

**Report To:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Report Title:** Climate Change Strategy update and plans for 2022

**Report By:** Victoria Conheady, Assistant Director Regeneration and Culture

**Key Decision:** Y

**Classification:** Open

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### Purpose of Report

To report to cabinet the progress against the agreed priority actions on the climate emergency action plan since October 21

To acknowledge that the Climate Change Strategy and action plan will be updated and presented to cabinet in October 2022 to reflect changes in international, national and regional policy advances

To review the latest data available relating to carbon emissions (borough wide and from council operations)

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### Recommendation(s)

- 1. To acknowledge the progress made against the actions of the climate emergency action plan since the last report to Cabinet in October 2021**
- 2. To recognise the breadth and scale of the challenge of our net-zero ambitions, and that these can only be delivered by collaborating and working together across all sectors from national and local government to local business and organisations and individuals through their lifestyle choices.**
- 3. To acknowledge the need to continue to lobby for additional finances, and to encourage others to do so the same, to meet the scale and pace of investment required to meet the ambitions of the strategy**

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### Reasons for Recommendations

1. To recognise the achievements to date since adoption of the action plan in March 2020.
2. This report covers the period October 2021 to March 2022 building on the annual report that was presented to [Cabinet October 2021](#)

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### Introduction

1. Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and publishing the climate emergency strategy and action plan in March 2020, the Council has made good progress towards the prioritised

actions in the action plan and delivered the majority of the actions. Some of course have not been completed due to the impacts of COVID-19 on staff resources and will be taken forward into the next iteration of the strategy action plan. For example, the development of the Strategic Asset Management Plan. However, new projects and programmes have also been developed that were not included in the original plan

2. Much of the climate emergency ambition has become embedded in our service provision, and we will continue to build on this in the coming months to help deliver the 2030 target and beyond. However, to meet the target it is essential the whole community takes part, that every organisation, business, and resident takes action however small to reduce their carbon footprint. In turn, we will continue to lobby for resources and policy amendments. We have continued to integrate the climate emergency into the Councils decisions making process and will continue to support services to include climate change in their projects and plans. To continue to ensure the Council holds itself accountable and that it embraces the climate emergency, we have continued to deploy the environmental and climate change impact assessment section for all executive decisions making and as part of the Corporate Management Centre for new plans and projects. This has helped report authors to understand how their decisions impact on climate change, and how climate change will impact in their decisions.

### **Next steps to develop the strategy 2022 onwards and action plan**

3. Since its publication in March 2020, there has been a range of international and national policy announcements which will be reflected in the refresh of the climate change strategy and action plan. It is widely acknowledged that to reach net zero, will require a shift in international and national policy and associated financing arrangements as well as a change in all of our behaviours in work and at home. Advancements in technology will support this along with recognising the value of nature-based solutions, all assisted by the recent international focus at COP26
4. Engaging local partnerships, key stakeholders, local businesses and the community in the next iteration of the climate change strategy action plan will be essential. This will help us to understand what others are doing to tackle climate change and well as sharing stories to inspire others to take action too. We will continue to show leadership in our climate change work and demonstrate that we are serious in tackling climate change.
5. The Council is planning to use a digital platform to engage the local community in understanding their ambitions for the town with regard to climate change and the actions they are already taking.
6. We will review the current themes of the action plan and update these in line with current guidance and new policy drivers. Areas to be considered in the next iteration of the strategy include resources consumption, waste and the circular economy and climate adaptation

### **Key activities for the Council will include**

- Continue to ensure that climate change is integrated into the Council decision making and
- Continue to lobby for resources for the town.
- Develop a strategic Assessment management plan for the Councils own assets
- Integrate Climate adaptation into the climate strategy and action plan using Local Partnerships [Climate Adaptation](#) tool kit.
- Continue the work to refresh the new Local Plan including the development of a Topic Paper on Climate Change

- Continue to lobby and work with partners, local organisations and community groups to deliver actions to tackle climate change
- Lobby key partners and the private sector to invest in Hastings to support the delivery of the carbon neutral ambition
- Continue to embed the climate emergency into all of the Councils work and work to ensure that all service areas are contributing to the net zero ambitions through our policies, projects and programmes
- Develop the climate web pages, providing advice and information about how to take action at home and in your business
- Launch the digital platform to engage the local community in the development of the next iteration of the climate change strategy and action plan
- Continue to secure funding to retrofit the existing housing stock and tackle fuel poverty
- Work with project leads delivering Towns Fund projects to ensure they contribute to the delivery of the towns net zero ambitions as well as climate resilience
- Work with partners and the local community to increase local biodiversity and through the management of our parks and open spaces

## Background

7. Within the borough boundary, the Council is directly responsible for less than 2% of local emissions, however, through our influence and own policy developments we can continue to help to shape and support local action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and engage local stakeholders and partners in taking action. However, as a council operating at a district level it is not within our power to directly enact all of the measures required to reach carbon neutrality.
8. In June 2021, Committee on Climate Change published their annual assessment of UK progress in reducing emissions and biennial assessment of progress in adapting to climate change. They reported that “reducing emissions and adapting to climate change will require a whole-of-society endeavour. Success will require the public to be engaged in the challenge, building public consent for the changes with a broader understanding of what is required and why”
9. In August 2021, the International Panel on Climate Change released its 6<sup>th</sup> report [Sixth Assessment Report - IPCC](#) which states human influence has unequivocally warmed the planet locking humanity into 30 years of changes. Climate changes are happening more rapidly. Impacts are being felt in every region of the world. However, the report also highlighted the actions we all need to take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which could limit warming beyond 2050.
10. In November 2021, the global ‘conference of the parties’ ([COP26](#)) took place, this had significant implications for global action on climate change. The global pacts made also have national implications. The council will seek to respond to policies and programmes developed because of this international process factoring these policy changes into planning our route map to 2030 to be developed this year.
11. The Council recognises that our residents, businesses and local organisations and our communities have a critical role to play in building resilience and reducing emissions in their own homes and businesses and through work and lifestyle choices, or as communities taking local action together. However, we are also very clear that without additional national grant funding and investment from the private sector it will take longer to reach our climate ambitions. Investment is needed across all aspects of our economy to accelerate the decarbonisation that is required to achieve carbon neutrality. In addition, innovative green

finance mechanisms will also help to deliver the strategy in the longer term e.g. community share offers and green bonds.

## **Key achievements since October 2021 – March 2022 to complete the delivery of the 2 year action plan**

12. This report celebrates the achievements that have been made during the last 2 years to deliver the climate change action plan. A detailed list of the achievements for the previous 18 months can be found in the report presented to Cabinet in [October 2021](#). This report provides an overview of work that has been undertaken in the last 6 months and completes the reporting on the delivery of the 2 year action plan

## **Theme 1 Communication, lobbying, building awareness and stakeholder engagement**

13. Partnership working remains a key to the success to the delivery of the strategy and action plan, and we will continue to build on the work that has been developed. These include:
  - Sussex Local Nature Partnership
  - East Sussex Energy Partnership
  - The Clean Growth Working Group of SELEP
  - The Town Deal Board
  - Hydrogen Sussex
  - The East Sussex Waste Partnership
  - East Sussex Climate Change Working Group
- Set up a dedicated form to submit your ideas on the regularly updated webpage [climate change ideas](#) . The web pages include ideas for what you can do as a resident and a local business to reduce your carbon footprint.
- We are developing an on line engagement platform which will be launched in the first quarter of 22/23 this will allow the Council to further connect with the whole community, hear their voices and make, more inclusive decisions about the future actions for the climate change strategy.
- Officers are taking part in Behaviour Change training in partnership with UCL and colleagues across the county; this will increase the council's awareness and understanding of the science behind behaviour change and support the development of future communication campaigns.
- Promoted the climate change focused 'crowdfunder' hosted and match funded by ESCC ([PTM: East Sussex | Crowdfunder UK](#)) and supported the approval of the projects including two in Hastings (Eco Heat the Y centre and the Crisp Packet project)

- The Council with its partners has continued to lobby regional and national government for resources to support the delivery of the climate emergency and other key priorities. For example, through the Partnerships for People and Place and Sustainable Warmth Funding.

## **Theme 2 Grid Decarbonisation – supporting the transition to zero carbon electricity**

14. Grid decarbonisation is one of the most important factors affecting whether the UK's net-zero target is achieved; emissions reductions to date have been largely achieved through national policy to phase out coal for electricity production, although gas still has a large part to play. This has reduced the carbon intensity of the national grid. As such officers regularly engage with UKPN and have provided input to help shape the development of their Business Plan, the outcome of which has created a dedicated team at UKPN to support local authorities reach their net zero ambitions.
- Continued to liaise with UKPN and inputted into the development of their new [Business Plan](#) to make sure the town's net zero ambitions are reflected.
  - Took part in Southern gas networks webinars to understand their local ambition for 'greening the gas network' ( [Gas goes green](#) )
  - The Council has procured 100% renewable energy for its electricity contracts for the last financial year and have begun the process to procure the Council's electricity supplies for 2022/23 and beyond.
  - The review of the Local Plan is still ongoing and will include new policies to support the climate emergency, including renewable energy policies that will support the decarbonisation of the grid at a local level.
  - In support of the Local Plan a Topic Paper on climate change and green infrastructure has begun to be researched; this will form part of the evidence base for the final plan submission at the end of 2022.

## **Theme 3 Reduce Energy demand from existing buildings**

15. The existing building stock accounts for 73% of greenhouse gas emissions in the borough arising from the gas and electricity used in our buildings. Improving the energy efficiency of the existing building stock and the way in which we use energy and emission intensity of the existing building stock. Since we reported to Cabinet in October, much of our work has been a continuation of our existing programmes with the exception of the MEES and Town Deal projects described below:
- We have continued to promote the East Sussex Warm Home Check Service hosting the East Sussex fuel poverty coordinator
  - Working in partnership with East Sussex Energy partnership the Council led the successful application for [Sustainable Warmth](#) funding to support low income households with energy saving upgrades and low carbon heating installations.
  - The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) [pilot project](#) working in partnership with Trading Standards have supported landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties to meet their legal obligations and ensure their tenants live in warmer homes. The project is targeting properties that have an Energy Performance Certificate

(EPC) rating below Band D. The Council will investigate and take appropriate enforcement action on private landlords who do not meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations.

- The Council delivered two training workshops for local landlords, letting and managing agents in partnership with Trading Standards and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services to highlight fuel poverty, MEES and EPC rating requirements as well as local grant funding opportunities.
- We have commissioned a Housing Stock Condition Survey which will collate information about people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of the housing in Hastings. This will inform future policy developments and funding bids to retrofit the existing housing stock.
- Worked in partnership with ESCC to develop a bid to the '[Partnerships for People and Place](#)' programme looking at integrating action on health inequalities and climate change – the project will focus on new and innovative ways to tackle fuel poverty and energy efficiency in private rented accommodation. The outcome of the bid will be known by April 2022.
- The Town Deal programme has got underway
  - a BREAM excellent new commercial building is being developed at Churchfields Industrial estate to provide local employment and business incubator units.
  - The Business Case for the Town Centre Living project is underway with concept designs commissioned for a building in the town centre which will create high quality, affordable and energy efficient homes.
  - The college has submitted the Business Case for the Green Construction Centre of Excellence for the Ore campus which will create a regional training centre for green skills including low carbon technology and retrofitting skills for domestic and commercial buildings.

#### **Theme 4 generating renewable and low carbon energy**

16. Generating renewable and low carbon energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, whilst increasing local energy security.
- In November the council 'soft launched' its [Solar for Businesses](#) project and to date has received interest from 15 local businesses. Of the 15 sites we have initially spoken to, two are being progressed forward as the first tranche. These two sites total 90kWp of Solar Panels which is estimated to offset 19.5 Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in the first year
  - The Council supported the development of the partnership 'Solar Together Sussex' project and encouraged local homeowners to take up Solar PV and battery storage. The project brings together homeowners and small to medium sized enterprises together, to install high quality solar panels at a competitive price. Across east and west Sussex over 7000 households registered an interest including over 300 in Hastings. For every kw of solar PV installed approximately one tonne of carbon will be saved.

## Theme 5 Low Carbon and sustainable transport

17. Transport accounts for 29% of all emissions in the borough. The transition to low carbon vehicles and fuels will help to reduce carbon emissions from transport significantly. In addition to reducing the use of fossil fuel vehicle, active travel such as walking and cycling, and the use of public transport has an important role to play in reducing emissions from transport. The impact of climate change also places additional pressure on the maintenance and resilience of the transport network so will require to adapt as well as mitigation measures to avoid more frequent and severe disruption to the movement of people and goods.
  - The specification for greening the council's vehicle fleet has been finalised with service areas, quotes for vehicles have been received and a 3 year lease option has been approved. It may take up to 12 months for the full fleet of vehicles to be received. The services included are as follows Parking and warden services, Environmental Health, Active Hastings and the Building Cleaning Services.
  - Identified the EV charging infrastructure needed to support the transition to a green fleet and procurement is underway to install electric vehicle charging points at for the Carlisle Base, the Depot and Muriel Matter House.
  - Taking part in the Task and Finish working group of 'Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex' (SPACES) to map and plan for future EV charging infrastructure needs across East Sussex using public sector estate and assets, as well as on-street parking which ESCC lead on. By working together partners will aim to develop a co-ordinated strategic plan for future investment in EV infrastructure
  - We are also working with our partners in the East Sussex Joint Waste Partnership to assess current, and potential future options to decarbonise the waste collection fleet.
  - Commissioning a Car parking study for Hastings Town Centre to understand the future needs of car parking in the town centre to inform the development of the new Local Plan – this will take account of national policy, ESCC on street parking strategy and the Councils plans for regeneration of some of the existing car park sites.

## Theme 6 natural climate solutions

18. The land (soil and plants) within the borough currently captures 23.9 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Biological diversity is essential and intrinsically linked to every part of our health, livelihoods and our future wellbeing providing the air, water and food ad materials we need to survive. Healthy and resilient societies depend on giving nature the space it needs yet nationally wildlife populations have reduced by 50% since the 1970's as reported in the [State of Nature Report 2019](#)
19. Substantial work in this area has commenced since October, as part of our work plans which includes:
  - We have been working with the [Sussex Local Nature Partnership](#) (SLNP) to share knowledge and ensure that any schemes designed to utilise natural capital to sequester carbon are appropriate. The SLNP will help to monitor and advise on nature related carbon offsetting activities.

- Commissioned Surrey Wildlife Trust to develop a Green Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy for the borough to inform the development of the Local Plan refresh.
- The Council repaired/ renewed and replaced the timber groynes between Hastings Pier and West St Leonards and will be undertaking ‘beach recycling’ to maintain the level of shingle on the beach to the level required for our sea defences. The beach between the harbour arm and pier provides one of our main sea defences, as well as spaces for recreation and habitats for wildlife.
- commissioned research to consider the options for the future management of the borough parks and open spaces.
- Supported the [Greener Futures](#) project that engages local people in getting involved in green space projects in the towns local parks, Hastings Country Park and the Combe Valley Countryside park, providing opportunities to learn about horticulture, foraging and practical conservation skills.
- Town Deal Projects in development phase:
  - In November the Council and the Garden Town Team visited Sheffield to learn about their ‘[Grey to Green](#)’ scheme to help inform the development of the green connections and public realm towns fund project
  - Supported the delivery of the Towns Fund project ‘Broadening Futures Together’ a partnership between the Education Future Trust and Plumpton College business case for approval. Once open the project will be able to deliver training for land-based skills and outdoor courses.

## Annual Emissions Reporting – how can we tell how we are doing?

### Borough wide emissions

1. Details of the borough’s greenhouse gas emissions for 2019 (the most recent data for the town), can be found in Appendix ‘1’. Since the action plan was published there has been a slight decrease in the town-wide emissions.

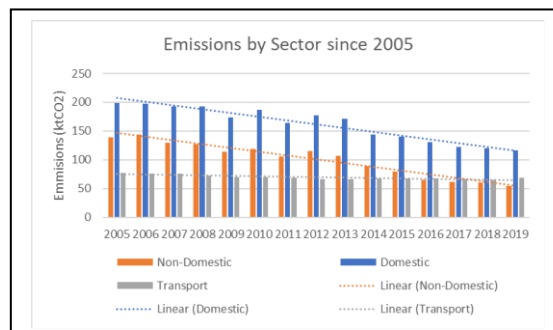


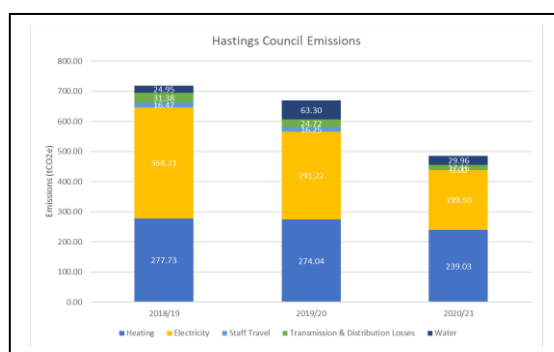
Figure 1 Emissions by sector since 2005 to 2019 (source: BEIS)



- Emissions from housing remained the largest source of CO2 emissions for the borough accounting for 49% of total emissions. Transport emissions accounted for 29% of emissions and non-domestic buildings 22%.

## Council Emissions

- We have used the [Green House Gas Accounting Tool](#) to calculate and report on the Councils GHG emissions.
- We have baselined the councils carbon emissions using data from 2018/19 and assessed 2019/20 and 2020/21 against this baseline year. The majority of the Councils emissions arise from the use of energy (electricity and gas) in our buildings and assets such as lighting in car parks. The results are shown in Appendix 1 and provide a detailed description of the councils' emissions. We will calculate emissions for the year 2021/22 by the summer 2022.
- In October 2020, we switched our electricity supplies to a renewable sources only supply, which will significantly reduce our electricity emissions for the lifetime of the contract. In 2019/20 the Councils emissions had decreased by 48% when compared to the 2018/19 baseline. (Scope 1 and 2 emissions only).



**Figure 2 Hastings Borough Council carbon emissions for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21**

## Timetable of Next Steps

- Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Launch of Citizen Lab climate change conversations	Develop pages during March	Spring 20220	Chantal Lass
Revised strategy and action plan to be developed by October 2022		October 2022	Chantal Lass

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## Wards Affected

(All Wards);

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## Policy Implications

### Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

Residents on low incomes can directly benefit from energy bill savings through the fuel poverty programme and energy and water efficiency schemes. Individual schemes brought forward as part of the Climate Emergency will be subject to their own more detailed Equalities Impact Assessments as required and as and when they are brought forward,

### Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)

There are no crime and fear of crime implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report

### Risk Management

By tackling climate change now reduces the risks of more intense impacts in the future.

### Environmental Issues & Climate Change

The strategy and action plan is focused on climate change, environmental protection and enhancement. The action plan will have a range of significant environmental benefits in terms of reducing carbon emissions, and increasing green infrastructure, boosting biodiversity and nature recovery, and increasing resilience to the local impacts of a changing climate

### Economic/Financial Implications

Creating a more sustainable place to live and work contributes to creating a more prosperous place, attracting business and investment. Responding to the climate emergency presents economic challenges but also an opportunity to stimulate the economy and to develop green skills and jobs.

### Human Rights Act

The impacts of climate change are predicted to impact on all communities, with the greatest impact predicted to be impacting the most vulnerable communities locally, and internationally.

### Organisational Consequences

Delivering the climate emergency will require the Council to continue to embed the implications across all of its service areas, projects, programmes and policies.

### Local People's Views

Local communities are engaged in climate change and their views will be actively sought for the next iteration of the strategy and action plan.

### Anti-Poverty

Taking climate action will benefit local residents and those on low incomes providing costs savings from energy and water costs for example.

### Legal

There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report

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## Additional Information

Appendix 1 Annual emissions monitoring

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## Officer to Contact

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