

NET ZERO STRATEGY REVIEW AND RELATED CLIMATE REPORTS	
Executive Summary	This paper presents the following reports: • the revised Environmental Charter • a draft decarbonisation strategy, proposed to replace the Council's Net Zero Strategy • a draft decarbonisation action plan to support the strategy until March 2027 • the Carbon Footprint Report 24/25
Options considered	These reports have been prepared using best practice in keeping with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and Net Zero targets
Consultation(s)	These reports have been developed following discussion with key Cabinet members, senior management and other relevant officers
Recommendations	To recommend to Full Council: • To adopt the revisions to the Environmental Charter • To adopt the Decarbonisation Strategy and associated action plan. Cabinet: • to note the contents of the carbon footprint report for 24/25.
Reasons for recommendations	To provide the Council with up-to-date documentation and a clear direction to meet its climate goals in support of the declaration of a climate emergency. To support the corporate plan theme: <i>Continue our journey to Net Zero</i> and associated objectives To meet the audit recommendations
Background papers	

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Adam Varley
Contact Officer	Kate Rawlings, Climate and Environmental Policy Manager Kate.rawlings@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:

Corporate Plan:	Continue our journey to Net Zero and the following objectives: ○ Continuing our own annual emissions reductions to reach Net Zero by 2030 ○ Introducing significant new projects which deliver on our Net Zero ambitions ○ Supporting homeowners to upgrade the environmental performance of their homes ○ Continuing to invest in the Council's property portfolio to reduce carbon impact ○ Promoting measures to reduce emissions from transport and increase active travel ○ Protecting and enhancing the special landscape and ecological value of North Norfolk whilst improving the biodiversity of the district ○ Strengthening the ability for local communities to deliver on local environmental ambitions and priorities ○ Continuing to pursue government and external funding for new green initiatives ○ Providing carbon literacy training for all staff and members to better inform council decisions and promote community understanding.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	There are no direct budget implications from the Carbon footprint report or Environmental Charter, but any actions arising from these, together with the action plans for the strategy, will require budget and/or resource. Some of this is already allocated, some will require additional budget and resource. Many projects offer the chance to invest to save.
Council Policies & Strategies	Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan 2022

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	No
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. This paper presents the following reports:

- the revised Environmental Charter
- a draft decarbonisation strategy, proposed to replace the Council's Net Zero Strategy
- a draft decarbonisation action plan to support the strategy until March 2027

- the Carbon Footprint Report 24/25

1.2. The Environmental Charter, draft decarbonisation strategy and action plan are presented for discussion and comment before passing to Overview and Scrutiny and then for adoption at Full Council. The Carbon Footprint Report is presented for information and to provide background and context to the other documents.

1.3. All reports are presented in draft form and will be formatted into corporate presentational style by the Communications team once the content is finalised and adopted before they are made available on our website

2. Introduction & Background

2.1. The Environmental Charter was developed following community engagement to provide context to the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019. It includes the Council's 2030 and 2045 Net Zero targets

2.2. The Council's Net Zero strategy and action plan were adopted in 2022 and now require a refresh to align with the new corporate plan and revised central government targets and policy. In addition, many of the actions have been completed or superseded. The need for a new strategy and action plan was confirmed by a recent internal audit. The Net Zero strategy has been renamed to the decarbonisation strategy to fit with the name and aims of the decarbonisation board. The separation of the action plan to allow frequent review and updates was also a recommendation of the recent audit.

2.3. Each year the Council calculates its Carbon Footprint using the carbon accounting tool developed by the LGA. The resulting report presents a breakdown of the calculation and the projects and changes that the Council has made during the year which have affected the footprint both positively and negatively. It helps to define the direction of future Council services and the actions needed to mitigate emissions to meet our Net Zero targets.

3. Proposals and Options

3.1. Small revisions have been made to the Environmental Charter to reflect the current corporate priorities and resources e.g. references to funding streams no longer available have been removed. There are no changes to the Council's 2030 and 2045 net Zero targets or other high-level ambitions, following discussion on this matter with key Cabinet members and relevant officers.

3.2. The Decarbonisation strategy and Action Plan have been compiled after a number of workshops with members and teams across the Council as well as research into strategies produced by other local authorities. They also pick up on the recommendations of a recent internal audit report.

3.3. The Carbon footprint calculation and report follow a similar format to previous years in order for relevant comparisons to be made and a consistent timeline to be presented.

4. Corporate Priorities

These reports are central to the corporate plan theme: **Continue our journey to Net Zero** and the following objectives:

- 4.1. Continuing our own annual emissions reductions to reach Net Zero by 2030
- 4.2. Introducing significant new projects which deliver on our Net Zero ambitions
- 4.3. Supporting homeowners to upgrade the environmental performance of their homes
- 4.4. Continuing to invest in the Council's property portfolio to reduce carbon impact
- 4.5. Promoting measures to reduce emissions from transport and increase active travel
- 4.6. Protecting and enhancing the special landscape and ecological value of North Norfolk whilst improving the biodiversity of the district
- 4.7. Strengthening the ability for local communities to deliver on local environmental ambitions and priorities
- 4.8. Continuing to pursue government and external funding for new green initiatives
- 4.9. Providing carbon literacy training for all staff and members to better inform council decisions and promote community understanding.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct budget implications from the Carbon footprint report or Environmental Charter, but any actions arising from these, together with the action plans for the strategy, will require budget and/or resource. Some of this is already allocated, some will require additional budget and resource. These actions will be overseen by the Decarbonisation Board and Major Projects Board, as appropriate.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

Due consideration will be given to Net Carbon reduction alongside financial and operational factors in making recommendations. Any budget growth will be authorized by the appropriate committees.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. The UK government is legally committed to reaching net zero by 2050 through the Climate Change Act 2008. However local Authorities currently have no statutory duty to act on climate change.
- 6.2. There is no requirement to calculate or publish our carbon footprint or to have a strategy on decarbonisation. Our own Net Zero targets are not legally binding.
- 6.3. Actions agreed, if these reports are adopted, will result in the delivery of projects or changes in the Council's operation or estate which may have legal implications. These will be considered separately.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.

If there are any subsequent projects flowing from the policies and charters, requiring, for example, significant expenditure, such may needs to be further considered through the committee process

7. Risks

- 7.1. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and set ambitious targets. The absence of up-to-date reports, monitoring, strategies and action plans to support this work exposes the Council to a reputational risk.

8. Net Zero Target

- 8.1. These reports have been specifically developed to support the achievement of the Council's Net Zero 2030 and 2045 targets. The clear direction laid out in these documents are key to the Council's success in delivering this corporate priority.
- 8.2. Actions agreed will result in the delivery of projects or changes in the Council's operation or estate will be assessed using the appropriate carbon tool as they are brought forward for delivery

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 9.1. Climate change is an issue that affects everyone, but inequalities in society mean that not everyone is affected in the same way and certain groups may be disproportionately impacted. Actions to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate will impact people and groups in complex ways.

10. Community Safety issues

- 10.1. These reports are unlikely to have any impact on community safety issues however as actions are progressed each project or change arising from the action will be assessed accordingly.

Conclusion and Recommendations

These documents provide the framework to support the Council's ambitions to be Net Zero across its estate and operations by 2030 and to assist the district to be Net Zero by 2045.

Recommendations:

To recommend to Full Council:

To adopt the revisions to the Environmental Charter

To adopt the Decarbonisation Strategy and associated action plan.

Cabinet:

To note the contents of the carbon footprint report for 24/25.

Reasons for recommendations

To provide the Council with up-to-date documentation and a clear direction to meet its climate goals in support of the declaration of a climate emergency.