

Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee

29th January 2025

Report Title	Draft Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030 Scrutiny Panel Feedback
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Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	Not applicable
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)	Green, sustainable environment

List of Appendices

Appendix A – North Northamptonshire Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030

Appendix B – Consultation Report

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment

Appendix D – Equalities Screening Assessment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the key areas of focus in the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy, and the Council's objective to provide a green sustainable environment and seeks comments/ feedback from the committee prior to the strategy being finalised and considered by the Executive for approval.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council declared a climate and environment emergency in July 2021, recognising the need for action to enhance, protect, and prevent further decline of the local environment. Alongside this declaration a set of recommendations were adopted to include developing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

- 2.2. The draft Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030 ensures North Northamptonshire Council has a strategy in place for its climate ambitions.
- 2.3. Public consultation was undertaken between 16th September and 20th October 2024. The key findings from the consultation have been analysed and feedback has been used to inform the draft strategy. A consultation report, outlining the consultation process and the key findings can be found at **Appendix B**.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee:
 - (a) Note the positive progress made toward the development of a Climate Change Strategy for the Council.
 - (b) Provide comment and feedback on the future objectives proposed in the strategy at Appendix A.

3.2. Reason for Recommendations –

- The Climate Change Strategy (CCS) aligns with the Council’s corporate priority to provide a green sustainable environment.
- The CCS aligns with the Council’s adoption of the climate change route map, which sets out the action to develop a strategy for North Northamptonshire.
- The CCS supports the Council’s ambition for climate change mitigation as set out in the Corporate Plan.
- The CCS compliments a number of existing environmental policies and strategies, such as the Carbon Management Plan, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, Pollinator Strategy, Local Nature Recovery project, and the Local Plan.

3.3. Alternative Options Considered –

The alternative option is not to publish the CCS. This would not align with the Council’s declaration of a climate and environment emergency, or wider strategic priorities. This option is therefore not recommended.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. In July 2021, the Council declared a Climate and Environment Emergency and subsequently the Council committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. As part of this declaration the Council resolved to develop a CCS for North Northamptonshire.
- 4.2. In March 2024, in response to the evolving landscape of climate action, including recommendations from North Northamptonshire to Net Zero (NN2NZ) and other policy advancements, the Council commissioned Electric Places working alongside officers, to develop a re-imagined CCS for the period 2025 to 2030 that positions North Northamptonshire as a leading example of sustainable, thriving, and forward-thinking communities and an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

- 4.3. The Strategy has been developed to address the critical challenges posed by climate change locally, while emphasising the importance of community and business engagement and a just transition to Net Zero.
- 4.4. The draft strategy has been informed by a series of stakeholder interviews (March – June 2024), school events, and a robust formal consultation.
- 4.5. Appended to this report is the draft Climate Change Strategy (Appendix A). The Strategy sets out key actions the Council will take to deliver the commitments outlined within the strategy. These actions are discussed throughout the document under the header “what we plan to do”.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. This initiative signifies a proactive measure to safeguard and enhance the quality of life for our residents, contribute to national carbon reduction targets, and foster sustainable economic growth.
- 5.2. The Strategy has six key areas of strategic importance. Plans for each sector focus on reducing Greenhouse (GHG) emissions, building resilience to climate change, and ensuring an equitable transition to a low-carbon future.
- 5.3. **Key area of focus: Homes & the Built Environment**
 - 5.3.1. North Northamptonshire is one of the fastest growing areas of the UK. Improving energy consumption and efficiency in homes and buildings, new and existing, is a critical factor for addressing climate change locally. Energy efficiency can be improved with better insulation, renewable energy installations (i.e., solar panels), and by adopting low-carbon heating systems. Retrofitting existing buildings as well as ensuring new developments meet high energy efficiency standards are essential steps toward achieving our goals.
 - 5.3.2. To support residents and businesses transition to Net Zero, the Council will continue working with local partners to provide targeted support and inclusive educational campaigns to raise awareness for the benefits and options for home adaptation. We will also work to empower local leaders and organisations to act as intermediaries and advocates for climate adaptation and resilience within the community. More information can be found on pages 20-24 of **Appendix A**.
- 5.4. **Key area of focus: Energy**
 - 5.4.1. Transitioning to renewable energy is imperative for the North Northants area to meet its carbon reduction targets. The region is already home to two renewable energy parks in Kettering and Chelveston. There is also potential for solar to be added to buildings, car parks, and low-grade farmland. As well as opportunities for wind and biomass energy generation, all of which would significantly decrease reliance on fossil fuels. The challenge over the next 10 years is to accelerate away from the use of fossil fuels, which could be achieved by investing in renewable energy infrastructure. The Council can help lead the way in creating a sustainable energy future by working with local

businesses and community groups and limiting its reliance on fossil-fuels within Council operations.

5.4.2. The Council is committed to driving renewable energy generation across the area. To tackle long-term energy issues, we will collaborate closely with the National Grid, aiming to resolve grid connectivity challenges by 2030. We will also continue to support grants and programmes that assist individuals and businesses in electrifying fossil fuel-intensive processes, transitioning to renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency. More information can be found on pages 25-28 of **Appendix A**.

5.5. **Key area of focus: Transport**

5.5.1. Transport is a major contributor to GHG emissions in North Northants. Growth in traffic and reliance on fossil fuelled vehicles poses a significant environmental risk. The adoption of sustainable transport modes, such as electric or alternative fuel vehicles, car sharing clubs, cycling, and public transportation, are crucial to reducing transport emissions in the area.

5.5.2. To encourage a shift towards more sustainable transport modes, the Council will continue to enhance local greenways. We will also focus on encouraging the prioritisation of infrastructure for green transport over building new roads for developments and will explore opportunities to repurpose wide roads to accommodate a shift towards cycling and micro-mobility. More information can be found on pages 29-34 of **Appendix A**.

5.6. **Key area of focus: Nature, Food & Farming**

5.6.1. Climate change is already impacting agriculture and natural ecosystems in North Northants. Increased temperatures and altered rainfall patterns affect crop yields and livestock, while biodiversity losses threaten local ecosystems. Sustainable farming practices, reforestation, such as the Rockingham Forest project, and initiatives to protect natural habitats, such as the Nene Valley, are vital for building resilience against the impacts of climate change. Promoting local food production and consumption can also help to reduce our carbon footprints and ultimately enhance food security.

5.6.2. The Council is committed to embedding a range of strategies and policies that promote sustainability and environmental resilience. One of the key areas of focus is championing sustainable farming practices. The Council will continue to work closely with partners to support local agricultural sector to encourage methods that are both environmentally friendly and economically viable. Alongside this as part of a broader initiative to expand education on healthy and sustainable food choices, there will be efforts to promote interventions aimed at reducing food waste, promoting sustainable food consumption, and encouraging dietary changes that support both personal health and environmental sustainability. More information can be found on pages 35-39 of **Appendix A**.

5.7. **Key area of focus: Green Economy**

5.7.1. A “green economy” is one that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment. It involves creating jobs and economic growth

through investments that reduce carbon emissions, enhance energy, and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. In 2023, the green economy grew five times faster than the general economy, and North Northants is well placed to benefit from this. It is essential that we continue to develop green local skills, and that businesses are supported in their journey to decarbonise their operations and create local green technologies and services. For the North Northants area, new sustainable businesses are key to bolstering sustainable growth in the area. This involves supporting businesses who adopt environmentally friendly practices and encouraging innovation in sustainability. The green economy not only helps reduce emissions, but it also drives economic resilience and competitiveness.

5.7.2. Further development of the green economy presents a significant opportunity for local growth and innovation. With a robust employment sector, the region is well-positioned to capitalise on green job creation. The Council aims to build on the success of local initiatives such as the Chelveston Renewable Energy Park and In2Tec's green electronics innovations to ensure that the local workforce is not left behind by industrial changes. To support this vision, we will collaborate with educational institutions and training providers to increase access to green job training and upskilling initiatives. More information can be found on pages 40-41 of **Appendix A**.

5.8. **Key area of focus: Waste**

5.8.1. Reducing waste by increasing recycling and composting rates can significantly lower GHG emissions locally. The Council aims to continue to enforce robust waste reduction strategies, support circular economy initiatives, and educate residents and businesses on sustainable waste practices. In the short term, this includes the continuation of our annual garden waste collection service and the introduction of food waste collection across the whole of North Northamptonshire, and in the medium term, ensuring proper waste management contributes to a cleaner, healthier environment, and supports overall climate goals. Businesses in North Northamptonshire are leading the way in the circular economy whether it is providing a second life for EV batteries for renewable energy storage, by extracting reusable polymers from unwanted carpet, or by providing global leadership in sustainable electronics through innovative processes and materials.

5.8.2. The Council is committed to promoting sustainable waste management practices to reduce the environmental impact, with a key focus on the circular economy principles, which seek to prioritise the reduction of waste and encourage innovative approaches to waste reutilisation. We will continue to actively use education and best practice to promote sustainable waste management practices to drive behavioural change within the area. More information can be found on pages 42-43 of **Appendix A**.

5.9. **Carbon Neutral Council**

5.9.1. In addition to the six key areas of focus the Council also has committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030. This commitment was approved by the Executive December 2021 and is outlined within the Carbon

Management Plan (CMP) and subsequent CMP Annual Report 2022/23 approved in June 2024.

- 5.9.2. A range of activities have been delivered in conjunction with the CMP, details of which can be found in the [CMP Annual Report 2022/23](#).

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The CCS (Appendix A) details the Council's vision and approach for addressing climate change in North Northamptonshire over the next five-years (2025-2030). The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and feedback on the draft strategy prior to it being considered by the Executive.
- 6.2. Following Executive approval, as indicated on page 46 of Appendix A under monitoring to ensure success, and within one year, the Council will look to develop a detailed action plan or roadmap to net zero, to enable the delivery of the strategy. Success will be dependent on several factors to include technology, funding, as well as the buy-in and participation of local partners, residents, and suppliers.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. The development of the Strategy will lead to a detailed action plan, which will help to inform future capital investment, external funding bids, and any capital investment the Council may or may not choose to consider. This does not include specific saving targets or future expenditure proposals at this stage.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The Strategy raises awareness of what the Council can do to address climate change in the North Northants area in a manner that is inclusive and that aims to provide a fair and just transition to our low-carbon future. Whilst the climate strategy is not a statutory document, a formal consultation was undertaken in respect of the Strategy as outlined below at 7.5.
- 7.2.2. Becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 is not a legal requirement; however, the Council agreed a motion in December 2022 which established an expectation to deliver a range of activities to achieve this. The CCS supports delivery of the long-term corporate aims of delivering a green sustainable environment.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The CCS seeks to reinforce the Council's strategic priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan:
- a) In particular, the key commitment to a greener, more sustainable environment;

- b) The report also recognises the declaration of a climate and environmental emergency, and its target of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. Should the strategy not be adopted there is a risk that the Council could appear to not be meeting its corporate priorities.
- 7.4.2. The absence of an effective and appropriately resourced strategy for climate change puts the Council at considerable risk in terms of delivery of the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Central Government commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. Recognising that collective action is essential to achieving the vision and outlined goals within the draft strategy it was important to understand the views of residents, businesses, and organisations across the area regarding issues related to climate change and sustainability. Prior to the public consultation, extensive interviews were held with stakeholders, including community groups, schools, town and parish councils, businesses, and council departments.
- 7.5.2. To ensure that the consultation was inclusive a range of targeted activities took place to include stakeholder interviews, events with schools, and via anonymous surveys.
- 7.5.3. Formal consultation for the draft strategy commenced on 16th September and ran for 4-weeks, finishing on 20th October. The structure and design of the consultation was set out over two surveys:
- Climate change attitudes and behaviours. Seeking thoughts on climate change, our six main areas of focus, and suggestions for actions the Council should take to mitigate climate change risks in North Northamptonshire.
 - Consultation on the Council's Draft Climate Change Framework. Seeking thoughts on the draft Framework, which outlined our vision, approach, and key areas of focus to address the effects of climate change over the next five-years.
- 7.5.4. The surveys were communicated through press release, social media, parish, and town councils, and via various communication forums of external stakeholders.
- 7.5.5. Survey results have been analysed, and the feedback has been incorporated into the draft CCS. Some key highlights from the public consultation, which have been incorporated into the revised draft strategy include:
- 39% of respondents felt the Council identified the specific climate change risks facing North Northamptonshire (i.e., flooding, heatwaves, water shortages, biodiversity loss etc); whereas 33% felt risks were poorly identified. A further 29% had a neutral response. To account for this feedback additional information was added to the climate change forecast for North Northamptonshire section on pages 10-11 of **Appendix A**. In addition, a

climate change risk table has been added as an appendix item to the strategy, on pages 50-54 of **Appendix A**, outlining specific climate risks for North Northants as well as the associated impacts.

- 88% of respondents felt the six main areas of focus are the most appropriate categories for addressing climate change in North Northants.
 - For Homes and the Built Environment – 8% felt the proposed actions cover all relevant risks, 60% felt the proposed actions mostly cover all relevant risks, but more emphasis and additional actions are required, and 32% felt there are significant risks that are not addressed.
 - For Energy – 13% felt the proposed actions cover all relevant risks, 59% felt the proposed actions mostly cover all relevant risks, but more emphasis and additional actions are required, and 28% felt there are significant risks that are not addressed.
 - For Transport – 12% felt the proposed actions cover all relevant risks, 60% felt the proposed actions mostly cover all relevant risks, but more emphasis and additional actions are required, and 28% felt there are significant risks that are not addressed.
 - For Nature, Food, & Farming – 15% felt the proposed actions cover all relevant risks, 54% felt the proposed actions mostly cover all relevant risks, but more emphasis and additional actions are required, and 31% felt there are significant risks that are not addressed.
 - For the Green Economy – 23% felt the proposed actions cover all relevant risks, 44% felt the proposed actions mostly cover all relevant risks, but more emphasis and additional actions are required, and 33% felt there are significant risks that are not addressed.
 - For Waste – 16% felt the proposed actions cover all relevant risks, 45% felt the proposed actions mostly cover all relevant risks, but more emphasis and additional actions are required, and 39% felt there are significant risks that are not addressed.
- We listened to the feedback provided and have used it to inform the strategy, adding additional content and undertaking suggested amendments. We have tried to incorporate as much of the feedback as possible, and where appropriate. Respondent feedback will also be used to inform the roadmap to Net Zero action plan, which will be developed within 1-year following Executive approval. The list below provides a snapshot of the changes made to each of the six main areas of focus.
- Changes & Additions include:
 - More information in regard to the Local Plan & Planning Policy,
 - Guidance on tips for retrofitting homes,
 - Content expanded on grid connectivity issues and energy security,
 - Additional information about local energy parks,
 - Additional transport, green economy, and waste statistics,
 - Linkage to the Air Quality Strategy,
 - Linkage to the Bus Service Improvement Plan, to include content on rural bus routes and micro mobility hubs,
 - Content on the Greenway and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
 - Content on the local EV charging infrastructure project expanded,
 - Linkage to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy,

- Linkage to the Tree Planting Strategy,
 - More information on circular economy,
 - Additional content regarding enforcement measures; and
 - Statements from local businesses and infrastructure providers.
- Other new additions include:
 - A new section outlining our next steps in relation to embedding the strategy, the roadmap to Net Zero action plan, and monitoring to ensure success (on pages 44-46 of **Appendix A**); and
 - A new section highlighting key government, council, and local milestones in relation to Net Zero (on pages 47-49 of **Appendix A**).

7.6. **Consideration by the Executive Advisory Panel – Sustainable Communities**

7.6.1. 9th October 2024 – Presentation of the Draft Climate Change Strategy and consultation design. The Panel considered a presentation by the Co-Founder of Electric Corby CIC, which outlined the Draft Climate Strategy for 2024-2030, targeting Net Zero by 2050. The presentation stated that the Council's focus was on creating a greener community with resilient infrastructure and a strong green economy.

7.6.2. 4th December 2024 – Results from the consultation as well as changes made to the draft strategy were presented to the Panel. Members endorsed the changes.

7.7. **Consideration by the Executive**

7.7.1. This report is on the Executive forward plan for 13th February 2025 where approval will be sought to publish the Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030 and accompanying appendix items on the Council's website.

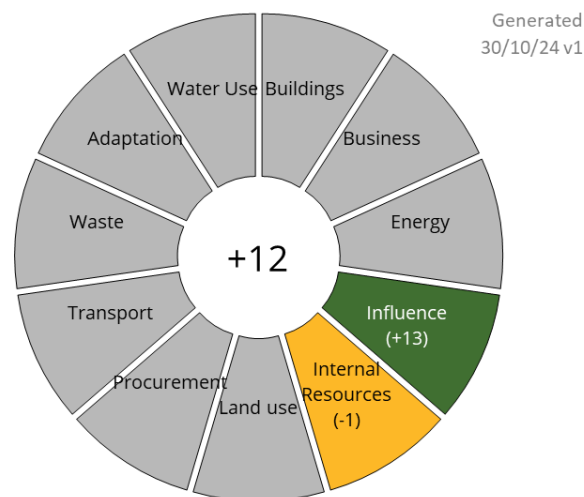
7.8. **Equality Implications**

7.8.1. One of the key principles for the CCS was for it to be equitable, ensuring a just transition to low carbon, climate resilience.

7.8.2. The effects of climate change are likely to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable in our society, particularly residents in areas of high deprivation, younger children, and older people. The CCS is not anticipated to disproportionately impact on any protected group. An Equality Screening Assessment has been completed and confirms that there are no negative impacts to one or more protected group as a result of this report.

7.9. **Climate Impact**

7.9.1. A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed. The resulting impact has been assessed as follows:



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 2 mos away.

7.9.2. The CCS is expected to have a positive net benefit in terms of the Council's influence on activities in relation to climate change and awareness building within the local community and with businesses.

7.9.3. A slight negative impact is expected in relation to internal resources, this is due to staff time required to embed the strategy into practice and development of the roadmap to net zero action plan.

7.10. **Community Impact**

7.10.1. Continuing to enhance our green environment has a positive impact on health and wellbeing, whilst also improving air quality and creating a sense of place.

7.11. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1. There are no Crime and Disorder issues arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

7.12. CMP Annual Report 2022/23