

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the proposed scope and approach to developing an all-encompassing environment strategy and associated environmental policy for the County Council.

Information

Background

2. At its meeting on 16 May, County Council resolved to welcome plans to bring proposals for a new corporate environment strategy to a future meeting of Policy Committee.
3. This report sets out proposals covering the scope and approach to developing this strategy.
4. In addition to the scope and approach set out below, it is proposed that the Council develops and adopts an overarching environmental policy. Together the policy and strategy would:
 - Demonstrate the Council's commitment to managing the effects of its operations on the environment;
 - Provide a strategic framework that will bring corporate coherence to the Council's existing environmental improvement activities, and offer a chance to showcase good practice;
 - Strengthen procurement requirements for suppliers of goods and services to demonstrate management and improvement of their own environmental impacts;
 - Contribute to furthering the efficient use of resources, thereby helping to make best use of the Council's finances;
 - Contribute to reducing the likelihood of breaching environmental regulations and suffering financial penalties and reputational damage;
 - Improve integration between policy objectives and decisions in all aspects of County Council business to maximise environmental benefits.
5. In terms of integration of policy objectives, many environmental programmes and activities also have positive benefits on other Council objectives, such as benefits to health from improvements to air quality and increased levels of physical activity and improvements in

efficiency and reductions in cost as demonstrated in the upgrade to LED street lighting. In developing the strategy attention will be given to maximising these co-benefits.

Current good practice across the County Council

6. In bringing forward this strategy, the Council will be building on established examples of good practice and activity across the organisation, including:
 - Investment in energy efficiency measures in buildings and street lighting, which has resulted in carbon dioxide emissions being reduced by 68% since 2010/11 and a reduction in electricity consumption in street lighting by 36% since 2012/13;
 - Reduction of single use plastics with the removal of plastic cups and the offering of reusable coffee cups;
 - Natural flood risk management solutions;
 - Landfill for waste disposal down to less than 5%;
 - Public health – action on air quality and the food environment;
 - Expansion of electric bus fleet and investment in bus and cycling infrastructure.
7. Whilst the development of an environment strategy and environmental policy will capture and build on activity already taking place, it will focus on setting the County Council's ambition for the future and identify new areas and practices to take our organisation forward. It will also help embed good environmental practice in the culture and processes of the organisation.

Scope of strategy and policy

8. The environmental policy and strategy will cover the key activities of the Council that interact with the environment and seek to improve the environmental impacts of those activities.
9. Whilst the environment strategy will be specifically for the activities undertaken by the Council rather than a strategy for Nottinghamshire as a whole, it will seek to embrace how the Council can influence everyone who lives in, works in, or visits the county through its role as a community leader and partner.
10. Key Council activities to be covered are proposed to include:
 - Use of fuel, energy and water in our vehicles and our buildings;
 - Generation, treatment and disposal of waste from our buildings and our activities;
 - The management of the Council's land;
 - New developments and projects;
 - Procurement of goods and services;
 - Use of goods and materials and their impact on the environment;
 - Council projects, strategies and policies.
11. Themes covered by the strategy are proposed to include:
 - Energy and transport - including energy use in buildings; street lighting and work-related travel;
 - Waste and resources - including waste management at Council offices and Council construction projects;

- Water – including use and quality;
- Countryside and heritage – including the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, landscape and the built environment;
- Procurement and commissioning – including the purchase of goods and services;
- Environmental risk - including compliance with environmental legislation, flood risk management and adapting to a changing climate;
- Embedding and educating – including staff and Member training and awareness, and considering environmental impacts in decision making;
- Economic development – including support for business resource efficiency and green/clean growth.

Targets and Performance regime

12. The motion approved by Council in May specifically mentioned that developing the strategy will include working through the evidence base related to the world's changing climate, with the intention of making progress towards carbon neutrality.
13. Related to this, one of the options currently being developed is an energy strategy for the suite of 14 main council offices ("County Offices"), combined with consideration of the business case to centralise energy and water budgets so that they might be more effectively managed.
14. This energy strategy, which sets an annual energy consumption reduction target for the County Offices portfolio, will be the subject of a report to Policy Committee in October and provides a foundation for more ambitious plans to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from Council's buildings.
15. Other targets will be developed as part of the approach to developing the environment strategy outlined below.

Approach to development

16. In developing the proposed scope, the Council has learned from good practice in neighbouring Councils through undertaking a desk top review of other environment strategies.
17. If an environment strategy is to be owned and delivered effectively across the whole Council, it is essential that it is both a top down and bottom up process. All staff and Members will need to be encouraged to contribute positively wherever their workplace and whatever their role if we are to deliver a significant step change in environmental performance for the Council.
18. Therefore, a programme of engagement with departments and services is seen as key to the approach. This will seek to capture existing pertinent activities and targets, identify gaps, and collect ideas for further work Council wide, as well as allow all services to consider how best they might contribute.
19. Engagement with corporate communication colleagues to ensure effective communication and interaction with staff to support behaviour change and help share best practice is also deemed key.

Resources

20. Costs of delivery of the strategy priorities, targets and actions will be determined during the development of the strategy and will be met through the Place Department as well as drawing on corporate resources including the use of Graduate Trainees.
21. Resourcing of any new or additional initiatives will be considered through appropriate business cases.

Governance arrangements

22. In developing the policy and strategy, consideration will be given to the most effective and appropriate governance arrangements. Initial work will be led by Place Department, through the Service Director, Place and Communities.
23. It is anticipated that updates on progress of the strategy, including progress towards achieving targets will be reported to Communities and Place Committee.

Timetable

24. If the development of a corporate environment strategy is approved by Policy Committee, it is anticipated a draft strategy will be sufficiently developed to be further considered and hopefully approved by Policy Committee in early 2020.

Other Options Considered

25. To continue to take an ad hoc approach to ensuring environmental impacts of decisions and projects are effectively captured, however this risks missing opportunities to incorporate best practice, and minimises the chances of achieving significant environmental benefits for the county.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

26. Having a clear environmental policy and strategy for the Council will ensure that environmental standards will be applied equally and effectively at a corporate level across the Council and can be embedded within both the corporate and departmental plans, and within decision making at Committee and officer level.
27. Improving the environmental performance of the Councils operations, and ensuring environmental considerations are applied transparently within decision making, will allow the council to set a positive and leading example to partners and stakeholders, and take an active role in embedding best environmental practice across the county.
28. Enhancing environmental standards will improve the long-term viability and sustainability of the Council by future proofing both the assets that we control, and the services we provide, and allow a long-term whole life cost approach to be taken on investment decisions.

Statutory and Policy Implications

29. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human

rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

30. There are no direct financial implications included in this report.

31. Any financial implications will be captured through the development of the environment strategy.

Human Rights Implications

Implications in relation to the NHS Constitution

32. As noted above, there will be associated health benefits with the development of an environment strategy, through, for example, improved air quality and increased physical activity such as cycling and walking.

Smarter Working Implications

33. The Investing in Nottinghamshire programme is already looking to achieve positive environmental outcomes and would consider how it can best contribute to any future environmental policy objectives.

Implications for Service Users

34. The environmental strategy would be expected to make a positive contribution to the Council's objective of making efficient use of resources through energy and water conservation and waste minimisation, freeing up resources for service provision.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

35. Development of an environmental policy and environment strategy as outlined above would have a positive affect both on the environmental impacts of County Council's own activities and on the wider environment through the Council's role as a community leader and partner.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) Committee approves the proposed scope and approach to developing an all-encompassing environment strategy and associated environmental policy for the County Council.

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE
Leader of the County Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Mick Allen, Group Manager, Place Commissioning Tel: 0115 9774684

Constitutional Comments (RHC - 21/08/2019)

1. RHC 21/8/19 Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of this report by virtue of its terms of reference

Financial Comments (DJK - 19/08/2019)

2. DJK 19/8/19 The Environment strategy will be delivered by colleagues within Place and no additional financial impact is anticipated. Further reports will be submitted to Committee in future months.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Minutes of Full Council, 16 May 2019

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All