

COUNCIL

26 NOVEMBER 2024

REFERENCE FROM CABINET

A.4 CLIMATE CHANGE TARGET DATE: AMENDMENT

(Report prepared by Ian Ford)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Council is asked to consider the recommendations submitted to it by the Cabinet in respect of an amendment to the Council's Climate Change target date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting held on 15 November 2024 (Minute 85 refers), the Cabinet had considered a report of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment (A.10), which had sought to enable Cabinet to determine its recommendation to Full Council with a proposal of amending the Council's current policy target to achieve net zero carbon in scope one and two emissions from 2030 to the Government's target date, currently 2050, in order to allow for more financially sustainable investment to meet the target.

The Portfolio Holder's report had also set out the proposed Climate Action Plan for 2024-27, subject to Cabinet's endorsement, which would look to deliver against the new target, following Full Council's approval.

Cabinet had further been requested to note that an action within the Action Plan was for further work to be undertaken to improve and streamline data collection on energy usage and emissions.

The Environment Portfolio Holder had proposed that the Council aligned its target date for scope one and two emissions to reach net zero to the Government's national target date, currently set at 2050, because this Council could not financially sustainably become net zero by 2030. This change was a realistic, value for money approach to responding to climate change. Aligning with the national target meant that the Government policy, regulation and funding required to meet net zero would be brought forward to enable the country, and so this Council, to meet what remained a challenging ambition by 2050.

Cabinet had been made aware that the Government would need to regulate to meet the 2050 target, and as it did so new statutory responsibilities for the Council would come with new burdens funding to deliver them. Over time it was expected that innovations in technology would make improvements in carbon reductions better value for money, more locally available (in terms of supply and maintenance), and more realistic in terms of delivery. The national target date of 2050 had therefore been recommended by the Environment Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet had consequently:-

“RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- a) *notes the contents of the Environment Portfolio Holder's report (A.10) and in particular the development of a draft Climate Change Action Plan, as set out in Appendix A for*

2024-27 based upon a revised target of achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050;

b) recommends to Full Council that –

- i) the Council's Policy Framework (within Article 4 of the Constitution)) be amended to "Approval of the Council's target for achieving Net Zero carbon emissions with the relevant strategy and action plans being adopted and delivered by the Executive";
 - ii) in recognition that at a national level the UK Government has outlined comprehensive targets aimed at achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 and based on the Council's resources, the Council's new target for achieving Net Zero carbon emissions be aligned with the UK's national objectives to achieve Net Zero, by 2050; and
 - iii) Cabinet adopts and delivers against its strategy and action plans in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.
- c) subject to Full Council approving the revised Net Zero target, the new Climate Change Action Plan for 2024-2027 be adopted via an executive decision being made by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment; and
- d) notes the limitations of currently available carbon emission data and commends further investigative work by Officers to improve data.

A copy of the published report of the Environment Portfolio Holder (and its appendices) to the Cabinet meeting held on 15 November 2024 is attached to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Full Council, having considered this reference report from Cabinet –

- (a) approves that the Council's Policy Framework (within Article 4 of the Constitution)) be amended to: "Approval of the Council's target for achieving Net Zero carbon emissions with the relevant strategy and action plans being adopted and delivered by the Executive";**
- (b) approves that the Council's new target for achieving Net Zero carbon emissions be aligned with the UK Government's national objectives to achieve Net Zero, i.e. by 2050; and**
- (c) agrees that Cabinet adopts and delivers against its strategy and action plans in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

Published Decisions of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 November 2024.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 = Published A.10 Report (and its appendix) of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 November 2024