

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL****AGENDA  
ITEM NO****FULL COUNCIL****18 MARCH 2021****9**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>STROUD DISTRICT 2030 STRATEGY – LIMITING, ADAPTING, RECOVERING AND RESPONDING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present the 2030 Strategy and Master Plan for adoption.
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Committee RESOLVES to adopt the 2030 Strategy and Master Plan</b>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	<p>Prior to the public launch of the draft 2030 Strategy and Master Plan, the views of all officers and members had been sought. Special workshops and briefing sessions were held, including sessions with senior managers and an all members briefing session in September 2020.</p> <p>The public consultation ran for a period of 9 weeks under COVID constraints, closing just before Christmas. The process included online discussion groups and webpage which presented the documents and their contents in pdf but also through audio presentations to increase accessibility. Staff and public were encouraged to give views via a questionnaire and a dedicated CN2030 email account received written responses and enquiries. The draft was also presented at the 4 main council committees and the Recovery Board meeting.</p> <p>The re-draft has addressed the feedback from the consultation in collaboration with expert bodies such as the Local Nature Partnership. This re-drafting has been agreed with the Leadership and Management Team and also, the Senior Leadership Team and is now presented to Full Council for approval.</p>
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<b>Options</b>	The 2030 Strategy sets an overall route map across a range of priority areas, with a supporting master plan. Collectively, these documents represent an array of options and approaches, based on evidence of key issues and challenges, to achieve the ambition to do everything within the Council's power to achieve a carbon neutral district by 2030.			
	<p>Whilst a formal consultation period has been completed the 2030 Strategy commits to an ongoing community collaboration to shape the delivery of the masterplan into projects and schemes. There will be scope to flex our approach through the dynamic action planning process involving communities, partner organisations and businesses that is described.</p> <p>An open, inclusive and responsive action planning process that promotes and empowers ownership of issues and actions provides the best possible chance of success in achieving an effective response to climate and ecological emergency and a carbon neutral district by 2030.</p> <p>Taking the above into account, the Committee's options are to adopt or, to reject the 2030 Strategy and Master Plan.</p>			
<b>Background Papers</b>	None			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A - 2030 Strategy Appendix B - Master Plan			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

1.1 A 'Climate Emergency' was declared by the Council administration on 16 November 2018, including a pledge to do everything within the Council's power to make Stroud District carbon neutral by 2030. The Climate Emergency was subsequently endorsed by Full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019, along with the following motion:

- a. To set out a plan of action, including clear targets and transparent reporting, to develop district wide locally determined contributions to complement national determined contributions in line with the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5C.
- b. To include planning and support in the District for adaptation to the climate change that is already happening.
- c. To develop a strategy for Stroud District Council to play a leadership role in promoting community, public and business partnerships for this Carbon Neutral 2030 (CN2030) Commitment throughout the District, County and region.
- d. To work with partner bodies across the county to ensure that the climate emergency is adequately reflected in the development and implementation of all

county wide strategies and plans, including Gloucestershire 2050, the Gloucestershire Industrial Strategy, Gloucestershire Energy Strategy and Gloucestershire Transport Plans.

- e. To investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment.
- f. To work with key partner organisations within the County and region to secure external funding.
- g. To report back on an annual basis to Council on progress made.

1.2 Since the climate emergency declaration, progress has been made across a number of areas, such as:

- Operational development:  
Environment and Climate central in recovery planning as overseen by recovery board and integrated into officer coordination group; additional staff resource secured realising 2 fte officers dedicated to CN2030 within the wider Corporate Governance Team.
- Own estates:  
£1m secured for Water Source Heat Pumps at Brimscombe Port and Ebley Mill to bolster our existing onsite renewables provision that has already generated in the region of 1.25m kwh of electricity.  
Our fleet has been 'greened' by replacing vehicles with EV and now includes 6 electric vehicles.
- Partnerships: Support to domestic and business sectors continues to realise retrofit measures and carbon savings and services have recently been expanded by successful bids to secure Green Homes Grants (GHG) funding. Alongside this top up funding enables advice provision to extend its reach to the 'Able to Pay' residents to support access to the GHG voucher scheme.

Residents are also well supported and encouraged in their endeavours to recycle more through an award winning partnership with Ubico.

Homes and businesses are being well protected from flooding by nationally recognised Rural Sub-Urban Drainage work.

Ongoing projects with local environmental charities and volunteer groups are realising hugely successful habitat regeneration and creation projects such as our Canal Regeneration work. This work also provides volunteering, apprenticeship and educational opportunities that help communities engage with our environmental ambitions.

A new partnership with Transition Stroud is realising neighbourhood climate action groups in our parishes with 17 groups already active in their communities on a range of projects, sharing experience and ideas.

- Strategy: The Draft Local Plan has been developed with the CN2030 pledge as a key focus and based upon a wide range of evidence including commissioning of experts to advise on planning and land use for maximising on our renewable generation capacity.

The 2030 Strategy (Appendix A) outlines more headline achievements so far under the 7 organising themes in the document.

- 1.3 Significantly, alongside the above activities, the Council has also been responding with partners and communities locally and nationally, to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside its pervasive and far reaching impacts on all aspects of society and human health, the Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated very clearly the links between human activity and the health of the environment upon which we all depend. A focus on environment and climate is therefore central to all that we do as we plan for longer term recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and this is clearly referenced in the Council's Covid-19 Strategy – *Recover, Reset and Renew*, approved by Strategy and Resources Committee on 18 June, 2020.
- 1.4 The 2030 Strategy and supporting Masterplan, attached as Appendices A and B respectively, set out how we intend to fulfil the pledge to 'do everything in the Council's power to make Stroud district carbon neutral by 2030' and reaches beyond this to include our strategy for adapting to and, mitigating against, the effects of changing climate and ecological emergency. The documents address all of the points (a – g) referred to above on para 1.1 and the remainder of this covering report provides more overview detail of 2030 Strategy and Masterplan.

## 2. THE 2030 STRATEGY AND ACCOMPANYING MASTERPLAN

- 2.1 The strategy and plan have been prepared on the basis of background research and contextual evidence review as well as through informal consultation via networks and groups on community needs and interests in relation to the strategy. It has been prepared by officers in consultation with service managers and council leaders. Achieving the targets of the strategy is beyond the council's sole control and depends on action from everyone in the District. It is vital therefore that the strategy has the broadest possible ownership to start generating the 'buy-in' that will be required. The current engagement process, the 'District Dialogue' and the collaborative governance and ongoing action planning process are designed to achieve this. The strategy and plan will be subject to ongoing review and annual reporting in order to maintain its relevance and ensure progress on the issues it addresses.
- 2.2 Key consultation points have been addressed in this version and these include:
  - **Vision and direction:** The ambitious vision and direction was welcomed by almost everyone. More explicit emphasis was wanted for the themes of 'Leadership' and 'Health and Wellbeing' so these are now named in the strategy and remain covered by our role as exemplar and associated actions in the plan.
  - **Leadership and responsibility:** 'Exemplar, Enabler and Encourager' was considered a clear and organised approach to defining the council role. The balance of commitments across these was considered good. It was noted that a clearer steer on the purpose of the strategy and plan was needed so a new section is included. The proposals for community governance were seen as very important. There were many good suggestions for how this should be rolled out and these ideas will later feed into its development as a key priority under the Master Plan.
  - **Solutions and innovation:** The consultation felt the strategy had assessed the scope needed to broach the multiple challenges over a number of years. We were asked to include an explanation of resourcing for the strategy and reminded of the scale of the challenge ahead.

- **Fact checking:** There was some helpful feedback on targets and queries have been explored again for this re-draft. Some wanted to know the detail on assumptions but others were impressed by the evidence paper and its thorough approach. The setting of targets over a 10-year stretch is a difficult matter and so, in this version, we have given this context and explained the continuous 'review and improve' approach that will be taken across the decade to 2030.
- **Other:** The need for lots of action around communication and awareness raising in ways that make the issues and challenges accessible was commonly noted. This will be addressed through a dedicated communications plan as well as through specific projects that will deliver the strategy and plan.

2.3 The strategy establishes the context, requirements and approach to both climate and ecological emergency and takes serious consideration to recovery and future resilience building in the wake of the pandemic. It recognises that there is already a changing climate delivering challenges to our everyday lives and that ecological recovery is an urgent issue. These require rapid action to mitigate the far reaching, serious consequences. The strategy sets out a vision for 2030 across 7 organising themes (Built Environment; Energy; Natural Environment; Mobility; Economy; Waste and Community). Six cross cutting themes address practical and social issues common to all aspects. An accompanying document gives the first iteration of a master framework for action including 24 quantified targets and success measures over a time framed range of commitments for our 2030 Mission. The commitments are framed within the spheres of council influence as: 'Exemplar' – on our own direct activities and estates; 'Enabler' – through partnership; 'Encourager' – indirect influence to communities, businesses and other groups. The strategy proposes a collaborative, community approach to action planning, delivery and governance and identifies starting points in terms of what the Council is already achieving and the 7 next key priorities for each theme e.g. addressing the retrofit challenge; mainstreaming renewables etc.

2.4 The strategy places responsibility on the Council to invest in its own estates and services to become an exemplar in the districts challenge. The strategy therefore has implications for finance and strategic planning across the entire council. Whilst there is a CN2030 budget in place which is playing an instrumental role in developing project and partnership working already; the 2030 Strategy and plan calls for the Council to develop holistic approaches to investment and partnership building so that all investments are considerate of the CN2030 commitment made.

2.5 Oversight of the whole 2030 Strategy and Masterplan will be carried out by Environment Committee. However, given the cross cutting nature of the topic, many of the individual projects and schemes in the documents will come to other committees of the Council for consideration and decision as appropriate.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The 2030 Strategy and plan makes a clear public statement about how completely the Council is addressing the need for 'emergency' action to address climate, ecological and recovery emergencies. It is therefore important that overall the timescale leading to Full Council adoption is kept tight by adopting the strategy without delay.

### 4. IMPLICATIONS

#### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications in the decision to approve the Strategy.

The recently approved Medium Term Financial Plan approves funding to support the Strategy in a number of areas.

As work continues to progress on the Strategy and associated actions resources will be identified through the Council's budget setting and monitoring process.

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#### **4.2 Legal Implications**

The overarching legislative context of the draft Strategy and Plan is The Climate Change Act 2008. This Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The UK legal framework on climate change is also shaped by both caselaw and international agreements.

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#### **4.3 Equality Implications**

An EqIA is not required because the draft strategy and plan does not propose a discrete project, policy or action to be implemented. EqIA will be embedded across all actions within the strategy and will be completed ahead of any specific activity being undertaken.

#### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

The following sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Failure to endorse the strategy could be seen as a failure to acknowledge the 'emergency' declared and increase the risk of overall failure to deliver on the CN commitment made.
- Delivery of targets within strategy will make a significant positive contribution to: reducing the impacts of the changing climate; recovering nature and, achieving carbon neutrality for the district
- Delivering of the targets within the strategy will make significant contribution to the whole district contribution to meeting the Paris Conference carbon emission reduction targets and National Government targets for net zero 2050.