

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Cabinet
Council

31 October, 2024
5 November, 2024
3 December, 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change - Councillor J O'Boyle

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Regeneration and Economy

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Climate Change Strategy 2024 - 2030

Is this a key decision?

Yes

The proposals in the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will have a significant impact on wards across the whole city.

Executive summary:

The Coventry Climate Change Strategy 2024-2030 sets out how the Council plans to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change, which is central to delivery of the One Coventry Plan. The Strategy sets out the challenges and opportunities to creating a more sustainable city through five key pathways (or themes):

- **Adaptation and resilience** – how we adapt to weather changes caused by climate change and create more resilience in our infrastructure, services and systems.
- **Route to net zero** – how we decarbonise our city including buildings, transport and industry and create a green economy
- **A circular economy** – how we use resources more efficiently
- **Fairer green future** – how we tackle inequalities and deliver a just transition
- **Nature** – how we address the ecological emergency, reverse the decline in nature and create a greener city

We are facing unprecedented challenges to our climate and natural environment, climate change is no longer something happening in the future, we are seeing the impacts now - in Coventry there are over 10,500 properties at risk of flooding and rising. Rising energy costs and energy inefficient homes mean that over 22% of households are in fuel poverty, and the rising cost of living means 20% of the city is in food poverty. There is a global nature emergency, with the UK one of the world's most nature depleted countries. In Coventry over 20% of households live more than 300 metres from green space.

We are moving towards a green economy and need to ensure that local people and businesses are equipped with the right skills to access jobs and opportunities. Tackling climate change can help to address these issues and presents a huge opportunity to create positive change that can improve the quality of life, health and well-being of our residents and a create a more prosperous and vibrant future city.

The Strategy goes well beyond the Council, it is citywide. It has been developed with expert input from the city's independent Climate Change Board and pathway groups which is made up of over 25 public, private and third sector organisations from across Coventry. The Strategy also considers feedback to public consultation undertaken last year and is guided by Coventry's Net Zero Carbon Routemap which was produced to help us better understand the city's biggest sources of emissions and where we need to prioritise action.

There is already a tremendous amount of activity happening across the city to tackle climate change which includes:

- We have created a UK-first Strategic Energy Partnership with E.ON to help us decarbonise our city developing a 15 year programme which supports our net zero ambitions
- We are developing Greenpower Park. With West Midlands Gigafactory as its anchor tenant, it will foster world-leading collaborations between industry, major academic institutions and stakeholders to drive the UK's ambitions in leading the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable energy future
- We are pioneering Coventry Very Light Rail, a net zero affordable battery powered tram system which will help to reduce carbon emissions and provide a comfortable hassle-free means of travel as an alternative to the car
- Coventry will be the UK's first Electric Bus City by 2025 and we have the largest number of electric car charging points outside of London, in the UK
- We have launched a state-of-the-art Materials Recycling Facility 'Sherbourne Resource Park', the first of its kind in the UK, to support a growing circular economy
- We are working with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent and the Environment Agency in opening up the river Sherbourne, providing benefits to nature and local communities.

Whilst good progress has been made, we need to go much further. The Strategy provides a foundation for how we will work with partners, businesses, organisations and communities to

address climate change. It recognises that the Council has a role as leader and enabler but recognises that we can't do this alone and citywide action is needed. The accompanying Climate Change Action Plan sets out the key actions that we will aim to deliver, in partnership to help meet the significant challenges and opportunities. It should be noted that whilst approval is sought for the Strategy and Action Plan, individual projects will be subject to further governance and approvals in line with the Constitution.

The work of the Climate Change Board and delivery of the Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to ensure a 'just transition'. The impacts of climate change and measures taken to address it can often affect the most vulnerable communities, we must ensure that we use this opportunity to prioritise action to reduce inequalities in our city and improve the quality of life for all.

Recommendations:

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to consider the report and make any comments/recommendations to Cabinet for consideration at their meeting on 5 November, 2024

Cabinet is requested to consider any comments/recommendations received from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and recommend that Council:

- (1) Approve the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan; and
- (2) Delegate authority to the Director for Regeneration and Economic Development and the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to make variations from time to time to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Council is requested to:

- (1) Approve the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan; and
- (2) Delegate authority to the Director for Regeneration and Economic Development and the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to make variations from time to time to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Climate Change Strategy 2024 to 2030

Appendix 2: Climate Change Action Plan

Background papers:

- Draft Climate Change Strategy 2023 [Coventry's draft Climate Change Strategy – Coventry City Council](#)
- Draft Climate Change Strategy Consultation Response [Climate Change Strategy 2023 - 2030 consultation feedback executive summary – Coventry City Council](#)

Other useful documents

- One Coventry Plan 2022-2030 [The One Coventry Plan – Coventry City Council](#)
Coventry Net Zero Carbon Routemap 2023 [Net Zero Carbon Route Map for Coventry – Coventry City Council](#)
- Strategic Energy Partnership Business Plan summary 2024 [SEP SBP summary](#)
- Cabinet Report, August 2023
- [Coventry Strategic Energy Partnership.pdf](#)
- Economic Development Strategy [Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 – Coventry City Council](#)

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee - 31 October 2024

Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes
3 December, 2024

Report title: Climate Change Strategy 2024 – 2030

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change is a key priority for the Council as set out in the One Coventry Plan. The Strategy gives a comprehensive insight into the challenges and opportunities we collectively face in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. Whilst the challenges ahead are significant, taking positive action to address them brings about real opportunity to create a better future for our city and its residents. The Climate Change Strategy is an important step for Coventry in being clear on our level of ambition, to be a leading city on the global stage, which is innovative, forward-thinking and capable of delivering meaningful change and leading the green industrial revolution. We need to be bold and rise to these challenges; we can't do this alone and the success of how we respond to this will rely on city-wide support.
- 1.2 Climate change has many complex challenges which must be looked at holistically to deliver meaningful and lasting change. The Strategy breaks these down into five key areas or 'pathways':
- **Adaptation and resilience** – how we adapt to weather changes caused by climate change and create more resilience in our infrastructure, services and systems.
 - **Route to net zero** – how we decarbonise our city including buildings, transport and industry and create a green economy
 - **A circular economy** – how we use resources more efficiently.
 - **Fairer green future** – how we ensure the transition to net zero future is fair to all
 - **Nature** – how we address the ecological emergency, reverse the decline in nature and create a greener city
- 1.3 Coventry City Council recognised the importance of this issue well before many authorities were declaring emergencies, the Council were a founding signatory of the Global Covenant of Mayors in 2008, which set a target of achieving net zero by 2050 and the Council published its first Climate Change Strategy in the same year. In 2021 the Council signed up to the the Covenant of Mayors revised interim target of 55-65% reduction in emissions from 1990 levels by 2030. We are committed to working towards the UK government's more recent interim target for a 68% reduction in emissions by 2030. More recently the Council are working towards how we can support government targets to tackle the ecological emergency, whereby 30% of land in the UK should be conserved and managed for nature by 2030. For Coventry, whilst we recognise the importance of targets to give focus, our focus is taking action and being innovative to tackle climate change.
- 1.4 It's important the Council is seen to lead from the front; we are committed to reducing the direct impact the Council has on the environment and climate change, and we have a role to lead and encourage city-wide action. It is for that reason that we helped to develop an independent Climate Change Board in 2021, where the Council in its leadership role representing the interests of its citizens brings together the

leading stakeholders in the private, public and voluntary sectors to take action on climate change and promote sustainability.

- 1.5 The Board is made up of more than 25 partner agencies from the public, private and third sectors. The Board is supported by five pathway groups, focusing on each of the key areas of the Strategy, expertly chaired by professionals in those areas. The Board and pathway groups share ideas and resources to develop solutions to these difficult and complex issues affecting our city and its people and have had an important role in developing this Strategy. We will also continue to engage with residents and help empower community organisations to develop projects on the ground and encourage behavioural change.

A summary of the five pathways is as follows:

- 1.6 **Adaptation and Resilience Pathway** we are seeing more frequent extreme weather events such as flooding, heatwaves and droughts which present major risks to our city, affecting communities, infrastructure, nature and the local economy. Over 10,500 properties in the city are at risk of flooding, and Coventry has been tabled 14th out all English towns and cities with regards to the number of neighbourhoods within the city at high risk of extreme heat. We cannot afford to ignore this, particularly as some of our most vulnerable communities are likely to be most impacted and therefore must take action to adapt to climate change and create a more resilient city. The key recommendation for this pathway is to develop a Coventry Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, to help us better understand the city's exposure to climate risks and develop actions to mitigate risks as far as possible – this work is already well underway. Some of the actions in response to this will include measures such as increasing green and blue space across the city to increase natural resilience to heavy rainfall and provide natural shelter and cooling – this could include more green spaces in neighbourhoods, green roofs, living walls, street tree planting and work to restore and de-culvert rivers.
- 1.7 **Route to Net Zero Pathway** like all UK cities, Coventry is on a journey to net zero. We have reduced our carbon emissions by 48% since 2000, however the remaining 52% will be more challenging to deliver. This pathway focuses on a number of key areas for decarbonisation closely aligned to the city's Net Zero Routemap, with a focus on homes, transport and business, which are the biggest sources of emissions in our city. Some of the key actions that will help address this include retrofit of properties, electrifying the city's bus fleet and providing better walking and cycling infrastructure, developing innovative solutions such as Coventry Very Light Rail and pioneering new technologies such as drones and mobility hubs, delivering on our ambitions to be the UK's first Electric City. The route to net zero is very much underpinned by technology, innovation and behavioural change which are all essential to support our journey to net zero. The city's Strategic Energy Partnership will play a pivotal role in helping us to drive this forward at pace and scale. This pathway also focuses on identifying opportunities to create significant jobs, skills and savings for residents and businesses across the city.
- 1.8 **Circular Economy Pathway** waste is a significant challenge for the city, and currently accounts for 10% of emissions. Developing a circular economy means focussing on re-use, repair and recycling materials to use as a valuable commodity. This pathway

seeks to create opportunities to develop a local circular economy, which will deliver environmental, economic and social benefits across the city.

- 1.9 Coventry has ambitions to be a UK leader in tackling electrical and electronic waste and Greenpower Park is a huge opportunity to help deliver this, developing technologies to support the recycling of batteries and electronic waste. The city is already taking innovative steps with the Battery Industrialisation Centre, Coventry Connects digital recycling programme and the Sherbourne Materials Recycling Facility provides additional capacity that can support an increase in processing of high-quality recycled materials. Part of the work of this pathway focuses on identifying opportunities and addressing challenges of creating a more circular economy, which includes working with businesses to look at how we can make better use of commercial waste, and residents to address low recycling rates across the city.
- 1.10 **Nature Based Pathway** the UK is one of the most nature-depleted nations in the world. There is a vital need to reverse the national decline in biodiversity and support local nature recovery. This pathway focuses on how we can protect local habitats, alongside creating new ones. Currently 11% of land across Coventry is used for conservation purposes, against a government target of 30% by 2030. This presents a huge challenge which many other urban towns and cities also face, but also a significant opportunity to enhance green and blue spaces across the city.
- 1.11 In order to do this successfully we need a better understanding of the existing levels of biodiversity, which is being done through the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This will enable us to target resources and support a pipeline of opportunities and help attract investment. We need to improve conservation management to support nature recovery, and increase education, awareness and involvement of communities and explore opportunities to increase space for nature in urban areas, as well as opportunities for larger rewilding schemes.
- 1.12 **Fairer Green Future Pathway** The impacts of climate change and measures taken to address it can affect communities disproportionately, often impacting on the most vulnerable communities. Climate change can increase existing risks, such as vulnerability of properties to flooding and impacts of heatwaves will affect communities living in areas with less green space and trees to provide shade. Taking action on climate change can contribute to better health, well-being and quality of life for residents across the city. Our response to the climate emergency will require working with communities across the city to address existing inequalities and deliver a 'just transition'.
- 1.13 Moving towards a low carbon economy will create new job opportunities but will mean a decline in sectors currently dependent upon the use of fossil fuels. It's important that we take a proactive approach in order to avoid creating inequalities in our communities and businesses to support the transition into new jobs, which includes upskilling and training in green technologies. The pathway group have created 'Eight Principles for ensuring a Just Transition for Coventry (listed in the Strategy) which have been adopted by the Climate Change Board members and we are keen for other organisations across the city to follow suit and get resource in place to help coordinate the city's just transition.

- 1.14 The Strategy explores the role of the Council. The Council's emissions only account for 1% of the city as a total, but the organisation is taking significant steps to decarbonise its estate and fleet and to ensure that climate change and sustainability is embedded in all policy areas, from planning to procurement. The Council has an important role in terms of co-ordinating the city's approach to tackling climate change, which includes partnership working, building support and empowering citizens to take action. Key actions in the next 12 months will include training and reviewing resources to build knowledge, capacity and awareness to help us deliver against the Action Plan.
- 1.15 The city's Climate Change Action Plan sets out all of the planned activities and projects, many already in development or underway, or plans we aspire to deliver in response to the Climate Change Strategy, to make a real difference city wide. Whilst a large number of the actions sit with the Council, there are also initiatives that require support from partners, businesses and communities to reflect the citywide action required. The Action Plan will remain a live document and be used to monitor progress and performance to make sure that the actions being taken are delivering against our goals.
- 1.16 We recognise that there is a huge amount to do, and it is important to be aspirational but practical about what can be achieved. We will work hard to raise finance, engage partners and work with communities and organisations across the city to help remove barriers, identify opportunities and make this happen. We must also ensure we consider the risks and impacts of activities and take collective action to deliver a just transition as part this.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. **Option 1 – Not recommended – Do nothing** – This option is not the recommended option. The UK Government passed legislation in 2019 to committing to reducing greenhouse gases, achieving net zero, by 2050 and Coventry must help contribute towards this goal.
- 2.2. **Option 2 – Recommended – Approve the Climate Change Strategy 2024 - 2030**
The Climate Change Strategy is the Council's direct response to the One Coventry priority 'Tackling the Causes and Consequences of Climate Change'. It is recommended that Coventry approve the Strategy to ensure the city can lead environmental change and create an improved quality of life for all by creating a greener, cleaner city.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. The Council launched its draft Climate Change Strategy in February 2023 for public consultation, which ran until early July. The consultation sought to understand the views of the people of Coventry on the pathways and key themes within them, to identify which issues are most important to people to help influence the final version of the Strategy and accompanying Climate Change Action Plan.

- 3.2. It was important to the Council to help make the consultation as accessible and wide reaching as possible across the city, therefore the engagement was conducted offering a range of different options for people to participate, with sessions held in person including drop ins and events, online or in meetings in their communities, alongside promotion on social media and in the press.
- 3.3. Data and feedback were captured via a survey on the Council's Let's Talk Platform, alongside more detailed surveys used during focused pathway group sessions, alongside email and letter correspondence. Comments were also captured from public drop-in sessions held at libraries and shopping centres, alongside events including Godiva and Motofest.
- 3.4. There were 1,421 people or organisations engaged in the consultation which took place face to face at various drop ins, events and focus groups, via online meetings, webinars and online surveys. Over 500 written responses were received, with over 1,856 comments from individuals and representatives of organisations providing feedback on the Strategy. We will continue involve and work with local people in our plans going forward to. raise awareness and encourage positive action to be taken.
- 3.5. The majority of the respondents that took part in this survey were between 35-64 years, proportionally larger than the 2021 Census figure of 36% of the Coventry population aged between 35-64 years old. Only 4.5% of respondents were aged 24 and under, again much lower than the Census figure of 15% of the population aged between 16-24 years old.
- 3.6. Of respondents that took part in the survey, 71.5% identify as 'White British', which is proportionally higher than Coventry's total 'White British' population of 66.6%. Responses from Asian groups which make up 16.3% of the city's total population only make up 4.3% of surveys received. This illustrates that the profile of respondents doesn't fully reflect the diversity of the city. Responses were received from all wards across the city.
- 3.7. The majority of respondents (81%) consider the issues around climate change and sustainability to be 'very important' or 'fairly important'. 19% of those that engaged felt it was 'not very important' or 'not important at all'. This is similar to the national picture.
- 3.8. Overall themes in responses included a call for the Strategy to be more ambitious and be clearer on commitments, targets and actions. Communications and engagement was also something people felt strongly about; this is a complex area and it's important that communications are clear and accessible. Community engagement is key to behaviour change, this will only be possible working with communities to find solutions and ways to empower them to take action, rather than actions being 'done to them'.
- 3.9. There wasn't consistent agreement over which aspects people feel are the most important when it comes to tackling climate change, which demonstrates the complexity of what it means to people and the issues they consider to be the most important. The most common responses included taking action to 'ensure a positive future for the next generation' and most responses related to the 'fairer green pathway', related to inequalities, pollution, lack of access to green space and jobs. Nature based interventions also appear to be an important aspect for local people, followed by climate

resilience. People were also keen to find ways to make recycling and reuse easier, to reduce waste.

- 3.10. Following the consultation process, the draft Strategy has been updated to reflect as much of the feedback as possible. This has then been reviewed by partners on the Climate Change Board and pathway groups to help shape the Strategy and Action Plan, which has involved workshops and meetings to feed into the process.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The Climate Change Strategy period is 2024-2030 and will be launched upon approval of this report. Updates related to the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be shared at future Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings as appropriate.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

- 5.2. This report does not request any additional resources. The Strategy has big ambitions and Coventry will need to find significant funds to deliver our vision. The cost of doing nothing will be far higher. Funding for individual projects and or the delivery of the next phase(s) will be brought back to Cabinet or Council as appropriate subject to robust business case, where such decision is required under the Council's Constitution.
- 5.3. The Council has been successful in attracting significant grant funding to support schemes such as domestic retrofit, electric buses, electric charging points and cycle infrastructure and will continue to work in partnership to attract funding into the city, with new opportunities coming through the WMCA Devolution Deal. We recognise that the level of investment needed isn't going to be funded solely from the public purse and are taking more innovative approaches to attracting private investment into the city, through things like our Strategic Energy Partnership to decarbonise the city, and partnership projects with organisations involved in the Climate Change Board and Pathway Group members to develop our local circular economy and developing a natural capital programme for the city to attract funding.
- 5.4. No additional funding is sought at this stage to support delivery. The Climate Change and Sustainability Team (10 FTEs) are funded from a mix of core budget and grant funding. Note that further funding will be required to replace existing grant funding from 2025/26 to sustain the team working to deliver this Strategy, which needs to be identified. It's proposed that the structure of the team is reviewed to ensure that the service has the right skills and capacity to deliver within available budgets.
- 5.5. There is an overarching risk in relation to lack of finance for resources being a barrier to delivering what we aspire to achieve. This is particularly significant in the current financial climate, however, it is incumbent on the Council to find creative and innovative ways to build capacity, which includes the Climate Change Board and

pathway groups, the Strategic Energy Partnership with EON and working more closely with community groups to help support delivery.

5.6. Legal Implications

- 5.7. Delivery of projects within the Climate Change Action Plan will help support the Council meet its legal carbon reduction targets (net zero by 2050, with an interim target of 68% by 2030).
- 5.8. It will also support the increasing legislative requirements for local areas around energy infrastructure, including local area energy planning, the introduction of heat networks and support for increasing the amount of homes in the city to become more energy efficient.
- 5.9. The Climate Change Strategy will help to inform local policy making decisions, such as the Local Plan Review which is seeking an uplift in the energy efficiency of new builds in the city, and installation of renewables where viable.
- 5.10. The Strategy also supports the statutory obligations on the local authority to support local nature recovery through mechanisms such as biodiversity net gain.
- 5.11. While the pipeline of schemes set out in the Action Plan represents the Council's current intentions, this is subject to change and each individual scheme will still be subject to public consultation and political approval, in accordance with the Council's normal governance arrangements.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

- 6.2. The Climate Change Strategy contributes to all three core aims of the One Coventry Plan. The core focus is achieving net zero which contributes directly to tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.
 - The strategy will support economic growth through the city's ambitions to lead the green industrial revolution and grow the green economy, helping to attract businesses to the city, creating new jobs and providing new skills to benefit local people and businesses. This will include safeguarding the future employment of those currently involved in fossil fuel dependent activities being phased out with reskilling. It also supports making the city more resilient to the impacts of climate change, helping our preparedness to deal with extreme weather events and reduce shocks to the local economy.

- The Strategy in accordance with the Marmot Principles will improve outcomes and tackle inequalities within our communities by focussing on people who have the lowest incomes and facing the greatest challenges these environmental changes present, such as higher fuel bills and food prices.

In addition to the above, the Climate Change Strategy will help support the Council as a partner and enabler. We will need to work in partnership to achieve the outcomes of the Climate Change Strategy.

6.3. How is risk being managed?

The Strategy and Action Plan are managed by the city's Climate Change and Sustainability Team, who will work closely with teams and partner organisations on the delivery of projects to ensure the risk profile of individual actions is managed robustly. The Climate Change Board and pathway groups will provide an overall assurance and monitoring role, which will include reviewing risks and opportunities. Climate Change and risks around adaptation and resilience are already captured on the Council's corporate risk register. Taking decisive action on climate change will increase preparedness and reduce the city's exposure to risks associated with climate change and moving towards a green economy.

6.4. What is the impact on the organisation?

There is already a dedicated Climate Change and Sustainability team who will oversee delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan, however, to deliver on our ambitions will require support from the whole organisation. The team are already working with services across the Council including Transport, Environmental Services, Energy, Estates, Education, Public Health, Procurement, Planning, Legal, Finance, Communications and Engagement and will continue to build on this. Training will be key to help build knowledge and capacity amongst staff.

The independent Climate Change Board is facilitated by the City Council in its leadership role, helping to secure commitments and lever resources through its partner organisations.

6.5. Equalities / EIA?

An EIA was completed on 12 June 2023. This EIA aims to ensure the strategy, and the more detailed interventions and actions that will result from its roll out (when officially adopted), eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups.

In addition to the EIA, the work being developed around creating a 'just transition' will support delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan, and help to address existing inequalities and inequities in the city, including food and fuel poverty, air quality, access to green space and support with skills to access green jobs.

6.6. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

The Climate Change Strategy is the key driver for the Council to achieve net zero ambitions and tackle the causes and consequences of climate change. This document supports the One Coventry Plan and sets out the city's ambitions for the journey ahead.

6.7. Implications for partner organisations?

The Strategy provides a foundation for how we will work with partners, businesses, organisations and communities to address climate change. It recognises that the Council has a role as leader and enabler but recognises that we can't do this alone and citywide action is needed. The Council will need to work with other organisations, communities, residents, businesses, schools, colleges and universities to help to work towards a greener and cleaner city. This will require building on the work we are doing with existing partners through the Climate Change Board, Strategic Energy Partnership and through existing projects, and also building new partnerships to maximise opportunities for partnership working and help deliver the goals of the Strategy.

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