

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

ENGAGEMENT ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022-2026) as part of the 12-week public consultation period. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. P. Posnett CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- i) A concern was raised regarding the installation of new gas boilers under the Warm Home Grants. Officers agreed to clarify the matter with Public Health and provide more information on the programme, which was funded by Government.
- ii) Arising from a query on the lack of reference to wood burning stoves, Members were informed that the Strategic Plan was high-level and addressed such issues with an action that looked to influence communities to reduce their carbon emissions. Further detail on the Council's approach and the specific behaviours which it would aim to encourage within communities would be outlined in relevant supporting strategies underpinning the Strategic Plan, such as the Council's Environment Strategy.
- iii) In relation to the commitment to 'support environmentally sustainable farming practices that support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and the condition of natural capital features', Members queried how the Council would look to encourage this, noting the impact ploughing had on the release of carbon dioxide. The Lead Member for the Green Agenda stated that farms leased by the Council were tenanted, and that the Authority had a legal obligation to uphold its contracts. Whilst it was not considered appropriate to tell farmers how to farm on the land they leased, members were assured that officers in Corporate Property worked with farm tenants to consider their sustainable practices and how they could support the Council's Action for Nature plan.

- iv) Officers offered to meet with community groups and partners to go through the Strategic Plan if they wished. Furthermore, the online survey offered options which allowed responders to only answer on certain aspects which were of particular interest to them thereby minimising the burden on members of the public and encourage responses. Officers offered to develop an Executive Summary of the Plan.
- v) In response to a query about missing figures in section 5.4 of the sub-outcome to ensure the 'economy and infrastructure are low carbon and environmentally friendly', Members were informed that the figures related to the fact that while commercial CO2 emissions and industrial emissions had reduced significantly, transport emissions had not. Officers would add the missing figures to the Plan.
- vi) Regarding quality of water in waterways within the county, Members felt it was important that these were highlighted within the Plan, to ensure they were protected and looked after. It was noted the responsibility for water quality however rest with other agencies such as Environment Agency. Officers advised that they would aim to highlight the issue of waterway quality in the Plan.
- vii) The Council had a road map to achieve carbon neutrality from its own emissions by 2030, and wider Leicestershire emissions by 2045. Carbon neutrality meant that any CO2 released into the atmosphere was balanced by an equivalent amount being removed through initiatives such as tree planting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).