

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

A GREEN FUTURE: OUR PLAN FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 In January 2022, the council adopted 'A Green Future' as its policy to deliver the positive change we need to create a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable North Lincolnshire.

1.2 It is centred on a vision that:

North Lincolnshire is a 'net zero' area. The environment is integral to all our decision making and everyone has a positive relationship with the environment. We all play our part in making our area a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit.

1.3 This report provides an update on the impact and outcomes of this policy so far.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Nationally, the Environment Bill, A Green Future: A 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment and The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution sets out an approach to deliver the government's environment vision. Government asserts that local government has an essential role to play responding to challenges at a local level, leading specific and locally appropriate responses and driving innovation. This all comes together as we build a better future, support green jobs and accelerate our path to net zero.

- 2.2 To drive good decision making and action in the context of organisation and place, the council has adopted 'A Green Future' as its policy to deliver the positive change we need to create a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable North Lincolnshire.
- 2.3 The council has mandated a programme, also called 'A Green Future', to ensure effective implementation of the policy. The blueprint for this programme is that **'we will all work together to protect our environment, end our contribution to climate change and all benefit from the wealth of the natural and economic opportunities we have in North Lincolnshire'**. The political lead is through the Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Planning and the Deputy Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring the impact and outcomes of this programme are achieved.
- 2.4 A Green Future policy is centred around four themes and eight aims. Taken together, achievement of these aims will ensure that every day we will leave the environment in a better state than we found it. They will ensure our environment is safe, self-sustaining and provides opportunities for everyone.
- 2.5 Significant progress has been made over the last year and more is expected. This progress is noted below.
- 2.6 A critical action is the council decarbonising and offsetting our own residual emissions. To this end, working with the Carbon Trust we have completed rebaselining our greenhouse gas emissions, in accordance with the internationally recognised Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Building on the greenhouse gas emissions reduction from our buildings of over 18% since 2018, we know what we need to do to get to net zero by 2030. Consequently, we have developed an Action Plan that sets out the interventions, programme and revenue/capital implications required to achieve this ambition. Opportunities for internal and external funding are currently being explored.
- 2.7 Through the Towns Fund we have attracted £2.7m to provide local schools with solar panels on their roofs, reducing their energy bills by up to 65%. The scheme is being managed by North Lincolnshire Community Energy and a total of 30 local schools and colleges are in line to have solar panels fitted. A community share offer is about to be launched, prioritising local people, which will help fund further installations on schools and other community buildings.
- 2.8 North Lincolnshire Council has set a target to plant 172,000 trees, one for every resident of North Lincolnshire. We are well on the way to achieving this target, with 99,347 trees planted so far. As part of the Northern Forest project we have achieved this by working with volunteer groups such as TCV Hull, The Rotary Club of Scunthorpe Pentagon, The Rotary Club of Scunthorpe, The Friends of Bottesford

Beck, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Brigg and Scunthorpe Area Group and Catzero Grimsby.

2.9 Proposals for improvements to how the council makes decisions are being finalised. This will ensure all decisions, business cases, procurement activity, service reviews and amendments to current policies or working practices are deliberately and consciously consistent with A Green Future. Significantly in terms of disclosure and transparency, this will also highlight by exception where they may not be consistent with A Green Future.

2.10 Our Local Plan Submission to the Secretary of State sets the vision and objectives for the future development of the area. Included within this is the basis for safeguarding the environment and adapting to climate change. This means that we will:

- prevent development proposals that would not protect the distinctive character and quality of the landscape,
- protect, manage and enhance natural capital,
- require development to demonstrate that it will deliver a minimum 10% measurable biodiversity net gain,
- maximise renewable energy capacity and
- protect and increase important open space.

We are also working with Natural England in the Isle of Axholme and Ancholme Valley areas to get these areas recognised for their outstanding natural beauty. We plan to achieve this by both expanding and creating new Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's). This will:

- make a significant contribution to enhancing the wellbeing of the population,
- enable people to connect with exceptionally high-quality natural capital,
- protect and enhance the quality of the landscape,
- ensure future development is managed appropriately and
- contribute significantly to the economic development of North Lincolnshire and the wider region, recognising and reinforcing the quality of place in North Lincolnshire.

2.11 Within industry, the Humber Energy Board Vision 2030 has been launched. This lays the pathway to delivery of significant investment across the Humber region in ground-breaking net zero technologies. This will help accelerate our progress towards North Lincolnshire being net-zero by 2050. Additionally, businesses have recently been urged to apply for grants to make their businesses more sustainable, using Levelling Up funding from the government. 61 applications were received with each successful application seeing local businesses

making a pledge that showcases their #OneGreenFuture ambition, achievements and intent.

- 2.12 Serious action is being taken to tackle envirocrime. Enforcement activity is targeting littering and dog fouling, with the number of fixed penalty notices issued recently reaching 200. Other areas of enforcement are energy labelling on domestic white goods, plastic bag legislation, energy ratings for the sale of houses and the sale of plastic straws. And on fly tipping, we have set up cameras in various locations and we will be using footage from these when we take action against the offenders.
- 2.13 Implementation of our Litter Plan is ensuring our public spaces are kept clean. We are working with the voluntary sector and communities to encourage behaviour change and our volunteering litter picking groups have been strengthened across North Lincolnshire. We are supporting the excellent work of the many litter picking groups across the county and we are keen to support many more.
- 2.14 We are encouraging recycling, with every household in North Lincolnshire having the option of exchanging their brown bin with a new free home composter. This will give them the opportunity to focus their efforts on recycling a greater range of household waste rather than throwing food waste away. A ten litre bag of compost can cost between £3 and £4 so residents could save up to £115 on average by making their own, using a 330 litre bin. So far, 960 households have swapped bins, which is reducing by hundreds of kg's the amount of waste being collected which could save over 1,000 tonnes of carbon every year. On a wider note, targets set out by the government aim for England to achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 50% by 2020, with this target increase to 55% by 2025. North Lincolnshire's recycling rate for 2021/22 was 51.25% and we are well placed to meet the target of 55% by 2025. Less than 1% of our waste goes to landfill.
- 2.15 Project plans are being developed to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits in North Lincolnshire. These will also help the public, private and voluntary sectors work more effectively together for nature's recovery. Collective effort will be focussed where it will have most environmental benefit and these projects will be key components in delivering our Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Alongside this, through partnership working we have begun to identify landowners willing to deliver biodiversity offsets, and to build trading mechanisms to make biodiversity offsetting deliverable.

Wildflower meadow areas have been created and are being managed in parks and open spaces and on gateway roadside verges, such as Mortal Ash Hill. Some of our Local Nature Reserves have established grassland areas that are also managed as lowland meadow priority habitat. These include Waters' Edge and Ashbyville. Various rural road verges have been identified as having natural plant communities that

are worthy of management as meadows, through hay cutting and removal of arisings. We have also identified opportunities for hedge planting, including stretches of species-rich mixed native hedgerow at Winterton Allotments and the new Brigg Allotments. These rural hedgerows have the potential for carbon sequestration.

- 2.16 The whole of North Lincolnshire is showcasing our one council #OneGreenFuture ambition, achievements and intent. This includes an area on the councils website where around 100 residents, businesses, the voluntary sector and community/interest groups are sharing their #OneGreenFuture pledges.
- 2.17 The quality of our parks has been recognised, with Central Park, Kingsway Gardens, Sheffield Park, Woodlands Crematorium and Baysgarth Park having Green Flag accreditation, with a further two accreditations expected soon. We are actively supporting the work of the Friends of Jubilee Park, Friends of Sheffield Park, Warley Road Residents Group, Friends of Barton Parks and Bottesford Beck 'Friends Of' group. More 'Friends Of' groups are in the pipeline and many volunteers regularly join us to help ensure our Local Nature Reserve (LNR) network is well managed and accessible for everyone to enjoy. Examples of recent projects completed are:
- Axholme Line Haxey LNR- scrub clearance, access improvements and wooden sculpture.
 - Frodingham LNR- replacement Boardwalk
- 2.18 North Lincolnshire Council has attracted over £4.6m in government funding from the Green Homes Grant (GHG). To date 236 homes have benefited from energy efficiency schemes funded by the GHG. The energy efficiency of even more homes will be improved when the next funding tranche of approximately £2m becomes available in April 2023.
- 2.19 We now have a draft Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Delivery Plan 2023 – 2030, which sets out a long-term approach and continued commitment by the Council to support the development of the local EV market. This will ensure that access to charging infrastructure is not a barrier to people using electric vehicles. The plan addresses the transition of road transport within North Lincolnshire away from fossil fuels, both now and throughout the next decade. We are also considering other non-carbon fuel sources. This plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains relevant whilst we are still in the early stages of adopting electric vehicles. Over the next 7 years this will achieve:
- Increased utilization of zero-emission vehicles.
 - Reduced carbon emissions and other toxic by-products from transport.
 - Reduced inequality in access to charging infrastructure.
 - Reduced noise pollution.

All of this is complemented by the Council's own ambitious plans to decarbonise its own fleet – North Lincolnshire Council should soon be adding to its existing fleet of renewable fuelled vehicles that support critical front line services.

- 2.20 Plans are in place for improved cycle routes in Scunthorpe, with others in the design stage that will be completed in future years. Funding totalling £500k is allocated for these and we are investigating how we can most effectively join up existing routes. These will enable people to travel around North Lincolnshire safely using cycles – and with zero carbon emissions. Barton upon Humber is set to receive almost £20m from the Government's latest round of Levelling-Up funding, some of which will fund almost nine miles of new cycle routes. The cycleways and footpaths will connect homes, schools, shopping areas, the railway and bus station and jobs. The move is designed to encourage more active lifestyles, reduce carbon emissions, and make travelling around the town easier and safer.
- 2.21 We continue to review how we collect data to ensure our reporting of scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (and our plan to get to net zero) is appropriately robust and driven by good data and insight.
- 2.22 To build collective and common understanding and purpose, cross council mandatory digital training is now being finalised and this will be rolled out in coming weeks. This will help everyone understand what A Green Future is and how everyone can play their part. It will also feature Carbon Literacy training, supported by the Local Government Association. This has potential for wider resident and business use.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To note the impact and outcomes that A Green Future has, and will continue to, achieve to create a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable North Lincolnshire.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 'A Green Future' is ensuring that we use our decision making, influencing and direct actions to best support everyone to play their part in achieving the best environmental outcomes for North Lincolnshire. This is critical if we are all to work to the same environmental outcomes, take responsibility for achieving those outcomes and are enabled to take positive action on the environment.
- 4.2 'A Green Future' takes an outcome-based approach to achieving net zero, decarbonisation, economic prosperity, environmental protection

and enhancement and personal wellbeing. 'A Green Future' is our plan to deliver the positive change we need, centred around 8 key aims:

Aim 1: By 2030, North Lincolnshire Council will achieve 'net zero' and we will end the council's contribution to global warming.

Aim 2: Clean Growth - net zero industry and commerce and good air quality.

Aim 3: The shift to net zero embeds decarbonisation in our economic growth. We use decarbonisation as the foundation of our future prosperity.

Aim 4: Net zero living is easy and accessible. It benefits the environment and improves peoples' lives.

Aim 5: Resources are used more efficiently. The amount of waste North Lincolnshire produces is minimised.

Aim 6: Everyone is connected with our environment. We enhance and protect it.

Aim 7: Everyone has a stake in our environment and everyone can feel the benefit.

Aim 8: A Network to achieve our vision for 'A Green Future'

5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

5.1 'A Green Future' guides our decision making, influencing and direct actions to ensure maximum environmental benefits and wellbeing. It contributes significantly to ensuring legal/statutory compliance.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 'A Green Future' is by its very nature inclusive – everybody must play their part if we are to achieve our vision for 'A Green Future'. Aim 8 - **A Network to achieve our vision for 'A Green Future'** is ensuring everyone is able to have a voice in this.

6.2 'A Green Future' is driven by the Council Plan. It takes an outcome focused approach to making our area a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit. Key in this is:

- We will end our contribution to global warming
This help will keep North Lincolnshire safe
- We are protecting our places and spaces and helping people to make the most of them
This will help keep North Lincolnshire well
- We are making sure we grow in a sustainable way

This will help keep North Lincolnshire prosperous

- We are bringing people together to make North Lincolnshire the best it can be

This will help keep North Lincolnshire connected

- 6.3 A Green Future is delivering on goals of sustainable, commercial, enabling and progressive, as set out below.

Environmentally sustainable – We increase, enhance and protect a range of habitats across North Lincolnshire to support carbon capture and biodiversity. Every day, we leave the environment in a better state than we find it. Our environment is safe, self-sustaining and provides opportunities for everyone.

Financially sustainable – We will make the most of the opportunities that tackling climate change presents to further strengthen and grow our local economy. Clean growth is at the heart of our area wide boost in productivity. Improved skills and good job creation increase earning power. Economic growth is decoupled from carbon emissions.

Enabling – We achieve our shared vision as a Network. Residents, businesses, the public sector and non-profit organisations take responsibility and are enabled to take positive action on the environment.

Progressive – positive environmental change happens, now and for future generations.

A Green Future is ensuring we organise how we do business and take positive action to address the climate and environment related challenges we face – locally, nationally and internationally.

- 6.5 A Green Future is providing significant assurance that the council is taking action so that it will deliver on the A Green Future policy intent within clear timeframes. This assurance is being provided by 'Project/Workstream Healthchecks'. They provide a proportionate review of:

- Project outputs
- Capabilities created
- Specific environmental outcomes and benefits
- Council plan outcome links
- Means of measurement/performance management
- Project governance including risk

An Internal Audit report has been completed on A Green Future, with no significant issues identified.

- 6.6 There are no Crime and Disorder Act 1998 implications.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 No adverse impacts have been identified.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 Not applicable.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the organisation and place related impact and outcomes of the Council's 'A Green Future' policy and supporting programme, as set out in paragraph 2 of this report, to create a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable North Lincolnshire be noted.

9.2 That the officers across all areas of the one-council approach involved in these achievements be thanked for their exceptional effort.

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Date: 3 March 2023

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Nil