

# Cabinet report



15 December 2020

## Sustainability Action Plan

Name of Cabinet Member	<b>Councillor Jennifer Wilson-Marklew</b> Cabinet member for Climate and Sustainability
Report sponsor	<b>Stuart Proffitt</b> Director Environment and Property
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	<b>No</b>
Council Plan reference	<b>Section 8 - para 8.1 and 8.3</b>
Wards affected	<b>All wards</b>

## Executive summary

The Milton Keynes Sustainability Strategy 2019 – 2050 sets out our long-term vision to create a world-leading sustainable city which embraces innovation, creates high quality jobs and recognises it has a vital role in tackling the global challenges of climate change. In March 2020 Cabinet approved a first draft Sustainability Action Plan, as well as the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee – Climate Change Task and Finish Group. Cabinet requested that the two sets of actions be drawn together into a combined action plan to ensure an integrated approach.

This update for Cabinet was initially planned for September 2020, but due to COVID-19 priorities was postponed to December 2020. Along with creating a consolidated action list a number of key elements of the plan have been moved forward since March, notably developing a local carbon baseline (for MKC) as the first stage in developing measures to reach carbon neutrality by 2030 and an Energy Prospectus.

The revised Sustainability Strategy Action Plan (Annex A) details the combined set of actions which are identified as short, medium and long term actions. Once the overall plan is approved each will be further developed to understand their full cost and the energy and carbon reduction that can be achieved and then prioritised. Some actions will run concurrently whilst others may not take shape immediately as new technologies and innovations will need to be fully understood and proven in the first instance.

An early consolidation activity has been to produce the Milton Keynes Energy Prospectus (Annex B) and a pathway to zero carbon (Annex C). The Prospectus is also an open invitation to all that Milton Keynes is open for net zero development and investment. It also supports policy objectives in Plan:MK and delivery of the Strategy for 2050 and is an important element in the ambition for MK to become a world leading green city. It outlines how a proposed Energy and Carbon Hub can provide the skills and capacity to deliver the opportunities and projects highlighted in the Prospectus and Action Plan, not only to deliver carbon neutrality against our own activities but also to support wider initiatives and measures for carbon neutrality across the borough. The Prospectus will evolve year on year, as planned measures are delivered and new measures are considered, perhaps because of availability of new funding routes or accelerated advances in technology.

Based on our revised baseline (24,000 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e), the 'pathway to zero' shows our progress on emission reductions to date and the impact that the planned interventions are forecast to make. It also describes further proposals that have the potential to cover the remaining gap to reach net zero.

Compared to many other local authorities, we are in a relatively good place having identified interventions which are both realistic and achievable, and most of which are already progressing, so take us much of the way to carbon neutrality. It does also show us that we must push very hard over the next 2 to 4 years to identify and begin to implement measures to deliver a demonstrable carbon zero position, and ensure that our pathway follows the exponential trajectory (Annex C) as closely as possible. It will not be easy, as there are areas where our direct control and/or influence can be reduced or require a different approach, but this Action Plan and Prospectus provide a strong basis for our work.

Through the Re:Fit programme of work, success has been achieved in attracting funding from phase one of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (GHG LAD) towards two projects in the HRA. This highlights the importance to continue the development of 'shovel ready' projects to ensure the Council is in the optimum position to make future bids against new Government funding

Officers are proposing a yearly update to all Ward Councillors to update on progress, monitor the delivery of benefits and gain support for specific measures, including locally specific activity. The reports will also provide an opportunity to highlight future plans and approaches to securing the collective behavioural change needed across the borough.

## 1. Decision/s to be made

- 1.1 That this update be noted and the action plan (Annex A) be approved as the starting point for an ambitious implementation programme.
- 1.2 That the progress against the action plan be reported annually to all Ward Councillors.

## 2. Why is the decision needed?

- 2.1 Milton Keynes Council declared a climate change emergency and adopted the Sustainability Strategy 2019-2050 in January 2019.
- 2.2 Having declared the emergency, we should demonstrate the council's civic and climate leadership by becoming carbon neutral and showing residents, organisations and businesses of the borough how they too can work towards carbon neutrality.
- 2.3 The benefits of achieving carbon neutrality are many, including generating renewable energy thereby providing resilience to the nationwide grid; reducing the levels of carbon emissions and therefore improving the air quality and creating circular economies across the borough, which increase the efficient use of resources to reuse materials, use less water and ensure the best use is made of the land.
- 2.4 The Climate Change Task and Finish Group recommendations covered a wide range of actions to be considered, developed and implemented to contribute to achieving the overall carbon reduction target. They have been integrated into the consolidated Action Plan (Annex A).

## 3. Implications of the decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	Y	Procurement	Y
Energy Efficiency	Y	Workforce	Y

### a) Financial implications

There are financial implications in delivering this action plan for revenue income and expenditure and for capital expenditure, but these cannot be assessed at this stage. Each of the proposed actions will require its own business plan and be considered as part of the capital programme (where appropriate) or be assessed as part of the existing revenue budget process. A sum of £250k has been provided to pump prime the overall programme as shown in Annex W of the proposed budget for 2020/21, which will be available for 2021/22. The goal of the energy and carbon hub is to be self-sustaining in 2023/24.

## b) Legal implications

The Council has general powers of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything which an individual can do subject to any limitations. The recommendations proposed within the report, if approved, will facilitate the Council's vision to create a world-leading sustainable city.

## c) Council Plan

Action on climate change and sustainability is one of the key commitments; number 8, of the current Council Plan 2016-2022 and the delivery of the action plan and the case for an energy company are two of the specific elements.

## d) Other implications

As the action plan will touch all citizens in some way a communications plan will be required to engage; advise and inform; and to introduce changes to the citizens at key points in a number of the actions.

Energy efficiency is a key part of becoming carbon neutral so improvements to the insulation of a building, behavioural change in the use of resources and re-use and recycling all need to be addressed.

Procurement of partners, contracts and services will need to be undertaken progression is made to achieve carbon neutrality.

## 4. Timetable for implementation

- 4.1 Once approved by Cabinet the work to deliver the actions will continue. Actions have been split into short, medium and long term but how to prioritise actions within each timescale will be subject to funding, ability to deliver and technological advances.

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## List of annexes

- Annex A – Sustainability Strategy Action Plan 2019 - 2050
- Annex B – Milton Keynes Energy Prospectus
- Annex C – Pathway to Zero

## List of background papers

- Sustainability Strategy 2019-2050
- Cabinet Report 10 March 2020
- Task and Finish Group Report – Cabinet 10 March 2020