

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2023

**CABINET MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR STRATEGY – LEADER OF THE
COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR JONATHAN NUNN**

Report Title **West Northamptonshire Council Emissions Report**

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Appendix A – West Northamptonshire Council Emissions Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. A key commitment of the sustainability project is to publish West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) CO2e emissions levels. This report is intended to update members on progress towards this commitment.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The sustainability project has been ongoing since late 2021, following a commitment at Council in July of that year to recognise a climate emergency. A key driver for the project has been the formation of a cross party sustainability working group, which has been instrumental in setting the direction of the project. The decision was taken early in the project to establish a dedicated sustainability team. Two WNC officers formed the nucleus of the team and a two further project officers were recruited, joining the team in July 2022. Since being established the team has:

- Developed the sustainability strategy and launched Sustainable West Northants, a fresh approach focusing and supporting residents, businesses and organisations on achieving environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- Completed collection of the baseline CO2e emissions data.
- Mapped the Council's activities, services and priorities against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDNs) so everyone can see how they contribute.
- Worked towards embedding a culture of sustainability across the Council.
- Undertaken sustainability workshops with members, directors and assistant directors.
- Signed up to the national UK100 Network to drive forward change and gather best practice.
- Delivered net zero briefings for members.
- Collaborated with housing colleagues to deliver government home energy funding.
- Undertaken significant stakeholder engagement, through events, talks and social media
- Developed a staff sustainability network and new communications channels, including web hub and social media.

2.2 Alongside the launch of the sustainability strategy in March 2022, a pledge was made to achieve net zero Council emissions by 2030. In order to develop a plan for reducing Council emissions, a need was identified for a set of robust baseline CO2e emissions data. The sustainability team have collated baseline emissions data against which reductions can be evidenced. The report sets out the baseline emissions data for the financial year 2021 – 2022, presenting the data in an accessible format suitable for publication.

2.3 Emissions data has been collected for scope 1 and 2 emissions sources and for scope 3 emissions which fall within the financial control boundary. This includes significant outsourced contracts such as highways and waste. Inclusion of scope 3 emissions demonstrates the Council's ambitious commitment, as the Local Government Association (LGA) estimates that only 54% of authorities have included scope 3 emissions. The data is expressed as a figure in tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e) or CO2e, this allows accounting of the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) identified in Kyoto Protocol, including carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), nitrogen trifluoride (NF3) and sulphurhexafluoride (SF6).

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the progress towards the commitment to publish WNC emission levels
- b) Note the commitment to Net Zero Emission Levels

4. Reason for Recommendations

Key reasons for the recommendation: -

- To keep members up to date in relation to the progress towards publishing the CO2e emission levels
- To reaffirm the Council's commitment to Net Zero Emission Levels
- The Council recognises the climate emergency, its importance to residents and impact on their everyday lives;
- The Council has committed to making the emissions data publicly available to keep its communities informed and build credibility with external stakeholders such as Climate Action West Northants (CA-WN)
- Making the data publicly available shows accountability and reinforces the Council's commitment to the 2030 net zero target and will help set the format for work towards the 2045 target
- Local authorities have the ability to influence up to 30% of local emissions sources, publication of the report is evidence of transparency and demonstrates the Council's commitment to lead by example

5. Report Background

5.1 As a Council, we have committed to be net zero by 2030. In order to plan for, deliver, and evidence progress towards this commitment, the Council needs a robust set of baseline emissions data. The sovereign Councils collected emissions data in different ways and to varying levels of detail. Because of this, there was no one data collection methodology which could be adopted. The decision was made through consultation with the cross-party sustainability working group to use the Local Government Association (LGA) Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool (LGA Tool), the LGA tool and associated methodology has been used to calculate the data for the report. The data has been collected from service areas across the Council.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 Through consultation with members of the cross-party working group, the LGA tool was adopted for use in calculating CO2e emissions for the Council. During the consultation a number of emissions calculation options were considered, this included The MacKay Carbon Calculator, The Green House Gas Protocol and BSI PAS 2060.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 There will be no direct financial implications from the publication of the report. As baseline data the report is intended to show our current position with regards to internal CO2e emissions and will be used to inform future emissions monitoring. It is expected that the costs associated with delivery of the net zero target will form part of the WNC core budget setting process.
- 7.1.2 The sustainability team have a dedicated budget of £180k, including salaries, which is used to deliver a broad range of sustainability projects including, CO2e emissions data collection, community engagement, administration of government funding to improve the energy efficiency of residents' homes.
- 7.1.3 In addition to the sustainability team budget, the Council has been successful in a Public Sector Decarbonisation bid, having been awarded £7.075m, the Council will contribute match funding bringing the total fund to £8.039m. This money will be used to update the heating system of 4 rural leisure centres, reducing both running costs and CO2e emissions.
- 7.1.4 There will be other ongoing financial implications from the work to achieve the net zero 2030 target, however it is expected that these costs will be considered as relevant emissions reduction projects are put forward for consideration.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 There are no legal implications from the publication of the report. As baseline data, the reports intended use is to inform and allow monitoring of future emissions reduction work.

7.3 Risk

- 7.3.1 The most significant risk associated with the report is that the Council fails to use the data to plan and deliver its contribution towards a global reduction in emissions. There is a very real need for all organisation to deliver reduction targets if global warming is to be limited to 1.5°C.
- 7.3.2 A further risk is reputational, given our commitments to net zero. Once the Council has set out its baseline emissions data alongside the already public 2030 net zero target there will be significant public expectation that the target will be met. The intention is to publish annual emissions updates which will show evidence of increases or decreases in emissions, the Council risks reputational harm should it fail to make progress and meet its 2030 net zero commitment.

7.4 Consultation

- 7.4.1 Informal consultation has taken place with CA-WN, an established group that is wholly independent from the Council, the report has been shared with CA-WN in full, in addition a joint discussion session was held at which the sustainability manager outlined the purpose of the report along with the methodology used. The contents of the report were then discussed in detail with members of CA-WN able to ask questions. Members of CA-WN have provided a response to the consultation, a statement from which has been included in the report, 'This report represents

a significant achievement, and a strong base for delivering actions to cut emissions. CA-WN looks forward to seeing how it influences the council's decision-making and spending'.

7.4.2 Internal consultation has also taken place through debrief sessions with officers who supplied the data for the emissions calculations, the staff sustainability network and officers in the sustainability group.

7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 Corporate scrutiny has been updated on progress as the net zero project has developed.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 The publication of the report is the first stage in the process of planning for and showing evidence of emissions reductions which are within the Council's financial control. It is generally accepted that local authorities have direct control over 2 – 5 % of local emissions, but they have the ability to have an impact on 30% of local emissions through influence. Through the publication of this report, continued stakeholder engagement and leading emissions reduction efforts by example, the Council has the opportunity to influence residents and business to calculate their emissions and put reduction plans in place. This has the potential to make a significant contribution to both local climate action initiatives and to contribute towards the Government's 2050 net zero target.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 Local communities will see a positive impact from the public reporting of Council emissions. As mentioned in the previous section, many of the emissions reductions needed across West Northamptonshire will be realised through influence. The report will be a key tool in demonstrating the Council's commitment to lead by example. Communities could potentially see a positive impact, for example, through improved air quality from a reduction in the use of fossil fuelled cars and other modes of transport or the retrofit of energy efficiency measures within homes, resulting in lower energy bills. Additionally, if the Council invests in local carbon sequestration projects, there could be an increase in local biodiversity and potential for greater access to green spaces and woodland. It is hoped that efforts to reduce carbon emissions will lead to the development of new employment opportunities as new technologies are introduced along with a new service sector, such as that seen supporting the delivery robots recently introduced around Northampton.

7.8 **Communications**

7.8.1 WNC will be promoting the publication of the report, including news articles, social media and media interviews, to widely communicate the objectives, outcomes and actions it is taking to reduce its own carbon emissions whilst encouraging its communities to do so. These promotions form part of a wider communications and marketing plan being developed for informing and engaging the public around sustainability campaigns and projects in the year ahead.

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 N/A