

Report to Cabinet

Thursday, 25 January 2024

By the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery

DECISION REQUIRED



Not Exempt

Adoption of the District wide Climate Action Strategy

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 23 March 2023, Cabinet approved the draft version of the Climate Action Strategy for consultation and engagement. In the meantime, in June 2023, Council declared a climate and ecological emergency. One way of addressing this is to have a document which gives a framework for collective action on climate change across the district. A Climate Action Strategy would fulfil this purpose.

The consultation and engagement on the draft Strategy took place between June and mid-October and consisted of two online surveys (one for residents and one for businesses), as well as different forms of one-to-one engagement.

The purpose of this report is to give the headlines from the consultation and engagement process, the subsequent changes to the Climate Action Strategy as a result of this, and to seek approval the adoption of this Strategy.

The consultation and engagement confirmed that the draft Strategy reflected the priorities of the local community. The most significant amendment is giving water related issues more prominence. Land Use has been extended to Land use and Water, with a new goal relating to the latter, as well as two new actions. Numerous other changes have been made to incorporate issues that were raised by both residents and businesses. Feedback from residents and businesses on the barriers they face to making changes to tackle climate change will also be used to develop a communications plan for 2024.

Although the Strategy has only been in draft form since March 2023, many actions within the document have been progressed to reflect the urgency of tackling this issue. Ongoing monitoring of the Strategy will take place via an online platform, known as One Planet. Progress updates will be provided to Cabinet annually, with a biennial review of the Strategy. The One Planet platform is also a useful tool to demonstrate how the climate action plans of other organisations, businesses and community groups are contributing to the Climate Action Strategy. This is particularly important as the Council cannot tackle climate change on its own. This concept is a fundamental part of the Strategy. The delivery routes for the Strategy are via Council leadership, partnership working and community wide action.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet is recommended:

- i) To adopt the Climate Action Strategy for the Horsham District as contained in the appendix attached to this report.
- ii) To delegate authority to the Director of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery to update the Climate Action Strategy and make amendments provided that any such changes do not undermine the Climate Action Strategy's core values.
- iii) To note the actions that have been undertaken and to approve the actions that will be required to be undertaken by the Council, as contained in, and in order to give effect to the Climate Action Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) The Climate Action Strategy provides the framework for collective action across the district on climate change, demonstrating Council leadership on this important issue, as well as what actions partnerships and the wider community should be taking to reduce carbon emissions and to adapt to the changing climate.
- ii) This will allow minor amendments to be made to the Strategy as opportunities arise and for the actions in the Strategy to be implemented.

Background Papers

Draft Climate Action Strategy – 23 March 2023

Risk Assessment of the Climate Action Strategy (updated December 2023)

Equalities Impact Assessment for the one-to-one engagement process (November 2023)

Equalities Impact Assessment for the Climate Action Strategy (December 2023)

Wards affected: (All Wards);

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council has set two targets for reducing the emissions from its buildings, fleet, and supply chain. It is making good progress on the approved Carbon Reduction Action Plan (April 2022 to March 2025) towards achieving these targets. This is important in itself and is vital in demonstrating a leadership role in tackling climate change. However, the Council's emissions only represent approximately 1% of the total emissions for the whole district. A Strategy is, therefore, required to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the changing climate.
- 1.2 On 23 March 2023 Cabinet approved a draft Climate Action Strategy for consultation. An extensive consultation and engagement process took place over the summer, aimed at residents and businesses. Whilst this was taking place the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency (June 2023). This reinforces the importance of having a climate change strategy for the district.
- 1.3 This report summarises the outcome of the consultation and engagement process and outlines the amendments to the draft Climate Action Strategy. It seeks Cabinet approval for the final version of the Climate Action Strategy. The Council will not be responsible for all of the actions in the Strategy. There are areas where it has direct responsibility, such as the Local Plan. However, it also has an important leadership role, as well as facilitating partnerships which can deliver action. Overall the Strategy provides a framework for collective action across the district to tackle climate change.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The Council Plan 2023-2027 includes the theme of "Inspiring greener futures". This includes the aim of becoming a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero district by 2050. The Annual Plan for 2023/24 which flows from this states that the Council will adopt the district-wide Climate Action Strategy to enable the Horsham District to become net zero by 2050.

3 Details

The content of the Strategy

- 3.1 The Strategy is a 10-year plan but includes immediate, short, medium, and long term actions. The draft Strategy was produced by a consultancy, Useful Projects. Its content was shaped by input from officers from across the Council, as well as key organisations, such as West Sussex County Council which has responsibility for highways, and transport. The Strategy was also underpinned by an analysis of the carbon emissions for the district. These determined the "carbon hotspots" that the Strategy needed to focus on and shaped the structure of the document. The hotspots in the draft Strategy were: -
 - **transport**, due to a significant number of journeys being by car (higher than the national average due to the largely rural nature of the district);

- **buildings**, due to 82% of the district's buildings being residential and with this sector generating a high amount of carbon emission;
- **energy**, due to the district having a low proportion of energy generated by renewable or low carbon forms of technology. Meaning that there is potential to increase the use of this technology;
- **waste**, this sector generates less carbon emissions than the other "hotspots", however, reducing waste generates direct and indirect carbon savings, as well as other benefits, such as waste materials being used as resources.
- **land use**, due to the district being a carbon sink for agriculture and forestry, as opposed to a net emitter. There are opportunities to increase this carbon sink, whilst also benefiting wildlife and helping to adapt to the changing climate.

3.2 As well as addressing these carbon hotspots, actions on increasing climate resilience were weaved into the draft Strategy. Another important issue is water. Actions relating to reducing water consumption and flooding, as well as improving water quality are also incorporated into the draft Strategy.

3.3 Underpinning the systems actions are enablers, such as governance structures, policies and plans, finance, and education/behaviour change. Implementing these will ensure that actions under each carbon hotspot or system can be progressed.

3.4 The proposed Strategy is not just for the Council, as it cannot achieve the widespread changes that are required on its own. Action is required by all residents, businesses, and organisations in the district. This is reflected in the way that the Strategy is put together. In terms of delivering the Strategy the actions fall within the following categories: -

- **leadership**, where the Council has more responsibility and influence and will take the lead on initiatives;
- **partnership**, where other partners, such as West Sussex County Council, will need to take the lead or work in partnership with the district Council;
- **community**, where the wider community, including residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups and other organisations have a key role to play.

The consultation and engagement process

3.5 The Council was conscious that the production of the draft Strategy did not involve input from local residents or businesses. This is important in terms of the credibility of the Strategy and also to obtain buy-in for what it is seeking to achieve.

3.6 There were three different strands to the consultation and engagement process. An online survey was produced for residents and groups. This was open from June to the end of August 2023. A slimmed down online survey was also produced to gain the views of businesses. This was open for six weeks from the beginning of September. A comprehensive promotion and communication plan accompanied both online surveys. Both received good responses. Based on previous resident surveys a target of 500 responses was set for the climate survey aimed at residents. A total of 753 were received. A target of 50 responses was set for the

business (this was from advice from the Economic Development team). A total of 53 responses were received from a range of sectors, and size of business.

- 3.7 Survey responses can be “self-selecting”, in that either those that are very interested in the issue or those that are opposed to it are likely to complete them. To counter this a series of one-to-one engagement events were held which were run by a consultancy. This provided qualitative rather than quantitative information. The engagement also sought to fill in some gaps from responses from the survey, such as working families and particular age groups. For example, there was an under representation of young people, under 30 years old. The engagement took different forms, from attending the Youth Forum, to interviews with selected businesses, online sessions and holding “pop-up events” to talk to members of the public at Park Run in Horsham, and at a market in Henfield.
- 3.8 The aim of the consultation and engagement was to determine if the Strategy contained the right priorities and actions, how important these were to residents and businesses and whether there were any gaps. It should be noted that respondents to the survey and involved in the engagement events did not have to read the Strategy before being involved in the process. Both the surveys and the engagement process were used to gain information on what actions residents and businesses were already taking, and what barriers they faced. This information will be used to help shape the advice and communications that the Council and its partners, can provide on specific climate related issues.
- 3.9 The main feedback was that overall the Strategy contains the right priorities and there are not any significant gaps. However, residents and businesses highlighted the importance of reducing water consumption, as well as flood risk with a changing climate. Some respondents also mentioned the need to improve water quality. These issues are included in the Strategy but given how often this was raised this issue needs more prominence in the document.
- 3.10 The most important issue for residents was Transport, specifically the need to expand the provision of local public transport, as well as walking and cycling infrastructure. This was followed by Land Use, specifically the need to support projects that make improvements for wildlife and join up habitats. The threat of new development to wildlife and greenspace was mentioned by residents. The relative importance of water as an issue cannot be gauged from the consultation, as the draft Strategy did not include this as a specific issue. Respondents were only asked to rank subjects with separate headings in the Strategy. However, free text areas for comment allowed them to give additional feedback.
- 3.11 In terms of feedback from business, again the survey did not suggest that there were significant gaps in the Strategy. Most were interested in taking more action on climate change, and they identified the following as climate related threats to their organisation: -
- inflated cost of energy, resources, and transportation;
 - supply chain complications/need to localise;
 - increasing insurance premiums;
 - reduced demand for products and services;
 - water availability.

The only issue listed above that requires a change to the Strategy relates to water. The other points are useful to shape how the Council engages with, and supports, businesses in relation to climate change.

- 3.12 Businesses were asked about events and support that are included in the Strategy. This includes being involved in a sustainability pop-up or roadshow and having a presence at a Green Skills Jobs Fair. In both cases the majority were interested which suggests these should be retained in the Strategy. In terms of support, 76% were either somewhat or very interested in joining a virtual climate network. Again this is an action in the Strategy. Support in developing sustainability plans and targets were mentioned.
- 3.13 The one-to-one engagement has provided a wealth of information for future communications and engagement. Overall no significant changes to the Strategy are required from this process. As with the resident survey water related issues were mentioned, and in terms of ranking the priorities and actions, the same top themes emerged as with the survey. Namely that Transport and Land Use are the priority areas. The importance of reducing carbon emissions from buildings was not identified as a high priority. This is a concern given that these represent over half of the carbon emissions for the district.
- 3.14 The main gaps were: -
- No mention of diet/meat consumption;
 - Engagement/behaviour change campaign for young people;
 - Carbon sequestration and land-use alternatives e.g. forestry;
 - Develop a network where businesses could share their waste;
 - Business wants support to understand fuel options for larger vehicles.
- 3.15 The consultancy that carried out the one-to-one engagement made some suggestions for changes to the Strategy, these mostly related to changes in emphasis or timescales for implementation. These are summarised in an appendix to this report, along with a response to the suggested change.

Proposed amendments to the draft Strategy.

- 3.16 Two versions of the final Strategy have been produced (the same approach was taken with the draft). One contains more detail, such as ideas for implementation which will be used by officers. The other is a more concise, public facing document which gives a high level view of the actions in the Strategy, timescales for implementation, and the delivery route (leadership, partnership, and community). Both have been updated in light of the comments received. As some of the comments and suggestions related to points of detail, these have resulted in changes to the longer more detailed document. The amended short document is appended to this report and will be uploaded to the Council's website.
- 3.17 Although climate related water issues are woven into the Strategy the feedback from residents and business on this issue suggests that actions on water consumption, water quality and flooding should be given more prominence. The section on Land Use has, therefore, been amended to "Land Use and Water" to reflect this concern. There were already actions relating to reducing water consumption in the Buildings section and flooding in the Land Use section.

However, a new goal and two new actions have been added to the expanded Land Use and Water section. The new goal reads as follows: -

- “To reduce water consumption across the district to support the recovery of watercourse ecosystems, and help to improve resilience to drought, as well as reducing flood risk and reversing the decline in water quality in rivers and streams.”

- 3.18 The two new actions are set out below and will need to be delivered through partnership and community action. Taken together these actions will not only seek to reduce flooding and water consumption, but combined with other biodiversity actions in the Strategy will contribute to improvements to water quality:
- “Contribute to the development and delivery of County-wide and river catchment adaptation plans and projects” These will contribute to reducing flood risk, increase resilience to drought, as well as improving river water quality” (as an immediate action);
 - “Support projects that reduce area wide water consumption and implement the Sussex North Offsetting Water Strategy” (as a short-term action).
- 3.19 Transport was an issue that residents identified as a priority area for action. This specifically related to the need to improve bus routes and timetables, as well as improved infrastructure for cycling and walking. No changes on this issue have been made to the Strategy, as it is sufficiently covered already. Given the limited control that the Council has on this issue it will predominantly rely on influence and partnership work working with West Sussex County Council, which is the highway authority. However, the Council does view this as an important issue. Encouraging active travel is included in the Council Plan, with an action to create safer routes for cycling and walking. In addition, the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19 includes policies which encourage non car-based journeys, including walking, wheeling and cycling (active travel).
- 3.20 The timescales for implementation on public transport and active travel have not been changed. Collaborating with West Sussex County Council, as the Highway Authority, to improve public transport is already an immediate action under the Bus Service Improvement Plan which was approved in 2021. An additional action has been included recognising the need to encourage car sharing and the use of car pool schemes.
- 3.21 The other issue which residents identified as a priority area for action was Land Use, specifically the importance of natural greenspaces, making improvements for nature and joining up habitats. These actions are already included in the Strategy. However, an action that just related to supporting urban greening has been expanded to improvements to green and blue infrastructure across the district. A reference to updates to the Greenspaces Strategy for Council land has been added.
- 3.22 Related to Land Use was a query from some residents about encouraging the shift to plant-based diets in the Strategy. There is a goal in the Strategy under on Sustainable Food Systems which aims “to create sustainable, low carbon and resilient local food systems”. An associated action has been updated to include local food that is produced using “low carbon farming practices”. There is a balance on this issue, as regenerative farming techniques can sequester more carbon but need, ideally, local markets to sell their produce.

- 3.23 The final land use issue was using alternative land uses, such as forestry, as opposed to agriculture to sequester carbon. One of the goals in the Land Use section refers to capitalising on the district's natural environment to maximise carbon sequestration. An associated action has been updated to include forestry, as well as sustainable and regenerative farming techniques.
- 3.24 Both residents and businesses made comments on the impact of new development, in terms of ensuring that they emit less carbon emissions, incorporate renewable/low carbon technology and use less water, as well as minimising their impact on wildlife. The Climate Action Strategy acknowledges the important role of land use planning in tackling climate change and enhancing and protecting nature. In turn, one of the key objectives of the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19 (which was approved by Council on 11 December 2023) is to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It includes policies to ensure that development proposals contribute to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest and adapt to the changing climate. The policies relating to these issues contain enhanced criteria compared to its predecessor, the Horsham Development Planning Framework. Enhanced sustainability and low carbon impact from new development is an action on the Strategy.
- 3.25 The Local Plan Regulation 19 recognises the pressure for development in the district and contains policies that protect and enhance biodiversity as far as possible. This includes ensuring that all development contributes to nature recovery, and a higher minimum than the national mandatory level of 10% biodiversity net gain. The policies set a minimum 12% biodiversity net gain target. Overall, the Local Plan Regulation 19 reflects the relevant actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Climate Action Strategy.
- 3.25 The consultation and engagement with businesses gained some useful insights on the actions some are already undertaking and where they might want support, advice, and information. Again no gaps were identified in the Strategy, but some updates have been made to the actions, such as including support for all business in transitioning to electric vehicles, and not just taxi companies. This would include advice on low carbon fuels for larger vehicles. An action relating to developing a circular economy has been amended to mention business-to-business support, so that businesses can transfer their waste to a business that could use it as a resource. Changes to the longer Strategy have been made to ensure that delivery considerations relating to business are reflected throughout. This also ensures that some of the support that they requested will be delivered, such as advice on developing sustainability action plans and how to measure carbon emissions.
- 3.26 One of the areas of concern to emerge from the consultation and engagement was that action on carbon emissions from buildings was not identified as a high priority. Retrofitting buildings to improve their energy efficiency is a complex issue, and is undoubtedly hard to tackle for most businesses, households, and other organisations. However, buildings account for over half of the emissions for the district. Investigating an area wide retrofit programme is now a short-term action in the Strategy but an information campaign on this issue can be started in 2024.
- 3.27 The online surveys, and one-to-one engagement highlighted numerous areas where residents and businesses wanted more information and advice. These have been collated and will be used to draw up a communications plan for the next year.

The action in the Strategy which refers to updated accessible online content has been updated to include using new communication channels” to ensure information is spread as widely as possible. The action on launching a comprehensive behaviour change campaign has been expanded to include an information campaign, as a short-term action. In the longer Strategy the delivery consideration includes the need to develop a communication campaign for young people, perhaps working with them to develop it.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 During the consultation and engagement process some of the projects in the Strategy were commenced. These were actions that not likely to change as a result of the engagement process and were important in laying the groundwork for taking action on climate change. The following actions in the Strategy are already underway: -
- establishing a Parish and Neighbourhood Council Climate Action Network;
 - updating the Council’s website pages on climate action (related to the action on updating and creating accessible content to inform, local communities and businesses on actions they can take relating to climate change);
 - investigating climate action training for staff, and community leaders, with the training due to commence early 2024 and spring 2024 respectively;
 - Wilder Horsham District project supports the development of a district wide nature recovery network, as well as regenerative farming techniques;
 - collaborating with West Sussex County Council to build a new electric vehicle charging network;
 - strengthened policies relating to sustainability and low carbon requirements for new development are contained in the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19. However, the final content of the Plan will depend on the outcome of the Local Plan Examination;
 - Reducing food miles by encouraging local food production and consumption through the Sussex Six campaign.
- 4.2 The following immediate and short term steps in the Strategy will commence shortly: -
- Use of the One Planet online platform to demonstrate how organisations and groups are helping to deliver the outcomes of the Strategy;
 - Using the West Sussex Business Hub to share climate advice and information, to be supported by a new video series, other content, and grants (via the Shared Prosperity Fund);
 - Update and strengthen the Councils Green Infrastructure Strategy, as well as the Greenspaces Strategy for Council owned land;
 - A Green Business Strategy will be incorporated in the review of the Economic Development Strategy;
 - Collaboration with West Sussex County Council has commenced on developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the county.
- 4.3 Monitoring of the Strategy will take place via an online platform known as One Planet. This will ensure that cross departmental actions can be monitored and can also show how actions by other organisations contribute to the shared outcomes in

the Strategy. An annual progress report will be produced to give updates on the Strategy, and there will be biannual review of the Strategy to keep this up to date.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 The Climate Action and Nature Recovery Policy Development Advisory Group (PDAG) received a presentation on the outcome of the consultation and engagement process on 15 November 2023. This gave the Group early sight of the potential changes to the Strategy as a result of the consultation. The same PDAG received a presentation on the amendments to the Strategy on 4 January 2024. The Group debated and supported the changes to the draft Strategy in light of the consultation and engagement process. The Group did not recommend any further changes to the Strategy.
- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources were both consulted on this report to ensure legal and financial probity and their comments were incorporated into this report.
- 5.3 The Head of Strategic Planning was consulted on the issues in the report that related to the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 The main course of action was the “do nothing” option. This would mean retaining the draft Action Strategy without any changes. Although the consultation and engagement process over the summer showed a large degree of support for the priorities in the draft Strategy, there were some refinements and changes in emphasis that will make the Strategy stronger. It is important that the final version incorporates these amendments, so that it reflects the outcome of the consultation and engagement. The Strategy is more likely to gain support from the wider community if these amendments are made.
- 6.2 Another course of action would be to not progress with a Climate Action Strategy at all. Some projects and initiatives were already taking place before the draft Strategy was approved by the Council. However, it is important to have a framework for action, not just for the Council but to reinforce partnerships with existing key partners, developing new partnerships, and to galvanise action across the wider community.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 The Council will not be responsible for implementing all of the actions in the Strategy. It is based on the principle that key partners, as well as residents and businesses in the district will need to take action. In some instances, the Council has a leadership role and also needs to facilitate partnership working.
- 7.2 Expenditure of £100k for 2024/25 has been identified for the main projects in the Strategy that will be delivered during the next financial year, as well as implementing aspects of the Council’s Carbon Management Plan. This includes

consultancy advice for establishing a behaviour change campaign and running the campaign, as there is not in-house expertise on this issue, as well as purchasing a database to underpin a retrofit programme and potentially training some community energy champions. This expenditure has been included in the budget for 2024/25.

- 7.3 Beyond this, as projects come forward the budget implications will need to be considered. In addition, innovative forms of finance will be investigated, as it will not be possible for the Council to pay for the larger projects in the Strategy. Furthermore, the Strategy makes it clear that the Council will not be responsible for implementing all of the actions within it. Other organisations will take the lead on some issues.
- 7.4 There are no Human Resources implications from this report, though the delivery of the Strategy will be challenging. There is increased capacity in the Sustainability Team, with the appointment of a Climate Change Support Officer in 2022. This will be further enhanced when a manager is appointed for this small team, to replace the Environment Programme Manager who has been promoted to Head of Sustainability and Greenspaces.

8 Legal Considerations and Implications

- 8.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 forms the basis of the UK's approach to tackling climate change. The Act was amended by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 to change the target for the UK to become net zero carbon by 2050. This is a legislative requirement placed on the Secretary of State. Although the Act does not impose any duties or responsibilities on Local Government in achieving the net zero target, Councils have a crucial role in meeting the national target and helping their communities adapt to climate change.
- 8.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of their functions. In addition, section 1 (4c) of the Localism Act 2011 permits local authorities to do anything they consider is for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 A risk assessment was completed for the draft Strategy. This has been reviewed but did not require significant changes. One medium risk, as well as four high risks were identified. There is a risk to the programme if an adequate governance structure is not established. This will be complex given the number of Departments and external organisations involved in the delivery of the Strategy. This risk can be managed through internal processes, and the use of the One Planet Tool to understand what actions other organisations are taking on this issue. Two of the higher risks relate to Council staff and partners, a lack of capacity and knowledge which could impact on the delivery. Both of these are likely to be an on-going challenge but could be reduced through developing strong partnerships and links to organisations outside of the district.

- 9.2 The third high risk relates to unsuccessful delivery of behaviour change programmes. These will need to underpin many of the actions in the Strategy. However, behaviour change is hard to achieve in the short term. Drawing on expertise and strong partnership working will be vital in managing this risk. The final high risk to the delivery of the Strategy is the range of partners that will be required to deliver it and the complexity of the partnerships. The One Planet tool will assist with managing this, and again, drawing on experience from elsewhere.

10 Procurement implications

- 10.1 There are not any direct procurement implications arising from the adoption of the Climate Action Strategy. Individual projects that the Council leads on within the Strategy will adhere to the Procurement Code.

11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 11.1 The Equality Act 2010 is concerned with discrimination in respect of specific “protected characteristics” being age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires Local Authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.
- 11.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment is a process to ensure that the impact of a new policies or changes to services on those with “protected characteristics” is considered at the outset, and if possible, adjustments are made to take account of the potential impacts. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed by the consultancy, Useful Projects for the one-to-one engagement and one has also been completed during the development of the Climate Action Strategy.
- 11.3 The one-to-one engagement was undertaken because it was recognised that an online survey might not be completed by all ages and others with protected characteristics in the district. A comparison with population data for the district was completed for the online survey and the one-to-one engagement. This demonstrated that there were gaps in those responding to the survey. For example, there was lower representation from certain age groups; mostly younger people and those under the age of 45. There was an overrepresentation of males compared to females, as well as those with disabilities.
- 11.4 The one-to-one engagement sought to fill these gaps. For example, sessions were held with young people (under 18) and events were held where there were likely to be working age people (under 60) and other “hard to reach” groups. This was largely successful. Interviews were also held with “community champions” about the impact of climate change and the transition to net zero on low income, vulnerable

and homeless people. This identified additional support that might be needed during the delivery of the Strategy.

- 11.5 The Assessment for the engagement process suggests further actions that should be completed to mitigate or eradicate negative impacts. This includes continuing to build relationships with hard-to-reach groups and potentially creating focus groups to feed into the delivery of specific actions in the Strategy. It also suggests the need for regular pop-up stakeholder activities to continue engagement with the local community, and comparing those that attend with demographic data to understand if there are sections of the community with protected characteristics that are not being represented.
- 11.6 An Assessment has also been carried out for the Strategy itself. This indicates that the Strategy has the potential to impact on the protected characteristics of disability and age. In some instances this will be positive, such as access to better public transport, for those without a car (often younger and older people). However, it also shows that there is potential for negative impacts. Focusing just on active travel will discriminate against those with a physical disability and potentially older people if this restricts access by all means of transport.
- 11.8 There is no need to change the Strategy. However, Equalities Impact Assessments will be needed when major projects within the Strategy come forward to ensure that any potential negative impacts are mitigated prior to implementation. On-going outreach to all sections of the community will be important throughout the implementation of the Strategy. Encouraging community-based action will have a role to play in this.

12 Environmental Implications

- 12.1 The approved Climate Action Strategy for the District will make a contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions across the area and the necessary adaptations to the changing climate. Many of the actions will also have other benefits, such as improving air quality, improving wildlife and habitats, and reducing the use of resources and the generation of waste.

13 Other Considerations

- 13.1 The consultation and engagement process was fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations and there are no crime and disorder implications from this report.

