

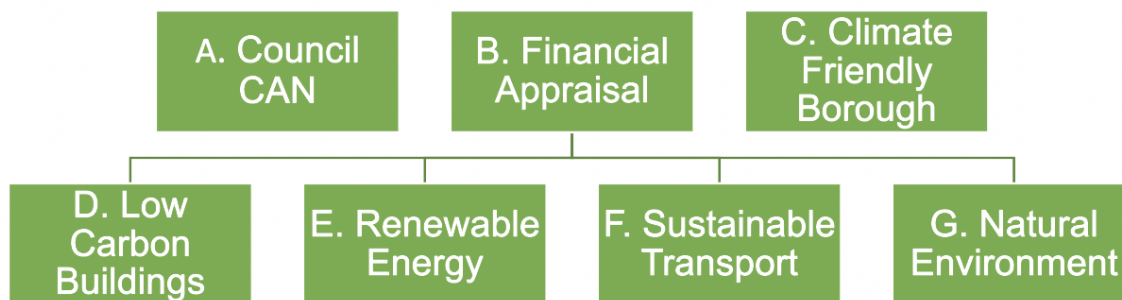
**Climate Action Now (CAN) Progress Report & Further Plans 2021**  
Report of the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport

## 1 SUMMARY / MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1 This report outlines the progress made in line with the Climate Action Now (CAN) Strategy since its launch in 2020 and goes on to propose further plans to enhance the Council's approach to responding to the Climate Emergency.
- 1.2 The CAN Strategy encompasses all areas of Council operations and influence. There are many actions taking place across the Council but due to the nature of the Climate Emergency it is evident that more needs to be done, hence the need for further plans to enhance the CAN Strategy.

## 2 CONTEXT

- 2.1 This is the first CAN Report which will outline progress made against the initial CAN strategy which was adopted by full Council in October 2020 following a cross-party agreement to declare a climate emergency and to adopt the Greater Manchester target of carbon neutrality by 2038.
- 2.2 The CAN strategy consists of 7 key workstreams that reach across the borough to include the council and council partners, businesses, schools, communities and residents. The key workstreams are:



- 2.3 The report will provide a summary of progress against each of the seven workstreams and outline details about further plans to augment the CAN strategy and improve reporting and governance.

### 3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. Positive progress has been made in many areas across the CAN strategy with successes in tree planting, improving Stockport Homes Group housing stock, implementing new ways of working and seeking funding to support the decarbonisation of public buildings.
- 3.2. Over 17,000 trees have been planted with more planned in parks, along the highways, in new woodlands and orchards. Currently over 90% of Council Housing stock has an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C or above and 40% have a renewable energy supply. The Council has almost completed a programme of replacing all its street and decorative lighting with LED bulbs giving an estimated 40% energy saving. £5.6 million pounds from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme has been allocated to improve the Council's own buildings.
- 3.3. The CAN Strategy is ambitious and comprehensive, and work is underway to create governance and monitoring indicators so that we can match these ambitions against the progress being made. We need to know we are making a difference. But the Council recognises it can't solve the climate crisis alone and that there is so much more that the Council, and the rest of the world, must do to make the difference that's needed to avert catastrophic climate change.
- 3.4. The CAN strategy is a working document that will sit alongside everything the Council undertakes, and can be changed, added to or amended as and when necessary.
- 3.5. A new Head of CAN was appointed in September 2021 to accelerate the CAN programme. As we move forward, we will continue to progress all workstreams plus introduce improved monitoring and measuring of the council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It will also be crucial to enhance governance measures around CAN to enable the tracking and reporting of the Council's progression towards Net Zero and provide more clarity on the most material measures to incorporate in to the 7 workstreams.
- 3.6. Some of the key CAN workstreams have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly around engaging residents, schools and communities. The Climate Action Now Summit and launch of the Stockport CAN Funding Scheme on 9th November has provided a platform to bolster and create new climate networks in order to achieve more collaboration.
- 3.7. Collaboration is key in the fight against climate change and the Council recognises it cannot tackle this issue on its own. Collaboration between the Council and Stockport businesses, community groups and residents is vital. Collaboration is at the core of the CAN strategy. The CAN Summit and Funding Scheme will also help accelerate this collaboration amongst the wider community.

- 3.8. To enable Stockport Council to be an effective civic leader, it is essential for us to be an exemplar organisation when it comes to our own operational impacts on climate change. The successful implementation of the CAN Strategy and further plans proposed in this report will help the Council demonstrate its leadership and thereby allow collaboration and influence to happen more confidently. In order to 'talk the talk', we must also 'walk the walk'.

## **4 INTRODUCTION**

- 4.1 In March 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency which recognised that the potential effects of global climate change will be so severe that it must be essential for governments at all levels to work together to reduce GHG emissions in line with the science of limiting global warming to 1.5C. There was a cross-party agreement to set the target for the whole Stockport region to become carbon neutral by 2038, therefore not only committing to reducing greenhouses gases emitted by the Council's operations and services, but by all of Stockport's residents and business.
- 4.2 The Stockport CAN strategy was developed to underpin this agreement and was approved by full council in October 2020.

### **The Global Picture**

- 4.3 Since the council declared a climate emergency, climate action has been at the forefront of the global news cycle and urgency of action has been highlighted most recently at COP26. New commitments around the elimination of fossil fuel use and biodiversity improvements suggest government legislation in these areas could have significant impacts on all areas of Council operations and influence, not least planning, energy and EV charging infrastructure. The Council must be ready to adapt to these changes and build in any strategic frameworks such as the Borough Plan.
- 4.4 The 6<sup>th</sup> United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment report, released in August 2021, clearly warns of dire consequences if rapid action globally is not undertaken to reduce GHG emissions to keep warming under the 1.5-degree benchmark. The science is clear, the consequences of global heating above 1.5C will result in more frequent extreme weather events, rising sea levels and vast swathes of the planet becoming inhabitable for human life. The entire earth's eco-system, on land and in the sea, is also under threat, and just as we rely on the cooperation and collaboration between everyone to tackle the climate crisis, we also rely on the earth's eco-system to ensure human life continues to thrive.

- 4.5 The consequences of global overheating are already being felt worldwide and are intensifying – just this summer we have already seen the devastating effects of climate change. In June 2021, an unprecedented heatwave and ensuing wildfires swept through Canada, where the country's highest ever temperature of 49.6°C was reached and many towns were destroyed by wildfire. Multiple countries have recorded thousands of deaths attributed to the extreme heat. Droughts have hit many countries such as Brazil, which is facing its worst dry spell in 91 years. In July 2021, record rainfall in Germany and Belgium caused rivers to burst their banks, resulting in 190 people losing their lives and millions of pounds of damage to property and infrastructure.
- 4.6 These events are not one-off events, and they are increasingly likely to happen. The IPCC report found that once-in-a-decade heavy rain events are now 1.3 times more likely and are 6.7% wetter compared with 50 years ago. Heatwaves show stronger increases in frequency than all other extreme events: twice-in-a-century heatwaves could happen roughly every six years with 1.5°C of warming.
- 4.7 The advantages of staying under a 1.5°C warming limit are clear both financially and in the loss of human life and essential eco-systems. If emissions aren't reduced soon, globally we could reach over 1.5°C in less than two decades from now.
- 4.8 Avoiding this will require GHG emissions to be cut in half by 2030 and net zero emissions to be reached by 2050. Globally, 25% of all GHG are emitted through electricity production that relies on fossil fuels, around 24% relates to food, agricultural and land-use practices including deforestation, 20% relates to industry producing the goods and services we use, and 15% is transportation.

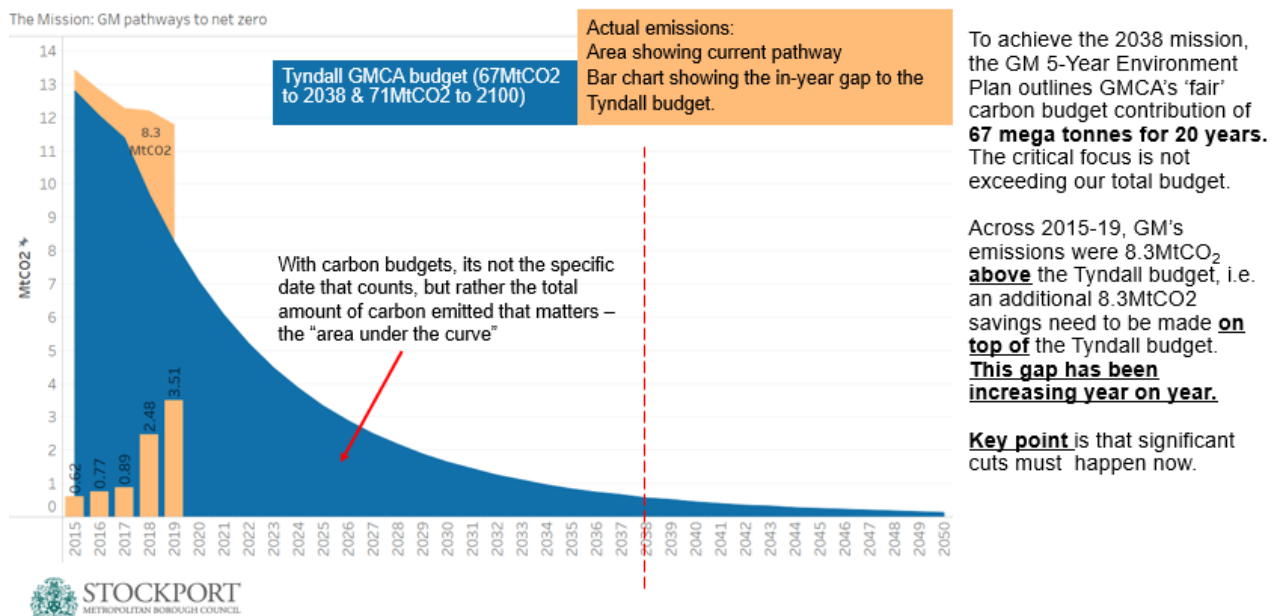
## **The Stockport Picture**

- 4.9 The Stockport CAN strategy sets out our aims to ensure the Stockport region becomes carbon neutral (net zero emissions) by 2038, to support the global goal of keeping warming below 1.5°C in order to reduce the risk and impact of severe climate change.
- 4.10 The CAN strategy not only has cross-party support within the council but is well supported across the borough. We know that preventing climate change is important to our residents, especially young people. 54% of Stockport's young people said that tackling climate change and protecting the environment was their biggest priority (Make Your Mark ballot, 2019).
- 4.11 The Council is ambitious in our plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions here in Stockport. As a borough, approximately 40% of our emissions are from residential buildings, 30% from on-road transport and 20% from industry. The council is directly responsible for 5% of emissions in the borough and we will lead by example in terms of our own commitments. This is essential in order for the Council to play a

leadership role in influencing residents and businesses to reduce their GHG emissions.

4.12 The strategy sets out a vision for how every business, community, school and resident in the borough can play their part in collectively reducing emissions. Support for residents across Stockport will be strengthened by the Stockport CAN Summit held in November 2021, providing residents with opportunities to take more action and enabling increased cross-fertilisation of ideas across the borough. A Stockport CAN Funding Scheme for microprojects and climate networks has been launched. The event celebrated ongoing actions as well as sharing knowledge, experience and motivation right across the borough, to inspire others to action.

4.13 The graph below outlines the GMCA’s 2038 carbon neutrality target in terms of the trajectory for the reduction of GHG emissions needed to keep global warming to less than 1.5C (in blue). This science-based emission reduction target is for all GHG emissions produced across the entire GMCA region. The reality of what is happening with GHG emissions across the GMCA region is juxtaposed (in peach) on top of the science-based trajectory. The surface area (in blue) of the science-based target emissions is essentially the GMCA regions ‘carbon budget’. As you can see, we are significantly ‘over budget’ (as demonstrated by the block graphs) and not decreasing GHG emissions in line with the science. This clearly demonstrates that more action needs to be undertaken rapidly to decrease GHG emissions in line with the science.



## 5 WORKSTREAM A – STOCKPORT COUNCIL CAN

5.1 The first workstream of the CAN strategy is Stockport Council CAN, which aims to put climate action at the heart of everything the Council does. This is essential for

the Council to ensure it is an effective civic leader able to influence and collaborate with local residents and businesses in order to affect change.

- 5.2 CAN is now front and centre for the One Stockport Borough Plan strategy and the emerging Local Plan. Consideration of climate change is built in to all aspects of Council operations and services by explicitly linking strategies with the need to tackle the climate crisis. This will be strengthened further in coming months as the Council will seek to address GHG reduction in line with science-based targets.
- 5.3 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a mandatory element for all Council reports for decision making, investment, or significant new policies and will be in place in the new year.
- 5.4 Stockport Council, as a minimum, will move from being a 'bronze' Carbon Literate Organisation to 'silver' during 2022. This will ensure we deliver our target of 15% staff trained by April 2022. Work is underway for Stockport Council to collaborate with other GMCA local authorities to develop a relevant and bespoke course for use in-house.
- 5.5 All procurement undertaken by the council will include climate targets by the summer of 2022, with minimal standards for all contracts and year on year climate efficiencies incorporated within the procurement processes.

## **6 WORKSTREAM B – SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 The second workstream in the CAN strategy is Sustainable Financial Appraisal. The aim of this workstream is to develop and establish a new model of financial appraisal that incorporates and embeds climate impact into decision-making. Putting climate impact at the heart of the council by introducing a brand-new model which appraises the carbon costs of potential investments.
- 6.2 Development of a financial appraisal system that models carbon emissions of projects so that carbon costs can be a factor in decision-making alongside financial costs is underway.
- 6.3 Early in 2020 a high-level financial appraisal model was developed in collaboration with the consultancy firm Anthesis. This model is intended to allow the assessment of carbon emissions from potential investment projects so that carbon, and not just financial cost, can be a factored in to decision-making. Stockport are working with other organisations to share and improve on the appraisal tool with a view that the tool will be used by many organisations across the country. Significant further work is required before a definitive approach is widely accepted as the preferred methodology.

## **7 WORKSTREAM C – CLIMATE FRIENDLY BOROUGH**

- 7.1 Through engagement, collaboration, education and advice, this workstream aims to encourage businesses and communities to work differently to reduce their negative impact on the environment and to inspire individual behaviour change in residents. The focus of this workstream is to promote how the Council can work alongside businesses and local people to take action.
- 7.2 The CAN Summit on 9th November showcased climate action and activity from across the borough and brought together existing 'climate networks' to hopefully inspire people yet to engage with the fight against climate change. The focus for this day was in four parts; what the Council CAN do, Business, Young People & Communities. The CAN Summit is the start of offering inspiration to build lasting climate networks across all areas of Stockport, in the spirit of the collaboration we know is needed to meet the carbon neutrality target of 2038.
- 7.3 The CAN Funding Scheme has been launched to coincide with the CAN Summit and will run until December 2022. The purpose of this scheme is like the summit in that it will act as a catalyst. By providing seed funding for reduction micro-projects across the borough that reduce GHG emissions, the fund can help instigate community led action. The grants will be approved by Area Committees and monitored by the CAN Team with up to £9,000 available per ward.
- 7.4 A new requirement for consideration of the impact of GHG emissions will be included in applications for the Local Fund by the end of 2021.
- 7.5 We will support existing networks and seek to broaden engagement with a wider cross-section of the community, providing more people with the opportunity to engage in positive action. As a result of the CAN Summit, new community climate networks will be formed, and officers will provide appropriate support to maximise collaboration across the borough and sharing of good ideas and expertise. The Council will also help nurture any new climate networks arising as a result of the CAN Funding Scheme.
- 7.6 The Stockport Sustainable Business Network will be relaunched as announced during the business section of the CAN Summit. Plans are in place to hold the first meeting early in the new year. This idea was trailed at the Planet Mark / Marketing Stockport / All+One Business Summit held in Stockport on 6th October.
- 7.7 We will support the growth and influence of the Business Growth Hub, which has 37 Stockport-based businesses registered in a Low Carbon Network. This network is used to inform and connect businesses within the low carbon sector, which includes renewable energy supply and other decarbonisation solutions.

7.8 A 'schools pack' for eco-action has been produced and distributed to all education centres alongside a focus on youth at the Climate Summit in November. Work is being developed with Stockport College's Equalities Council on Climate Action and a series of climate related events for schools and young people is planned to follow the CAN Summit.

## **8 WORKSTREAM D – LOW CARBON BUILDINGS**

8.1 The Low Carbon Buildings workstream aims to improve the quality, design and use of homes and buildings across Stockport in order to lower carbon emissions. Delivering more energy efficient homes and buildings, now and in the future.

### **Council buildings and housing stock**

8.2 Over 90% of Stockport Council's housing stock are at Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating C or above.

8.3 Stockport Homes are planning to build 13 Passivhaus properties as part of the development on St Thomas's. Passivhaus buildings are constructed, insulated and ventilated in ways that allows them to retain heat from the sun and the activities of their occupants, requiring very little additional heating or cooling.

8.4 At the start of the financial year 38.7% of Stockport Council's housing stock had at least one form of renewable energy. Throughout 2021, this figure has increased to almost 40%. This was achieved via the European Regional Development Fund project which included over 600 new measures installed, such as external wall insulation (71 completed in 2020/21), ground source heat pumps (117 completed in 2020/21), air source heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage.

8.5 In 2020 Centrica Business Services carried out appraisals for solar panels across a sample of schools and leisure centres. Subsequently, the council obtained grant funding via the Low Carbon Skills Fund to carry out more detailed energy audits of schools, corporate and leisure buildings. This in turn led to the council applying for a Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant (PSDS) through Salix. The council was awarded a PSDS grant worth £5.6m to carry out decarbonisation schemes across the civic complex, schools and leisure property. Work is underway with external partner AECOM to undertake the design element of this work, in order to achieve our interim target of achieving 10% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of 2021. Overall PSDS work will finish in 2022.

8.6 Plans are in place to develop a five-year capital programme which will include investment in more audits on buildings (not identified in PSDS grant), such as high carbon schools, to identify future energy saving projects. These future audits will comprise an Energy Survey to inform the five-year capital programme and future low carbon government funding schemes.



- 8.7 The 5-year rolling Asset Management Plan (AMP) for the Stockport Schools estate has been developed to deliver key interventions and ensures safe environments for children. Where capital works are undertaken the CAN priorities will be delivered where viable and seek to deliver improvements to the energy performance of the estate. As part of the 5-year rolling AMP an individual Suitability plan will be delivered for each school to inform future investment decisions and support grant finding applications for low carbon schemes
- 8.8 The Council is currently undertaking a Town Centre Asset Management Review which is focused on the corporate estate within Stockport. The plan will seek to deliver an enhanced estate that supports staff in active travel, extends the life of key assets to protect the embedded carbon, and deliver a more energy efficient estate that uses less energy and employs greener systems.

### **Promoting renewable and sustainable technology within the Local Plan**

- 8.9 In July 2021, the Council published a high-level principles document to guide the development of the Local Plan. This identified an overarching principle that the Plan will “ensure everything we do contributes to Stockport’s response and resilience to the Climate Emergency”. The Council will open a consultation on the draft Stockport Local Plan in the coming months, which will include draft policies relating to renewable and sustainable technology.
- 8.10 As part of ongoing work to develop the supporting evidence base for the Local Plan, an Energy Evidence Study is underway and will be published alongside the plan to provide more data and evidence to determine Council policy and inform the CAN strategy.
- 8.11 The Local Plan will promote sustainable drainage and biodiversity net gain on planning applications. Policies are being drafted to form part of the Local Plan consultation later in 2021, and development of interim technical guidance is ongoing.
- 8.12 Ongoing LED street lighting investment programme is scheduled to be completed during 2022/23. It is expected to achieve approximately 40% energy saving once completed.
- 8.13 Feasibility and planning is underway for the Birdhall Lane Eco-Park as part of the £4.4M funding from Cheadle Towns Government Funding Board. This will help to create an exemplar low-carbon light-industrial eco-park employment hub to attract ‘green business’ to Stockport.

### **Promoting renewable technologies for private properties**

- 8.14 Stockport Council has worked with GMCA to promote and roll out the 'iChoosr' solar panel group buying scheme. 40 installations have been completed to date (372 panels) which have a generating capacity of 115kw with an estimated annual carbon saving of 24,236kg.
- 8.15 Stockport is working with GMCA colleagues to look at the success of the iChoosr scheme, and feasibility of repeating this opportunity in the future, however focus has now moved to the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme, which can include solar panels.

### **Working across Greater Manchester to deliver retrofitting in the private housing sector**

- 8.16 The current focus of work in this area has moved to securing and delivering the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme. This scheme was launched in 2020 and funds energy efficiency and low carbon heating projects for low-income households across England.
- 8.17 In the last year, the council, working alongside GMCA and procured delivery partner EON, have submitted successful bids for the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme. A total of £4.7m across Greater Manchester for phase 1a of the scheme, £5.6m for phase 1b and £3m for phase 2 has been secured. Stockport is in the top 3 boroughs for installations via this scheme in Greater Manchester.
- 8.18 Phase 3 of the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme has been incorporated into the new Sustainable Warmth fund, and GMCA are preparing for a bid for £15m. If successful, this will be delivered between January 2022 and March 2022.
- 8.19 As part of this workstream, the Council also promoted the availability of Green Homes vouchers scheme through information provided via a website and advice given through email and telephone. However, the Government withdrew the Green Homes voucher scheme following complaints linked to timescales and capacity with the Trustmark contractor scheme.
- 8.20 The Government recently announced that a new fund will be launched in March 2022, which will provide grants of up to £5000 for the installation of 'green' heating systems. The fund will operate for 2 years and provide up to £450m of grant funding.
- 8.21 Although the success of the Local Area Delivery scheme bids will drive positive changes in terms of climate action in the borough, there are concerns that the scale of the impact will be small compared to the size of the housing stock in Stockport. For context, funding for Phase 1a and 1b was £500m which aimed to upgrade

around 50,000 homes in local authorities across all of England. Stockport alone has around 128,000 houses and flats. Significant national policy changes and drivers will be required to achieve the levels of change required for Stockport’s private housing stock.

8.22 The table below illustrates the rate of improvement since 2011 on the % of properties in Stockport classed with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating between A-C (good and above). Please note this is based on EPC assessments undertaken and submitted in each year, and that the calculation changed post 2012. Although the numbers submitted in any one year make annual data less reliable, there is clearly an improving trend.

% of Properties achieving an EPC rating between A-C									
2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
37%	35%	35%	26%	27%	29%	42%	45%	44%	41%

8.23 Stockport is working with GMCA to identify barriers, blockages and opportunities with a view to actively engaging in discussion and lobbying Government. GMCA, through its climate change agenda and housing strategy implementation plan, is collating all proposed measures, changes and proposed pilot works for inclusion in the next round of devolution requests. The main work related to existing housing stock is through the GM Retrofit Accelerator Programme which identified the following challenges:

- Sustained demand – a market for retrofit that is self-sustaining
- Sustained delivery – a skilled and developed supply chain and workforce
- Trusted Offer – a well-understood offer with reliable quality and performance
- Finance Vehicles – availability of finance to address different sectors of the market

## **9 WORKSTREAM E – RENEWABLE ENERGY**

9.1 The renewable energy workstream aims to ensure that the future energy needs of the borough can be met in a sustainable way.

9.2 Assessments are underway for the installation of solar panels and electric vehicle charging points in the borough with the first installations anticipated in 2022. Currently, the Council controlled sites for consideration of rooftop solar PV are Endeavour House, Stockport Exchange, the Merseyway and Grand Central Leisure Centre.

9.3 The council is currently identifying a pipeline of sites for renewable energy systems, initially on council-owned sites, to investigate the feasibility of potential

renewable energy schemes. The following two feasibility studies will help inform the possibilities for renewable energy systems across the borough including specifically for Stockport Town Centre and the Mayor's Development Corporation.

- 9.4 The Town Centre Regeneration programme has been successful in bidding for £76,900 funding from Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy's Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) to carry out a feasibility study into creating a heat network in Stockport Town Centre. A heat network (also known as district heating) would generate and supply sustainable heating from a central source to consumers, via a network of underground pipes carrying hot water. There will be match funding of £24,100 contributed by Stockport Council
- 9.5 Work is currently underway on a Local Area Energy Plan for Stockport. Stockport is in phase 2 of the GMCA sponsored work with consultants from Catapult Energy Systems looking to develop data to aid decision-making on what sustainability initiatives to adopt within specific areas of Stockport. The process uses public, government and local authority meta data to model the unique characteristics of the local area, including the type of building stock, heating technologies, existing energy networks, electrification of cars, as well as local spatial constraints and opportunities. The work also involves collaborating with a range of stakeholders including local authorities, distribution network operators, businesses and communities to help plan for a data-driven and cost-effective transition to a low carbon way of life. The outputs will be available at the end of 2021 and an engagement exercise is planned for residents across the borough in December this year to promote action and provide advice on renewable energy systems.

## **10 WORKSTREAM F – SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**

- 10.1 This workstream aims to help move Stockport towards having more carbon-free transport options, including the promotion of walking, cycling and the use of public transport within the borough and the wider GMCA.

### **Walking and cycling opportunities**

- 10.2 Two Active Neighbourhood trials are being progressed in the Heaton and Romiley, which are to be completed by 2022. The Council is working closely with residents in the other proposed Active Neighbourhood areas to develop local schemes with the community that reduce the impact of cars in neighbourhoods and improve the opportunities to walk, cycle and play on streets.
- 10.3 The development and delivery of Stockport's Active Travel Programme continues to take place across the borough utilising various funding streams including the Mayor's Challenge Fund for Cycling & Walking and Cheadle Town Fund. The council remains committed to deliver transformational change to cycling and walking facilities within the borough and is currently seeking to deliver 14 schemes, funded

by the Mayoral Challenge Fund while a further two schemes are being funded under the Active Travel Fund and Cheadle Town Fund. All 14 business cases are on track to be designed and approved by 2023. To date, 7 business cases have been approved, 3 schemes constructed, 3 schemes are on-site, and consultation is being undertaken on the Heatons Active Neighbourhood early in the new year following a 3-month trial period of proposed measures.

## **Public transport**

- 10.4 Stockport officers are continuing to work with TfGM to secure funding for Metrolink to Stockport and to review routing options.
- 10.5 The new Bus interchange is progressing with the temporary bus station at Heaton Lane now in operation and demolition on the old bus station has started on site. It is expected that work will start on the new interchange, park and flats in the new year.
- 10.6 Work is about to commence on a programme of studies and schemes for improvements to the highway network to support bus travel. These include things such as improved bus stops, removing pinch points which impact timetable reliability and crossing points to help people access bus stops more safely. This is funded through Transforming Cities Round 2 and will be delivered over the remainder of this and next financial year.
- 10.7 The council is working with TfGM to identify opportunities to decarbonise the bus fleet in the borough, building on the opportunities presented by bus franchising. A Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme funding bid has been submitted to enable retrofitting of buses.
- 10.8 The council has secured funding to start feasibility work on a new rail station in Cheadle, connecting more residents to the rail network and is working closely with TfGM on developing these proposals. Also, in partnership with TfGM we have been awarded funding to undertake a feasibility study on the Stockport – Ashton line through Reddish South to have regular passenger services.
- 10.9 The Stockport Station industry working group, established spring 2021, supported submission of a Levelling Up Funding bid for phase 1 of Station improvements in June 2021. This was unsuccessful however work is continuing to develop an OBC for improvements to Stockport Station and also to investigate capacity constraints on the rail network around Stockport.
- 10.10 A programme to identify sites for EV charging points has been completed, utilising existing Early Measures funding. There are now charging points at Newbridge Lane (Stockport) and Massey Street (Cheadle). Additional taxi charging point sites have been identified on Newbridge Lane and in Torkington (Hazel Grove)
- 10.11 A GM-wide consultation about clean air proposals was undertaken late 2020 (closed December 2020) with Stockport achieving the second highest response rate

in Greater Manchester. Proposals for GM clean air plans have been through Scrutiny and Council and was approved at Cabinet in July 2021. The aim is for the clean air zone to be operational by June 2022.

## **11 WORKSTREAM G – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

- 11.1 This workstream aims to protect and enhance our natural environment.
- 11.2 The Council has also planted approximately 17,000 trees since the declaration of a climate emergency which is a significant increase year on year from before, and by the end of 22/23 Stockport Council will have planted almost 30,000 trees
- 11.3 This includes working with City of Trees and other partners across GM which has allowed for the supply, planting and ongoing maintenance of seven woodlands (in total over 14,000 trees) in Pear Mill open space in Offerton, Brabyns Park in Marple, Willow Grove (Tame Valley) in Reddish South, New Zealand Road open space in Offerton, Dial Park Road open space in Hazel Grove, Bruntwood Park in Cheadle and Happy Valley in Bramhall.
- 11.4 Plans are in place to deliver an orchard in every ward by 2026 planting up to 3,500 fruit trees across all sites by 2030. Ten wards have successful orchards and locations for community orchards have been identified for those wards that do not have one. The council continues to liaise with stakeholders to ensure community involvement in this work. Engagement with communities helps to ensure a sense of ownership and the longer-term sustainability of orchards.
- 11.5 We will create areas managed as a grassland meadow in every ward across the borough by end of 2025. Currently there are 25 sites managed as meadows across the borough and multiple sites managed as areas of long grass. Meadow creation work across the borough is ongoing. In 2021 we commenced the creation of a new meadow at Mill Lane, Bredbury.
- 11.6 There are seven wards that do not have a site managed as a formal meadow and a plan is in place to meet the target set for 2025. Six wards have sites that have the potential for meadow creation on Council-owned land. The seventh has a private site, that has full public access, which offers the greatest potential. Consultation regarding meadow and long grass site creation will commence shortly, initially with Stockport Greenspace Forum, ward members, and existing Friends Groups. This will be to determine the sequence of delivery and to identify opportunities for community engagement.
- 11.7 In 2020/21, 550 highway trees were replaced as part of a three-year Highways-funded tree replacement programme to replace all historical empty tree pits on the

highway. There are a further 250 to be planted in the winter of 2021/22, which will be the final year of the programme. The only remaining exceptions will be where utilities and other considerations have prevented a replacement tree at or near the original location. From 2022 onwards, there will be only contemporary highway tree replacements necessary.

11.8 The council continues to liaise with stakeholders to ensure community involvement in this work. Engagement with communities helps to ensure a sense of ownership and the longer-term sustainability. Future plans will include engaging with owners of private land for bio-diversity improvement.

11.9 Residents will be aware of the plans to create a new town centre park at the Interchange. In addition, the council is converting a car park at Hopes Carr into a new park as part of our plans to green the town centre.

## **12 FURTHER PLANS**

12.1 To augment the CAN strategy the following 'further plans' are proposed for adoption by the Council. These measures will enhance the current approach to the CAN strategy by instilling a formal measuring and monitoring regime and improve governance. The specific actions will also help the Council in its endeavours to be an exemplar and allow the council to more confidently collaborate and influence key partners, businesses and residents across the borough in the fight against climate change:

12.2 Adopt the following actions to enhance governance and measuring of the Council's own operational carbon footprint to inform carbon budgets in line with the carbon neutrality target of 2038:

- Establish an effective way to measure the Council's operational GHG emissions and establish the boundaries for what is 'in scope'.
- Determine science-based targets for the reduction of the Council's operational GHG emission in line with the 2038 carbon neutrality target.
- Align the GHG emission reporting to Finance reporting regimes in order to establish Carbon Budgets determined by the science-based targets.
- Establish new KPI's for CAN workstreams based on the science-based target's, the Borough Plan Outcomes Framework and Local Area Energy Plans.
- Report on these KPI's via internal quarterly update reports for CLT and the Portfolio Holder in line with the financial cycles of July-Oct-Jan-Apr.
- Publish a public-facing annual report (May / June) in line with public-facing financial reports. To specifically include details of Stockport Council's operational GHG emissions, performance on CAN targets and carbon budgets

plus details of other significant climate network engagement activity & achievements.

- Externally audit and verify Stockport Council's science-based GHG emissions reduction targets and the yearly GHG emissions public reporting - via Climate Disclosure Project or similar.

12.3 A Net Zero target for Council operations will be developed using science-based targets for scope 1 and 2 emissions, and also for scope 3 emissions based on the level of control and feasibility of measuring and monitoring performance. We will continue to partner with UK100 to further collaboration with other UK local authorities.

12.4 Refresh Stockport Council's Environmental Policy in line with the further plans. Update the Council's 'Sustainability & Climate Change' webpage and include signposting for resources for businesses, residents and community groups. Plus details of the CAN Funding Scheme.

12.5 Establish an external CAN advisory panel. To include residents, youth groups, businesses, community groups and climate change experts to assess the effectiveness of the CAN strategy and make suggestions for improvement. To take on the role of a 'critical friend' to promote continual improvement.

12.6 Accelerate the decarbonisation of Stockport Council's building estates & fleet – to include The Totally Local Company.

12.7 Develop carbon budgets for all Council services built on the Council's established science-based targets.

12.8 Increase scope for developing more renewable energy schemes with particular focus on the town centre regeneration and Mayoral Development Corporation.

## **13 CONCLUSION**

13.1 It is self-evident that the battle against climate change is not one that solely rests with Stockport Council. As already indicated collaboration and cooperation across all areas of the region, the UK and the planet are crucial.

13.2 Stockport Council must outline what is achievable by the Council given the current resources and capacity for change in responding to the climate crisis. First and foremost, this can be achieved by continuing the good work in every workstream and adopting the further actions highlighted in the report. By undertaking this strategy Stockport Council should understand what can be done given the resources available.



13.3 Secondly, the Council must set itself some stretch targets and always be adaptable given the constantly changing landscape of local, national and international legislation. This way, with favourable conditions, we can set-out the extent and upside of what is possible and be ready to meet these changes as they arise in a strategic and planned way.

13.4 Finally, the Council must be informed about what is actually necessary to ensure Stockport plays its part in keeping global warming to around 1.5C despite the challenges. Stockport Council must understand what is necessary but also to place this in the context of what is achievable.

13.5 Understanding what is required will help set the strategic framework that can be adopted as circumstances change. As the political and legislative appetite to provide more opportunities and resources to tackle climate change increases, the strategic CAN framework will be the roadmap that can be deployed in every part of the CAN workstreams, and ultimately across the Council and the borough of Stockport.

## **14 RECOMMENDATIONS**

14.1 Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note and comment on the progress achieved since the implementation of the CAN strategy across the borough.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Stockport Council CAN Strategy - Oct 2020](#)