

Report of:	Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance Director of Environment and Community Services
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	10 May 2022
Title:	Green Strategy - Year Two Action Plan
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Climate change
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Urgent:	No
Why:	N/A

Executive summary

Middlesbrough Council developed a Green Strategy with aligned actions to steer its climate response and address its carbon emission reduction promise which has been in place since its adoption in May 2021. This report seeks to highlight the progress made in Year One (2021/22) of the Green Strategy and seek approval for the Year Two (2022/23) actions.

The recommended decision to implement the Year Two action plan needs to be taken in order for Council to move closer to achieving its three overall environmental aims:

- To make Middlesbrough Council net carbon neutral by 2029.
- To ensure Middlesbrough as a town is net carbon neutral by 2039.
- To make Middlesbrough a lead authority on environmental issues.

The recommended decision is the only option, aside from to do nothing. To not implement Year Two of the Green Strategy is not recommended as this would result in the Council not meeting the set climate change ambitions.

The implications of the recommendation have been considered by the appropriate officers of the Council and are set out in the main body of the report.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of Middlesbrough Council's Green Strategy Year Two action plan and to summarise the progress made in Year One.

Background and relevant information

2. A decision by Executive is required to provide approval for the proposed Year Two action plan to be implemented, in line with the Strategic Priority to '*Implement Year Two actions of the Council's Green Strategy.*' This is a new decision and does not vary any previous decision/s. This decision affects all Wards of Middlesbrough.
3. The Green Strategy has three main aims:
 - To make Middlesbrough Council net carbon neutral by 2029.
 - To ensure Middlesbrough as a town is net carbon neutral by 2039.
 - To make Middlesbrough a lead authority on environmental issues.
4. The Green Strategy is an overarching climate change and sustainability strategy that contains a number of themed action plans based upon the One Planet Living (OPL) framework and principles, which are as follows:
 - Zero Carbon
 - Zero Waste
 - Land Use and Wildlife and Sustainable Water
 - Sustainable Transport
 - Culture and Community
 - Health and Happiness
 - Equity and Local Economy
 - Local and Sustainable Food
 - Sustainable Materials
5. The Strategy was adopted and approved by Executive in 2021 and has delivered a range of achievements in Year One (2021/22) which are summarised here:
 - Established a carbon data baseline for Middlesbrough Council and implemented a performance monitoring process with a Smart Carbon Tool.
 - An education awareness programme has been developed and implemented and was delivered to nine schools and seven public roadshows were held.
 - Installation of electric vehicle charging stations at Resolution House and the purchase of five electric vehicles.
 - Designation of Middlemarsh Nature Reserve and the establishment of a Friends Group to help maintain and care for the site moving forward.
 - Green Shoots Nature Recover project to restore biodiversity on three nature reserves with many hours of volunteer time devoted to delivering this project.
 - Climate Action Middlesbrough project was led by Middlesbrough Environment City which worked with residents to engage the community on climate issues and recycling.
 - Creation of the Peoples Climate Forum, led by informed and enthusiastic people who engage in decision making and influence others.
 - Development and roll out of a Waste and Recycling Education programme for schools.

- Achieved the accolade of World Tree City status.
- Planted 15,000 more trees to increase tree cover in Middlesbrough.
- Became a more bee friendly town by installing five bee hives and developed a 'Buzz in Boro' guide.
- 30,000m² of urban flower meadows were sowed.
- Worked with businesses with the aim to reduce commercial waste and increase recycling levels.
- Developed and rolled out a mandatory 'Climate Change' e-learning training module to all Council employees, which will provide further climate change education to MBC employees.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

6. That Executive notes the progress achieved in Year One (2021/22) of the Green Strategy as outlined above and approves the following Year Two (2022/23) actions:
7. Year Two actions:
 - Commence with data capture for carbon emissions for the town of Middlesbrough.
 - Enhance digital connectivity and develop a digital poverty strategy.
 - Develop a culture programme for parks with green credentials.
 - Deliver an Eco-festival.
 - Introduce active travel measures and hubs.
 - Establish a green social prescribing model.
 - Develop clean air zones.
 - Work with suppliers to help them reduce their carbon footprint.
 - Develop a social value framework and charter for Council procurement contracts.
 - Establish a food re-distribution hub in Middlesbrough.
 - Develop five new community growing sites.
 - Achieve the Sustainable Food Places Gold Award with a '22 Carrot Gold' campaign.
 - Develop two new nature reserves.
 - Purchase new machinery which will help manage meadows and verges more sustainably.
 - Plant 13,000 trees and sow 80,000m² of urban meadows.
 - Work with business and organisations to help them further reduce their carbon impact and explore energy saving measures.
 - Further expand the Council's electric vehicle fleet.
 - Work with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to install new electric vehicle charging points in locations across the town.
 - Retain World Tree City status.
 - Hold a Climate Showcase event for business and communities.

Rationale for the recommended decision

8. The recommendation to progress with the outlined action plan for Year Two of the Green Strategy is the only possible decision, other than to do nothing.
9. The Green Strategy is a long term environmental programme and approach to respond to the climate emergency. Middlesbrough has to act now to rise to this challenge to ensure we meet our targets of becoming net carbon neutral by 2029 for the Council and 2039 as a town. The action plan for Year Two will enable the Council to move closer to achieving its three overall environmental aims:
 - To make Middlesbrough Council net carbon neutral by 2029.

- To ensure Middlesbrough as a town is net carbon neutral by 2039.
- To make Middlesbrough a lead authority on environmental issues.

10. The Council therefore has an obligation to respond to climate change and should lead by example by delivering against our promised actions within the Green Strategy on which we undertook public consultation in 2021.

11. The proposed Year Two actions of the Green Strategy have not been examined by Scrutiny.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

12. The other option of to do nothing and not approve the proposed Year Two action plan would result in the Council not meeting our set climate change obligations and ambitions to be a lead authority on environmental initiatives and therefore is not recommended for that reason.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

13. The Paris Agreement is an agreement contained within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UK is party to that agreement. The introduction of a Green Strategy contributes to the Government's commitment to mitigate global warming. Whilst there is no mechanism in place which forces a country to set a specific emissions target by a specific date, the Countries are expected to set ambitious targets. The Paris agreement came into effect on 4 November 2016, whilst this is a Government Target, Local Authorities as emanations of the state are, in essence required to play their part.

Strategic priorities and risks

14. The decision to implement the Year Two action plan of the Green Strategy aligns to the following Strategic Plan priority: Climate Change - *'We will ensure our town acts to tackle climate change, promoting sustainable lifestyles.'*

15. There are no key risks aligned to the decision to implement the Year Two action plan.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

16. Protected groups would not be affected by the decision to implement the Year Two action plan. An Impact Assessment is included at Appendix A.

17. The decision to implement the Year Two action plan would not involve the collation and use of personal data.

Financial

18. Funding has already been identified and allocated to deliver the individual initiatives listed in paragraph 7.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Confirm approval of the Year Two action plan to the One Planet Living (OPL) theme group leads (Heads of Service)	Simon Blenkinsop	16 th May 2022
OPL theme group leads to provide quarterly updates to the Green Strategy Strategic Group, to identify progress toward each action	OPL theme group leads	Quarterly reporting from June 2022 to March 2023
Green Strategy Strategic Group to meet all theme group lead action owners on a quarterly basis to monitor performance against the actions	Green Strategy Strategic Group	Quarterly from June 2022 to March 2023
Completion of Year Two actions	OPL theme group leads	March 2023

Appendices

1	Equality Impact Assessment
---	----------------------------

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Contact: Geoff Field
Email: Geoff_field@middlesbrough.gov.uk