

Report of:	Geoff Field - Director of Environment and Community Services Councillor Dennis McCabe - Executive Member for Environment
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Submitted to:	Executive - 11 May 2021
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Subject:	Green Strategy
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Executive approves the adoption of the Green Strategy following the public consultation. 2. That Executive approves the Year One Action Plan.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
Decision	Yes, impacts two or more wards	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan		
People	Places	Business
The Green Strategy assists with the delivery of the Mayor’s Priority of ‘ <i>Ensuring our town is an absolute leader on environmental issues</i> ’.	The Green Strategy assists with the delivery of the Mayor’s Priorities of ‘ <i>Protecting our Green Spaces</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Making Middlesbrough look and feel amazing</i> ’.	The Green Strategy assists with the delivery of the Mayor’s Priority of ‘ <i>Creating positive perceptions of our town on a national basis</i> ’.

Ward(s) affected
All wards.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. That Executive approves the adoption of the Green Strategy following the public consultation.
2. That Executive approves the Year One Action Plan.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

3. The proposal affects more than two wards.
4. The adoption of the Green Strategy will impact all Council departments in the way they operate and collect, manage and monitor data.

Report Background

5. A report was submitted to Executive on 1 September 2020 that outlined the proposed Green Strategy and sought approval, which was granted, to commence with consultation on the adoption of the emerging Green Strategy.
6. The Green Strategy has three main aims:
 1. To make Middlesbrough Council net carbon neutral by 2029.
 2. To ensure Middlesbrough as a town is net carbon neutral by 2039.
 3. To make Middlesbrough a lead authority on environmental issues.
7. 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.
8. Middlesbrough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 in order to address its obligations in relation to climate change through adopting the ten principles of the One Planet Living approach to sustainable living. The Council have adopted One Planet Living and used this approach to influence decision making for over ten years and will continue to do so in order to reach carbon net zero by 2039.
9. Some of the initial key approaches but not an exhaustive list, within the Green Strategy which will ensure Middlesbrough achieves its ambitious Carbon reduction and environment sustainability objectives will include:
 - Setting Middlesbrough's Carbon Budget for the Council.
 - Setting Middlesbrough town's Carbon Budget.
 - Encouraging movement towards purchasing green energy.
 - Increasing the level of energy saving in Middlesbrough homes and businesses.
 - Moving towards greener transport through enabling electric, hydrogen and other green energy solutions.
 - Expanding the use of cycling across the town.
 - Changing behaviours and attitudes toward how we manage waste, to promote waste reduction.
 - More sustainable waste management, increased levels of recycling and green waste collection uptake.
 - Sustainably managing and promoting Green Spaces within Middlesbrough encouraging biodiversity.

- Embracing green purchasing and procurement to support the local Supply Base.
- Increasing the level of community environmental initiatives and activities.
- Supporting active environment education programmes.

10. Following Executive approval in September 2020, a wide range of activity has taken place around the Green Strategy which is outlined in the following paragraphs.

Establishment of OPL theme groups:

11. Nine theme groups have been established with each one being based upon an OPL theme as follows:

- Culture and Community – lead by Head of Culture, MBC
- Equity and Local Economy – lead by Head of Economic Growth, MBC
- Health and Happiness – lead by Public Health Consultant, Public Health South Tees
- Land Use and Wildlife and Sustainable Water – lead by Head of Planning
- Local and Sustainable Food – lead by Director, Middlesbrough Environment City
- Sustainable Materials – lead by Specialist Commissioning Manager, MBC
- Sustainable Transport – lead by Head of Economic Growth, MBC
- Zero Carbon – lead by Head of Property and Commercial Services, MBC
- Zero Waste – lead by Head of Environment Services, MBC

12. The theme group leads have received training in climate change and carbon reporting from a specialist consultant at True North Sustainability.

Development of theme group action plans:

13. Each of the nine theme groups have started to develop action plans which will all collectively assist the Council in meeting our targets to be net carbon neutral as a Council by 2029, as a town by 2039 and ensure Middlesbrough is a lead authority on environmental issues.

14. The Green Strategy is a very long term approach to tackling climate change within Middlesbrough and the first year (2021 to 2022) is being treated as a baseline year to gather all necessary baseline data required to set targets and measure success going forward.

15. The nine action plans have set out objectives for the first year and the groups are currently further developing the plans for future years to make their objectives aspirational to ensure that the Council and town are prepared and can mitigate against the effects of climate change on residents and businesses such as increased flooding, greater pressure on water resources, damage to natural habitats and risks to human health from periods of extreme temperatures.

16. The nine theme groups are also currently scoping external stakeholder involvement and engagement to ensure local businesses and organisations will work in partnership with the Council in delivering the Green Strategy and it is a cross-organisational initiative.

17. A governance process has been established wherein the nine theme groups submit a monthly highlight report detailing progress against their action plans which are reviewed by a Strategic Group led by the Director of Environment and Community Services, the Executive Member for Environment and other appropriate officers.

The Director of Environment Services will then in turn provide quarterly updates to the Performance Clinics.

18. Year One (2021-2022) objectives:

- Establish carbon data baseline for Middlesbrough Council and performance monitoring process.
- Commence with data capture for carbon emissions for the town of Middlesbrough.
- Host a climate conference with partners and begin to map out town wide objectives.
- Increase recycling rates by way of education awareness programmes and roadshows.
- Facilitate the installation of electric vehicle charging stations at Resolution House and purchase of five electric vehicles.
- Designation of Lower Ormesby Beck nature reserve and establishment of a friends group to help manage the site.
- Manage existing sites to restore biodiversity on three nature reserves.
- Climate Action Middlesbrough to work with residents to help manage and improve biodiversity on three nature reserves.
- Gain World Tree City status and retain the accreditation for future years.
- Plant 15,000 trees to increase tree cover.
- Become a more bee friendly town by installing five bee hives and develop a 'Buzz in Boro' guide.
- Sew 30,000m² of urban flower meadows.
- Work with businesses to reduce commercial waste and increase recycling levels.
- Develop and roll out mandatory 'Climate Change' training to all Council employees, which will provide further climate change education to MBC employees.

19. Objectives following year one of the Green Strategy are still being scoped and identified by the nine theme groups and some already planned are as follows:

20. Year Two (2022-2023) objectives:

- Install electric charging stations across Middlesbrough.
- Enhance digital connectivity and develop a digital poverty strategy.
- Develop a culture programme for parks with green credentials.
- Deliver an Eco-festival.
- Bring partners together in an annual Middlesbrough Environment Summit.
- Introduce active travel measures and hubs.
- Establish a green social prescribing model.
- Develop clean air zones.
- Work with suppliers to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Develop a social value framework for Council procurement contracts.
- Establish a food re-distribution hub in Middlesbrough.
- Develop more community growing sites.
- Develop two new nature reserves.
- Work with business and organisations to help them reduce their carbon impact and explore energy saving measures.
- Expand the Council's electric vehicle fleet.
- Retain World Tree City status.

21. Year Three (2023-2024) aims and targets:

- Dorman Museum to become more environmentally friendly.
- Work with travel providers to enable move to cleaner fuels.
- Improve air quality in Middlesbrough.
- Commence domestic food waste collection in line with Government guidance.
- Aim to further increase recycling rates to 40 percent.

Green Strategy consultation:

22. The public consultation was launched on 15 November 2020 for a six week period which was then extended to 31 January 2021 to encourage more responses. The feedback gathered within the consultation was overwhelmingly in favour of adopting a Green Strategy and that Middlesbrough should become a lead authority on green issues. A summary of the feedback is included at paragraph 26 within the recommendations section of this report and a document outlining further feedback gathered during the consultation is included at Appendix 2.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

23. 1. That Executive approves the adoption of the Green Strategy following the public consultation.
2. That Executive approves the Year One Action Plan.

Why is this being recommended?

24. The Green Strategy sets a programme to meet current Government targets for increasing recycling uptake to 40 percent and reducing Greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, which was a commitment that the UK made by signing the Paris Agreement which is contained within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
25. The adoption of the Green Strategy is recommended as a vehicle to deliver the Council's obligations to address Climate Change. The implications of climate change are broad ranging and significant and the Council has a responsibility to ensure measures are put in place to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
26. The overwhelming feedback from the Green Strategy public consultation process was that the majority of respondents (82%) agreed that Middlesbrough should be a lead authority on Green issues, which the Green Strategy will achieve.
27. A summary of feedback from the Green Strategy consultation is as follows:
 - 175 respondents in total.
 - 145 (82.8%) respondents agreed with the Mayor's ambition that Middlesbrough should be a lead authority on green issues.
 - 18 (10.2%) of respondents disagreed with the Mayor's vision, stating a number of reasons. For example, monies would be better being spent elsewhere, such as tackling crime (44%) and building on Green Spaces (20%).
 - On average 162 (92.5%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the 10 OPL principles were perceived as important.
 - 99 (56.5%) of respondents agreed that the proposed strategy would achieve the Mayor's ambitions.

- 97 (55.4%) of respondents provided suggestions about what else could be considered to include in the draft strategy. 24% of these respondents suggested that building on Green spaces ceases and 30% suggested other measures, including: electric vehicle charging points, clean air help with solar power, culture, local produce.
- 105 (60%) of respondents indicated that they are interested in finding out how they can help achieve the vision.
- 102 (58.2%) of respondents indicated what they are already doing or planning to do to contribute to the towns carbon neutral proposals.
- 79 (45.1%) of respondents felt that they either didn't know or felt that they needed more information, support or guidance to contribute towards the towns carbon neutral proposals.
- 50 additional comments were made by the respondents, when asked 'Do you have any other comments you wish to make on the draft strategy'.
- The demographic of all respondents was:
 - 145 (83.3%) of respondents - an individual resident of Middlesbrough
 - 12 (6.8%) of respondents - a community group
 - 3 (1.7%) of respondents - a business or agency
 - 14 (8.2%) of respondents - as part of an organisation

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

28. The other potential decision is to not adopt a Green Strategy. This is not recommended as the Council has a moral and legal responsibility to address climate change and reduce the carbon emissions of Middlesbrough and therefore taking no action and not adopting a Green Strategy is not a viable option.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

29. 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.

Financial

30. Funding has already been identified and allocated to deliver the individual initiatives listed in Para.17. For subsequent years the action plans are to be considered alongside the development of the MTFP and a report will be submitted to Executive in October 2021 outlining the Year Two action plan.

Policy Framework

31. The report sets out a proposal in accordance with the Council's approach to the delivery of efficient services. It delivers on priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

Equality and Diversity

32. An Impact Assessment (appendix 1) has been conducted and no protected groups would be affected by the decision to adopt the proposed Green Strategy.

Risk

33. The recommended option of adopting the proposed Green Strategy addresses the risk of not meeting the Council's climate change target to be carbon neutral by 2029 and for the town of Middlesbrough to become carbon neutral by 2039 as specified by the Mayor in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

34. There is also a legal risk of not meeting the previously mentioned Government legislation for climate change.

35. These risks are reduced by the range of actions identified within the Green Strategy and the ongoing programme of established theme groups and governance processes which will continue to add new actions to the Green Strategy when opportunities are identified.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

36. Continue to further develop the Green Strategy as follows:

- Publish the consultation findings.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy.
- Further development of action plans.
- Report to Executive in October 2021 outlining the Year Two action plan.

Appendices

37. Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment level 1 (9 February 2021)

38. Appendix 2 - Middlesbrough's Green Strategy Consultation (1 February 2021)

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Executive	Green Strategy	1 September 2020

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