

REPORT AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 27 September 2023

Report of: Net Zero Exeter & City Management

Title: City Council Net Zero Risk Register

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 To update the City Council's Net Zero Risk Register and assess the risk to measures needed to reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint, and achieve the Council's Net Zero target of 2030.
- 1.2 To address the impact of extreme weather events, and other risk to service delivery and adaptation required to protect Council services in relation to climate change.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Audit and Governance Committee recommend to Council that the City Council's Net Zero Risk Assessment update is noted and approved; and
- 2.2 That it is noted that the risk assessment will continue be updated every six months.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 To highlight the risks associated with measures required to reduce City Council GHG emissions. Climate Change, carbon performance and management technologies are changing all the time and as such both the Risk Register and Carbon Reduction Plan are live documents and reviewed every six months.
- 3.2 To enable the Net Zero team to strategically plan resources, organisational change and budget to deliver activity and progress to support one of the main City Council's corporate priorities.
- 3.3 To enable risks associated with reducing City Council carbon emissions to be measured, monitored, reported on and incorporated into all City Council processes.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources.

- 4.1 Financial and non-financial resources to reduce City Council carbon emissions are in place, detailed a July 2022 report to Executive. An update on spend is within a report to Strategic Scrutiny September 2023.
- 4.2 Further work will be undertaken to complete a detailed risk assessment related to service area and scope, to identify financial and non-financial resources needed for the City Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and to protect services against climate change. This activity will be developed, when resources allow and in line with the carbon reduction plan priorities.
- 4.3 Achieving net zero, whether nationally, locally or organisationally, requires broad action across all emission scopes and by every service. To deliver Net Zero for the City Council by 2030 will require a significant increase in financial investment and operational capacity internally, from government at a local, regional and national level and potentially from private investment.

5. Section 151 Officer Comments:

- 5.1 The register highlights the challenges in delivering such a huge piece of work with limited financial resources. The economic conditions including high interest rates exacerbate the challenge.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 Section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 states that '[i]t is the duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline. The target was originally 80% and was increased to 100% by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.
- 6.2 Exeter City Council has declared a climate emergency and set the target of achieving net zero by 2030.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

- 7.1 This risk assessment is prepared in order to identify potential barriers to the Council's Net Zero aspirations and enables the council to continuously monitor those risks. More importantly, it promotes a strong culture around risk management and where possible identifies ways to mitigate those risks.

8. City Council Net Zero Risk Register

- 8.1 The City Council's Net Zero Carbon Reduction Plan is to be reported to Strategic Scrutiny September 2023. It has been reviewed by City Council services and a full update completed.
- 8.2 The City Council's latest Green House Gas Inventory report is included in the Scrutiny Report and a small decrease of total carbon emissions is reported in the 2021/22 footprint. The report also includes the supporting carbon reduction plan, which is a live document. It will continue to inform the work programme of the Net

Zero team, all City Council services, and subsequent budget required to deliver net zero.

- 8.3 Correspondingly, the Risk Register developed in July 2022 (Appendix 1) is a live document and has been updated to covers aspects of net zero activity within the City Council. In addition to guidance from the National Audit Office, and organisational adaptation measures to protect the delivery of City Council services
- 8.4 Within the Net Zero Risk Register, ref 1 remains red. Current resources (financial and capacity) available to City Council, will not enable the City Council to reach net zero by 20230. The Net Zero team are constantly looking at ways to reduce our corporate carbon emissions through change behaviour or innovative solutions in reducing our carbon emissions; they are also applying for external funding to speed up the delivery of the action plan.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Plan?

- 9.1 This report and the work of the Net Zero team links directly to the Exeter Vision and a number of corporate priorities. Work will have to be delivered in partnership with all City Council service areas to reduce our carbon emissions.

Exeter Vision	Innovative & Analytical City	The team has developed a range of data sets to monitor City Council carbon emissions
	Healthy & Inclusive	Ensure City Council owned homes are energy efficient
	The Most active city in the UK	Projects are developed to support active travel for employees
	Accessible world class educations	N/A
	Liveable & connected	Commercial and residential properties are energy efficient and built to the best possible standard
	A leading sustainable city	The City Council is a role model for other organisations in Exeter

Corporate Plan	Net Zero Carbon City	Net Zero team focuses on reducing City Council carbon emissions to deliver Net Zero by 2030
	Prosperous Local Economy	Green Accord supports a local supply chain, better recording of data and procuring locally
	Healthy and Active City	Working in partnership with Live & Move in developing sustainable travel options and low traffic neighbourhoods for staff active travel
	Housing & Building Great Neighbourhoods and Communities	Working with Building Greater Exeter, Liveable Exeter, Exeter City Living and other developers in developing sustainable and accessible neighbourhoods and new homes, using sustainable constructions methods
	Leading a Well Run Council	Carbon reducing actions can be commercially viable and reduce service delivery costs

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 10.1 The City Council's annual Green House Gas Inventory report, supporting carbon reduction plan and risk register will inform the work programme of the Net Zero team for the foreseeable future. These documents are presented to Strategic Scrutiny and Audit & Governance on a regular basis for ongoing monitoring.
- 10.2 The Net Zero team have been successful in providing improved data, and more accurate carbon accounting, to ensure the annual footprint report is accurate allowing the City Council to better monitor progress and impact.
- 10.3 The financial cost to deliver net zero within the City Council will be significant. At every opportunity, funding bids are submitted to capture available grants to deliver projects needed to decarbonise the Council's operation and protect services.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

- 11.1 In developing the action plan, the Net Zero team will take into account the potential impact of actions in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision. An EQIA will be undertaken for each action being developed.
- 11.2 An EQIA was undertaken in developing the new Net Zero & Business team in allocating resources.

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

12.1 The City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and as part of this commitment it aims to achieve net zero emissions for its corporate activities by 2030. The Risk Register will consider the carbon reduction measures required to achieve net zero.

13. Are there any other options?

13.1 There is the option of not committing financial and non-financial resources to work towards Net Zero within the City Council. This would result in a lack of direction in reducing our carbon emissions and missing our 2030 target. On a regular basis, the Net Zero team will be sourcing and applying for external funding to enable delivery of the City Council's own carbon plan, working towards net zero within the City Council.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

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