

REPORT AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 25 September 2024

Report of: City Centre & Net Zero

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 A six monthly review of the City Council's Net Zero Risk Register, which is an assessment of risks in achieving carbon reduction measures needed to deliver on the City Council's 2030 Net Zero target. The Risk Register includes adaptation measures required to protect services and to reduce risk in relation to climate change considerations.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Audit and Governance note the amendments to the Net Zero Risk Register; and
- 2.2 It is noted that the Net Zero team have consulted with the Devon Climate Emergency Tactical Group, to contribute to a district wide review of Net Zero risk and alignment of adaption measures and improved regional resilience.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 To highlight the risks associated with measures required to reduce City Council carbon 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 which are reviewed every six months.
- 3.2 To enable the Senior Leadership Team to support the Net Zero team to plan resources, to support one of the main City Council's strategic priorities.
- 3.3 To enable risks associated with climate change and 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 to support the Net Zero team, detailed a July 2022 report to Executive. An update on spend is within a report to Strategic Scrutiny March 2024.
- 4.2 Further work is being undertaken to identify the scale of financial and non-financial resources needed for the City Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and to protect services against climate change. This work will be presented in the form of a Costed Organisational Carbon Descent Plan to Strategic Scrutiny in November 2024.
- 4.3 Achieving net zero, whether nationally, locally or organisationally, requires broad action across all emission scopes and by every service. Enabling the Council to deliver Net Zero 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 that funding constraints and scope of grants along with a lack of financial resources to make changes within each Council service area are amongst the risks of achieving net zero by 2030.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 Section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 states that it 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 Members will note the legal aspects set out above. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

8. City Council Net Zero Risk Register

- 8.1 The updated Risk Register was first developed in July 2022, (Appendix 1) and is a live document, it assesses aspects of net zero activity within the City Council.
- 8.2 The majority of the Net Zero Risk Register, (Appendix 1) remains red as current resources (financial and capacity) available to the City Council are challenging. The Net Zero team are constantly looking at ways to reduce corporate carbon emissions through change behaviour or innovative solutions in reducing operational carbon emissions; securing external funding to speed up the delivery of the action plan is critical.

- 8.3 As discussed at a previous Strategic Scrutiny, the Net Zero team commissioned SWEEG to develop a costed Organisational Carbon Descent Plan. After a review by officers, the plan will be reported to Strategic Scrutiny.
- 8.4 The City Council's latest Greenhouse Gas Inventory will be included in the costed Organisational Carbon Descent Plan and will report on total carbon emissions from the City Council. The report will support the Carbon Reduction Plan, which is a live and continually updated document. The Carbon Reduction Plan will continue to inform the work programme of the Net Zero team, wider City Council services, and subsequent budget required to deliver net zero.
- 8.5 The recent organisational changes will support the delivery of net zero across the City Council, in teams working better together to reduce corporate carbon emissions.

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 strategic 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
	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 & Active City	Working in partnership with Live & Move in developing sustainable and active travel options and low traffic neighbourhoods for City Council staff
	Housing & Building Great Neighbourhoods and Communities	Working with Building Greater Exeter, Liveable Exeter and other developers in developing sustainable and accessible neighbourhoods and new homes, using sustainable constructions methods
	Thriving Culture & Heritage	The decarbonisation programme of cultural and heritage buildings we occupy

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

- 10.1 The City Council's annual Greenhouse 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 six-monthly basis for ongoing monitoring and scrutiny.
- 10.2 The Net Zero team have been successful in providing improved data, and more accurate carbon accounting, to ensure the annual Greenhouse Inventory report is accurate allowing the City Council to better monitor progress and impact.
- 10.3 The financial cost to deliver net zero carbon emissions for 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.
- 10.4 A range of KPI's are being developed by the Net Zero team, which will be reported to Strategic Scrutiny on an annual basis. They will be used to monitor progress and achievements to date.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

- 11.1 In developing the action plan, the Net Zero team took 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 carbon 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 towards the Net Zero Team within the City Council. This would reverse progress made, and inhibit the ability to reduce carbon emissions and deliver the City Council's 2030 target. The Net Zero team are responsible for sourcing and applying for external funding to enable delivery of the City Council's Carbon Reduction Plan, working towards a net zero 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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