

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 2 MARCH 2022
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: MICHAEL JOHNSON

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update concerned with the progress that is being made by the Service in relation to the environment and climate change agenda.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Note the information contained in the report, seeking further detail, as necessary.

Background

2. The Fire Authority approved the Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2020-25 (the Strategy) in June 2021. It contains six Key Objectives
 - Provide buildings that are energy efficient.
 - Reduce the fuel use by our fleet to cut emissions and costs.
 - Reduce business travel mileage.
 - Reduce waste and improve recycling rates.
 - Use purchasing power to drive environmental and social benefits.
 - Increase carbon literacy to encourage and embed behavioural change.

The Strategy takes into account the Government's environmental aspirations and the national objective to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

3. Members of this committee asked for updates about progress. This is the first update.

Information

4. This first progress report focuses on carbon emissions reduction performance. Future reports will provide further updates about carbon, but will focus on other elements of the Strategy, e.g. waste and recycling.

Carbon - What is Measured?

5. Carbon reporting involves the measurement of Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Scope 1 emissions are direct, i.e. from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 emissions are indirect, i.e. from the generation of purchased energy.

From 2009 until 2020

6. The Service was given guidelines in 2009 which led it to produce a baseline figure for carbon emissions. There was an expectation that public bodies would aim to reduce their carbon emissions by 30% of their 2009 carbon emission baseline by 2020.
7. The Service calculated its baseline carbon emissions in 2009 as 2,965 CO₂e tonnes. In reporting year 2020 the Service had managed to reduce its carbon emissions to 1,754 CO₂e tonnes.
8. This was a reduction of 41%; well ahead of expectations.

From 2017 until 2021

9. The Government now expects public bodies to reduce their carbon emissions by 50% by 2031, although many have proactively set targets well ahead of this ambition and the national target of net zero by 2050. The baseline which is being measured against is now 2017.
10. The Service's 2017 baseline was 2,057 CO₂e tonnes. In reporting year 2021, the Service had managed to reduce its carbon emissions to 835 CO₂e tonnes, a reduction of 59%; already in excess of the 2031 target.
11. Whilst this figure is very encouraging, it may be slightly 'false' given the impact that Covid will have had on the Service's carbon-hungry activities, e.g. business mileage has been significantly reduced.

Achievements

12. The Service achieved the reduction in carbon emissions from the 2009 baseline by delivering a number of projects during the existence of the Environmental Strategy 2014-2020 and this is a list of some of the more significant:
 - Introduction of a biomass boiler at the Training Centre
 - This removed oil fired boilers, which were carbon intensive
 - 2012/13 the oil fuel cost was £47,607 and it resulted in 294 tons of CO₂e
 - Biomass is carbon neutral, therefore saving reportable carbon emissions and current fuel cost is approximately £20,000.
 - The service also benefits from revenue through the RHI scheme.

- Thermal water heating at the Training Centre and Northwich Fire Station
- LED lighting across a number of locations
- Up-grade of boiler systems from oil fuelled heating and hot water
- Introduction of 7 solar PV installations on existing and new build projects.

Journey to Net Zero.

13. Achieving net zero will be considerably more challenging, because aspects of what the Service does can only currently be delivered in a way that involves the production of CO₂, e.g. fire engines run on diesel fuel. This will change over-time as innovation begins to create other green options.
14. One of the main objectives of the Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025 is creating energy efficient buildings and this has led to the installation of a further 9 arrays of photovoltaic (Solar PV) systems, including at the new fire station at Chester. Some of these systems also utilise battery storage so we benefit from any excess generation.
15. The role of Environment and Sustainability Lead was re-instated in November 2019 by Cheshire Constabulary to support both organisations. The postholder is current the chair of the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group, which supports both the NFCC and NPCC. This has undoubtedly had a positive impact on the Service's performance in a number of areas covered by the Strategy. It will be a key role in moving towards the delivery of net zero.
16. In January 2021 a new group containing officers and Members was formed; the Environment and Climate Change Working Group. The members of this Group, will also help to drive performance.
17. Carbon literacy will be important to the Service. Staff and Members need to have an overarching understanding of the causes of climate change and its effect on the organisation and community. In order to promote wider knowledge we are introducing carbon literacy training which should, ultimately, be available to all staff and Members. The first phase of this training will begin on the 28th February.
18. The further introduction and expansion of the current non-blue light electric vehicles will further reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. The Fleet Strategy will involve the creation of the necessary electric charger infrastructure. We currently have 13 sites with charging infrastructure, with 3 more locations planned for March 2022.
19. The Environmental Impact Assessment form was updated in 2020 to allow greater engagement in environmental considerations. There is a need for this to be embedded in processes so that environmental matters are fully considered in the development of policies and proposals.

20. Scope 3 emissions will become more relevant to reporting and identification as we work towards net zero. This involves the consideration of “embedded carbon”. There are 15 elements of Scope 3 emissions and several will directly impact the Service, e.g. staff commuter mileage, waste, logistics and supply-chain and water.

Financial Implications

21. Financial investment in environmental and sustainability projects and initiatives is key to progression in this area. Whilst returns on investment may only be delivered in the longer term, there will be a range of benefits that are not measured in financial terms.

Legal Implications

22. Mandatory and advisory targets are set nationally. The Authority could be punished for a failure to meet some of these targets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

23. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report..

Environmental Implications

24. This report is about environmental matters. Members will need to be appraised of developments as the environment and climate agenda develops.

**CONTACT: CONTACT: KIRSTY JENNINGS, GOVERNANCE OFFICER
TEL [01606] 868641**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025.