	Policy Panel		**Item** **10**
	11ᵗʰ January 2023		
Report of	**Place and Client Services**	**Author**	**Ben Plummer** ☎ **508965**
Title	**Climate Change Policy**		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   The Council does not have a climate change policy. However, several procedures and measures have been put in place to monitor the Council's action on climate change, and that aim to ensure that climate change is embedded as a consideration into activities and decision making. The aim of this report is report is to inform councillors of how this monitoring and reporting occurs.

1.2   This report sets out these different methods of reporting and monitoring, and can be listed simply as:

- **Annual greenhouse gas emissions reporting**
- **Internal monitoring** through operational meetings including staff working group (Climate Opportunities Working Group), staff board (Sustainability and Climate Change Project Board) and cross-party panel (Environment and Sustainability Panel)
- **Climate Emergency Action Plan** – Updated annually and reported on every 2 months at Environment and Sustainability Panel. This has also been reviewed and rated by an external organisation (Climate Emergency UK), and the Council's climate action will be rated in 2023 by the same organisation.
- **Policies and ways of working** – Including staff travel plan, environmental assessments for projects, reducing paper use, environmental awareness training for staff.

2.   Action Required

2.1   The report has been written to promote discussion about the need for a Climate Change Policy. The report is therefore primarily to note, as it is not recommended that the Council should create a dedicated Climate Change Policy based on the monitoring and reporting on climate action currently in place.

3.   Reason for Review

3.1   Members requested the suggestion of creating a Climate Change Policy; there is no current Climate Change Policy.

4. Background Information

4.1 At the Policy Panel meeting on 15th June 2022, a member "queried whether there was a formal policy to codify the Council's approach, arguing strongly in favour of having such a policy to show how the Council was working and would work to meet its targets". This was in relation to a policy around the climate emergency and the Council's aims of meeting net zero organisational emissions.

4.2 The Council does not have a 'climate change policy'. Instead, the aim is for the climate emergency to be considered within Council policies and ways of working. This report sets out how the Council aims to do this, alongside how its work on climate action and reducing organisational emissions is monitored.

Emissions

4.3 The Council measures and reports its greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis. These are published on the Council's website, showing emissions recorded in the last four financial years. Since recording the Council's 'baseline emissions' in financial year 2018/19, the Council's emissions have reduced by 10.1% (based on figures recorded for financial year 2021/22).

4.4 For further information, please see the report that was presented at the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 29th November 2022 which gave a further breakdown and analysis of the Council's emissions.

Reporting and monitoring

4.5 The Council has created a procedure that allows action on climate change to be monitored. Several groups have been created which contribute to this:

- Climate Opportunities Working Group (COWG) – A cross service group of staff where meetings are held to discuss work being undertaken across the Council to tackle climate change, and to share advice and guidance on each other's projects and workstreams related to climate change and the environment.

- Sustainability and Climate Change Project Board – A small group of staff that sit above the COWG and receive updates on the Council's climate action and provide strategic direction for work being carried out.

- Environment and Sustainability Panel – A cross party panel of councillors meeting every two months to receive reports on key Council environmental projects and activities such as the Woodland and Biodiversity Project and sustainable travel projects, as well as regular updates on the progress of actions in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (see 4.6).

4.6 The Council documents the work it is doing to reduce emissions and its environmental impact throughout the organisation and supporting in the community through the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Action Plan has several themes which structure the work being carried out by the Council and relevant partners. An updated version of the Climate Emergency Action Plan is due to be published in January 2023, but a draft version was presented to the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 2nd November 2022, and can be viewed here (themes of the plan are shown on page 2).

4.7 The Council (alongside all UK councils) had its Climate Emergency Action Plan reviewed and rated by [Climate Emergency UK](#), a charity that aims to support and lobby a variety of organisations to take action on climate change. This work was published in January 2022 and can be seen [here](#). They are now going to be rating **action** on climate change by all councils, with the scores for climate action by councils to be published in Autumn 2023. The draft methodology they will be using to do this can be viewed [here](#).

Ways of working

4.8 The Council is trying to embed a consideration of climate change in all its policies and ways of working as appropriate. This is so it becomes mainstreamed and the default stance, rather than as an 'add-on' through having a separate climate change policy.

4.9 Several examples of how the Council has embedded climate change considerations into policies and ways of working are listed below:

- Staff travel plan to encourage sustainable travel to work
- Environmental assessments included within the project management process
- Business Rates Relief Policy includes 10% relief for businesses certified carbon neutral
- Training provided to councillors to update them on Council's environmental work, and how they can support this
- Development of training to be rolled out with all staff on environmental awareness.
- Regular internal communications that advise staff on ways to reduce their environmental impact (and save money)
- Considering environmental impact of ICT equipment procured
- Reducing use of paper across the organisation by promoting 'digital by default'
- Partnering with different organisations to increase the impact of our work, and supporting these organisations to also reduce their environmental impact through sharing and learning

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

5.1 As it is suggested that a climate change policy is not written, there are no equality, diversity and human rights implications of this report.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 This report directly links to the following themes of the Strategic Plan:

- Tackling the Climate Challenge and Sustainability
- Creating safe, healthy and active communities
- Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits.

7. Consultation

7.1 There are no consultation considerations.

8.   Publicity Considerations

8.1   As the report is to note at this stage, there are no publicity considerations to be made.

9.   Financial implications

9.1   There are no financial implications.

10.   Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

10.1   There are no health, wellbeing and community safety implications.

11.   Health and Safety Implications

11.1   There are no health and safety implications.

12.   Risk Management Implications

12.1   There are no risk management implications.

13.   Environmental and Sustainability Implications

13.1   There are no direct environment and sustainability implications of this report. However, the actions and activities covered in the report aim to reduce the Council's environmental impact and emissions.