

<p><b>CABINET MEETING – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023</b></p> <p><b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I</b></p>	
<p><b>Title of Report:</b> Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23</p>	
<p><b>Author(s):</b> Executive Director of City Development</p>	
<p><b>Purpose of Report:</b> This report provides an overview of the Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23 including the Council's emissions for 2022/23 and city-wide emissions for 2021.</p>	
<p><b>Description of Decision:</b> Cabinet is recommended to consider and note the Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and approve its publication on the MySunderland webpages.</p>	
<p><b>Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?</b>      <b>Yes</b></p>	
<p><b>If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework</b></p>	
<p><b>Suggested reason(s) for Decision:</b></p> <p>In accordance with the Council's Low Carbon Action Plan, the Council is committed to publishing an annual data report which sets out the progress made towards both the Council's and the city's low carbon commitments. The Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23 sets out the latest city-wide and Council emissions data and provides an overview of the progress made.</p>	
<p><b>Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:</b></p> <p>The alternative option would be not to publish the Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23. However, this would result in the Council not meeting its commitment to publishing an Annual Low Carbon Data Report as set out within the Council's Low Carbon Action Plan.</p>	
<p><b>Impacts analysed:</b></p> <p>Equality <input type="text" value="N/A"/> Privacy <input type="text" value="N/A"/> Sustainability <input type="text" value="N/A"/> Crime and Disorder <input type="text" value="N/A"/></p>	
<p><b>Is the Decision consistent with the Council's Co-operative Values?</b>      <b>Yes</b></p>	
<p><b>Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?</b>      <b>No</b></p>	
<p><b>Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?</b>      <b>N/A</b></p>	



## LOW CARBON ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23 including the Council's emissions for 2022/23 and city-wide emissions for 2021.

**2.0 Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to consider and note the Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and approve its publication on the MySunderland webpages.

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1 Climate change represents a significant challenge for our generation. Over the past 50 years, the average global temperature has increased at the fastest rate in recorded history and the trend is accelerating. According to the World Meteorological Organization, the last seven years represented the seven warmest years on record globally. It is a global issue in relation to which every person, every organisation and every place has a role to play. Sunderland is committed to playing its part in tackling the global climate change emergency.

- 3.2 In March 2019, the Council acknowledged the scale of this challenge by declaring a Climate Emergency at Full Council, recognising the immediate action required, and agreed to the following motion:

*"In recognition of the threat posed to our environment by climate change Sunderland City Council will declare a climate emergency. Numerous local authorities around the country have declared climate emergency and it is important for the council to show it takes the issue seriously. Recent weather and changes in ecosystems show that we are already seeing changes as a result of climate change so it is important to join other councils in giving the issue suitable attention and clearly setting out how we will meet our targets on cutting emissions."*

- 3.3 Over the past decade Sunderland has responded to the climate change crisis in a number of ways and taken steps to reduce its carbon emissions. This work has been advanced significantly since the Council declared a Climate Emergency.
- 3.4 A partnership board, known as the 2030 Shadow Board, was set up in 2019 and on a quarterly basis brings together representatives from across the city including Gentoo, the NHS Foundation Trust, University of Sunderland, Sunderland College, Together for Children, NE Chamber of Commerce, Transport North East, as well as Elected Member representation from each

Political Group on the Council. The 2030 Shadow Board shaped the development of the city's Low Carbon Framework, adopted in December 2020, and its purpose is to work collectively to drive forward Sunderland's ambitions and commitment to tackling climate change. Representation has since been broadened to include the Voluntary Sector Alliance and representatives from the young people's Environment Green and Sustainable (EGS) Group.

- 3.5 The Tyndall Centre provide carbon budget recommendations for Local Authorities in the UK. This is the maximum amount of greenhouse gases a Local Authority area can emit within a period of time in order to meet the overall decarbonisation target. The current recommended interim targets for Sunderland, aligned with a 14.4% annual reduction in citywide emissions and a carbon budget of 8.2 MtCO<sub>2</sub> between 2020 – 2100, are to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 65.5% by 2025 based on 2015 levels and to stay within a carbon budget of 5.8 MtCO<sub>2</sub> between 2018 – 2022.
- 3.6 In January 2021, Cabinet endorsed the Sunderland Low Carbon Framework. This recognised the need to work together to reduce carbon emissions across the city and set an overall ambition to become carbon neutral as a city by 2040. The Framework is established around seven strategic priorities which are equally important in helping to achieve the overall ambitions. At the same meeting, Cabinet also approved the Council's initial Low Carbon Action Plan, which set out an ambitious target to become carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030. The Action Plan set out a range of actions and against each of the seven strategic priorities.
- 3.7 In July 2022, the Council published an updated Low Carbon Action Plan which builds upon the significant low carbon activity undertaken by the Council to date, and an increased understanding of the level and nature of the Council's emissions. It sets out a number of overarching objectives within each of the 7 strategic priority areas identified in the Low Carbon Framework, under which individual actions will be taken forward.

#### **4.0 Current Position**

- 4.1 The Council published its Annual Carbon Data Report 2021/22 in November 2022. This report provided an estimation for the annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the Council in 2021/22, as well as citywide carbon emissions for Sunderland in the 2020 calendar year (the latest for which city-wide data was available at the time). This was the second annual carbon data report published since the city-wide Low Carbon Framework was adopted by Sunderland Partnership, and since it was endorsed alongside the Council's Low Carbon Action Plan by the Council's Cabinet in December 2020.
- 4.2 In-line with the Green House Gas (GHG) Protocol Corporate Standard, the Council's GHG emissions are categorised into three scopes:
  - Scope 1 emissions refer to direct emissions from owned or controlled sources, for example the combustion of fuel;

- Scope 2 emissions include emissions from the generation of purchased energy, for example electricity purchased from the National Grid; and
- Scope 3 emissions refer to all indirect emissions which occur in the value chain of a reporting company, for example employee commuting and emissions from purchased goods.

- 4.3 The Council's carbon neutral target, as set out within the Low Carbon Action Plan, currently covers scope 1 and 2 emissions.
- 4.4 The 2021/22 report outlined that the Council's scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint during 2021/22 was 7,498 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, representing a 12.4% reduction from 2020/21 and a 58.5% reduction over the five-year period since the 2017/18 baseline. Just over half of this reduction was due to the decarbonisation of the National Grid, with the rest due to lower energy consumption. The main sources of emissions from Council operations in 2021/22 were the generation of purchased electricity for the Council's buildings and streetlighting. It is recognised however that emissions within 2021/22 were still impacted by Covid-19, as with 2020/21.
- 4.5 Following improved data availability and revised methodology used during preparation of the 2022/23 Annual Report, the 2021/22 figure was recalculated for consistency, as explained in 5.2. The recalculation was primarily as a result of analysing vehicle fleet emissions on the basis of fuel consumption rather than mileage which gives a more accurate assessment. The recalculated figure for the Council's scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint during 2021/22 is 8,680 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, representing a 9% reduction from the recalculated 2020/21.
- 4.5 Although it is not currently mandatory to report on scope 3 emissions, the Council recognises that this is good practice. Scope 3 data is therefore included in the Council's annual data reports, and work remains ongoing to build on and refine the Council's scope 3 inventory.

## **5.0 Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23**

- 5.1 The Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23 provides an estimation for the annual GHG emissions for the Council in 2022/23 (against the base year of 2017/18), as well as citywide carbon emissions for Sunderland in the 2021 calendar year (the latest for which city-wide data is now available). The format of this year's report also aligns more closely with the priorities within the Low Carbon Framework and Action Plan, providing a summary of key activities undertaken against each Strategic Priority after the emissions data.
- 5.2 The 2022/23 report also includes a recalculated estimate for previous years using more robust data where this is now available, for example in relation to vehicle fleet emissions. The recalculated estimate for previous years is included to increase accuracy levels as well as support ongoing awareness and understanding of the position. Year-on-year reductions are set out in relation to the recalculated estimates, where applicable, to ensure transparency and consistency.

- 5.3 The 2022/23 report outlines that the Council's scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint during 2022/23 was 7,866 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, representing a 9% reduction from 2021/22 and a 58% since the 2017/18 baseline. An overview of the Council's emissions is set out in Section 1 of the attached report, with fuller detail set out in Section 4. The main source of emissions from Council operations in 2022/23 was liquid fuel used for the vehicle fleet. The generation of purchased electricity for the operational estate and streetlighting experienced the greatest reduction of emissions, with annual reductions of 18% and 17% respectively. Liquid fuels used for the vehicle fleet experienced the lowest reduction, with emissions falling by 0.3%.
- 5.4 The challenge of decarbonising fleet is recognised in the City Council's Low Carbon Action Plan with the need to embed electrification and decarbonisation into lifecycle replacement planning within the context of current technology strengths and financial constraints.
- 5.5 The Council continues to refine its scope 3 emission data, building on the annual data report for 2021/22. Based on current data availability, the Council's scope 3 emissions for the 2022/23 financial year are estimated to be 43,630 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (85% of overall emissions, increasing from 82% in 2021/22). The main sources of scope 3 emissions for the Council are purchased goods and services, as well as leased assets – including emissions from operations for Sunderland Care and Support, fire stations and some vacant assets. Although a 2017/18 baseline comparison is not yet available for scope 3 emissions, work is ongoing in relation to the Council's scope 3 emissions inventory and datasets to establish this where possible. There is also the intention to set a target in future for reduction of scope 3 emissions once the baseline position is established.
- 5.6 In terms of city-wide emissions, the report sets out figures published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ – formerly the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) which indicate that total carbon emissions within the scope of influence for the local authority in Sunderland in 2021 were 1,089,313 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. This represents an increase of 6.5% compared to 2020 emissions and is consistent with emissions increases across other local authorities in the UK, with only three local authorities experiencing reductions in carbon during the same period. An overview of the city's emissions is set out in Section 1 of the attached report, with fuller detail set out in Section 5.
- 5.7 As reported in the 2021/22 report, Sunderland met its first interim target suggested by the Tyndall Centre for 2015-20 (a 16.1% reduction in annual citywide emissions, achieving a 26% reduction). Drawing on this, the city is on track to meet its first interim recommended 5-year carbon budget period of 5.8 MtCO<sub>2</sub> between 2018 – 2022 (aligned with the carbon budget of 8.2 MtCO<sub>2</sub> between 2020 – 2100). This is due to targets being exceeded in previous years.
- 5.8 However, the city is not currently on track to meet its second recommended interim decarbonisation target (of 61.5% by 2025 - aligned with a 14.4% annual reduction, against a city-wide 2015 baseline). The city must therefore

seek to reduce annual emissions rapidly over the forthcoming years to maximise its ability to reach this interim target. Reducing emissions from transport and domestic energy have been identified as the biggest challenges for city-wide decarbonisation, as they represent both the largest share of emissions and the slowest rate of reduction since the baseline year of 2015.

5.9 The Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23 also provides a key progress update summarising delivery across each of the seven strategic priorities within the Council's Low Carbon Action Plan. These are set out in Section 6 of the attached report.

5.10 Subject to Cabinet endorsement, it is proposed that the Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23 will be published on the MySunderland webpages.

## **6.0 Reason for Decision**

6.1 In accordance with the Council's Low Carbon Action Plan, the Council is committed to publishing an annual data report which sets out the progress made towards both the Council's and the city's low carbon commitments. The Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23 sets out the latest city-wide and Council emissions data and provides an overview of the progress made.

## **7.0 Alternative Options**

7.1 The alternative option would be not to publish the Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23. However, this would result in the Council not meeting its commitment to publishing an Annual Low Carbon Data Report as set out within the Council's adopted Low Carbon Action Plan.

## **8.0 Relevant Considerations**

8.1 **Financial Implications** – There are no direct financial implications from endorsing and publishing the Council's Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23.

8.2 **Legal Implications** – There are no direct legal implications from endorsing and publishing the Council's Low Carbon Annual Report 2022/23, although the report highlights the Council's contribution towards the Government's legally binding climate change commitments.

8.3 **Equalities Analysis** – The report publishes data for information only and does therefore not require an equalities analysis.

8.4 **Health Outcomes and Health Inequalities** – The report publishes data for information only and does therefore not require a health outcomes and health inequalities analysis. However, the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions within the city identified within the report are expected to have a positive impact upon health outcomes.

8.5 **Sustainability** – The report publishes data for information only and does therefore not require a sustainability appraisal. However, the report identifies the Council's progress in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions which is clearly linked to improved sustainability.

- 8.7 **Policy Implications** – The report publishes data for information only and does therefore not have any policy implications. The report does identify progress made against the Council and City-wide commitments to reach carbon neutrality as a Council by 2030 and as a city by 2040, as established through the city-wide Low Carbon Framework and the Council’s Low Carbon Action Plan which include a strategic priority focused on Our Policies and Practices.
- 8.8 **The Public/External Bodies** – The report publishes data for information only and does therefore will not have any impact upon public or external bodies. The report will be shared with partners through the 2030 Shadow Board.

## 9.0 **Background Papers**

Appendix 1 – Sunderland Low Carbon Annual Data Report 2022/23