

Report title: 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life'

(Key Words: Environment, Sustainability, Top-Tier, Strategy)

Council Date	18 th September 2024
Council Member:	Cllr Ahmed – Environment and Highways
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	Yes
<p>Purpose of Report: To note the contents and ambitions of the 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life' as developed by a process of co-design with people who live work and study in Kirklees.</p> <p>To seek Council approval for the adoption of the 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life'.</p>	
<p>Recommendations: Following the recommendation by Cabinet on the 9th of July, for Council to adopt the Environment Strategy and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the Partnership Pledge and associated monitoring and evaluation process via the Environment Strategy Partnership Group. • Establish the governance structure, associated board and necessary policies and procedures to effectively govern the implementation of the strategy within the Council. • Deliver any future minor alternations for the strategy. • Meet the ambition (targets and objectives) outlined within the 'Environment Strategy, Everyday life.' • Apply for and accept external (i.e., non-council) funding for the implementation of the partnership pledge process and any actions associated with achieving the strategies targets, in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. • Collect and analyse data for the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy, with the support of necessary service areas which hold, or have responsibility for collecting this information. 	
<p>Reasons for Recommendations: Cabinet recommend adoption of the strategy by the Council, as to achieve 'Our Vision' and 'Shared Outcomes' outlined within the Council Plan 2024 / 2025, alongside the Council Leaders priority for 'delivering a greener Kirklees and leading on the climate emergency', we need to address the environmental challenges we face. Our social and economic ambitions are all underpinned by the environment – it's the air we breathe, the resources we use, the food we eat, where we live, work, and relax.</p> <p>Cabinet recommend delegating authority to the relevant Executive Director to help translate the strategy from paper into on-the ground action and impact. These steps are necessary to effectively embed practices into Council operations, track progress against the ambition of the strategy whilst influencing, guiding, and encouraging partners across the district to take action.</p>	
<p>Resource Implication: There is no direct capital investment associated with this strategy.</p>	

The management and delivery of the strategy will require dedicated human resource within the Council. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining external funding to 'capitalise' this capacity is being considered.

The strategy will also help coordinate the existing internal and external resources currently being used for environmental workstreams, enabling us to maximise resource efficiency through the identification of gaps and the duplication of effort.

Date signed off by Executive Director & name:

David Shepherd Executive Director of Place,
12th of August 2024.

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?

Kevin Mulvaney, Service Director Finance (S151 Officer). 27th of June 2024

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?

Samantha Lawton Service Director, Legal, Governance & Commissioning. 18th of June 2024

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: All ward councillors were consulted via their political party group meetings on two occasions: December 2022 and March 2023. More details on this consultation can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Executive summary

1.1. Context to the strategy:

The 'Environment Strategy: Everyday, Life' is a high-level framework to help inform and provide direction for action across the district, not just within Kirklees Council.

This strategy does not just look at climate change, but the broader environmental picture – addressing the ecological and the climate emergencies, whilst tackling social and economic challenges through environmental action.

It is a reflection of the people who live work and study in Kirklees, having been developed via a process of co-design, involving 1039 residents and 549 representatives of partner organisations, businesses, institutions, and community groups across Kirklees.

Partners were engaged with on multiple occasions, helping evolve the content over time to deliver a strong, ambitious, and successful strategy for all, that is both realistic and achievable.

1.2. What is the strategy's ambition?

The strategy's vision is to: *"Make the environment a priority in all decision-making, whether big or small. We want to harness the power of the natural environment to enhance the lives of the people who live work and study in Kirklees, fostering healthy, happy, and better-connected communities."*

This vision is encompassed within four themes, which contain 12 headline targets and 31 wider objectives, all underpinned by our three always-on priorities. (see Appendix 1 to this report for detail).

1.3. Why is the strategy needed?

The environment underpins everything. Our survival and wellbeing depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. It is our home. It gives us the air we breathe, places to relax and resources for our businesses and jobs. To achieve the social and economic ambition of our Council Plan 24/25 and the other top tier strategies, we must also tackle environmental issues.

Addressing environmental sustainability is also what people who live work and study in Kirklees told us matters to them - they care about those broader environmental issues and its day-to-day problems.

This strategy builds upon the Climate Emergency declared by Kirklees in 2019 and will help address the Council Leader's key priority for the Council in "Delivering a greener and healthier Kirklees and leading on the climate emergency" by taking a bigger picture approach to environmental issues. Reducing our carbon emissions and building resilience to severe weather events are a vital part of this strategy, but it also factors in the ecological emergency and how we can use environmental action to tackle broader social and economic challenges.

This strategy also helps to address key environment targets set by national government, such as the Environment Act 2021, whilst also laying foundations within Kirklees Council for the impending legislative reporting requirements on biodiversity, as set out in the 2023 update to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

1.4. What will the impact of this strategy be?

By tackling all our environmental challenges, we can improve the health, wealth, and happiness to our residents.

The strategy is structured by four themes ('Closing the Loop', 'Bringing it Home', 'Nurturing Nature' and 'Kirklees on the Move') which represent the areas and activities where action and change would have the biggest positive impact on our environment, society, and economy.

Our three-always on priorities ('Sustainable Economic Development', 'Resilient Futures', 'Environment for All') represent the benefits that can be experienced by taking environmental action.

This strategy will help develop a greater resilience of our people and places to future challenges, a just transition with a focus on equity, make the environment accessible to all.

It will also help save people money, which is more important than ever given the heightened need for greater energy resilience and the resultant impact this has on people's wallets.

2. Information required to take a decision.

2.1. Background

The Strategy is one of the council's four top-tier strategies, sitting alongside the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Inclusive Communities Framework, and the Inclusive Economies Strategy.

Each of these top-tier strategies support the others to achieve the overall vision of the Council Plan 2024/2025. Success in one, translates into success in another.

This strategy is also key in helping achieve the 'Clean and Green' shared outcome within 'Our Council Plan 2024/25', which aims to "Ensure people in Kirklees experience a high quality, clean, sustainable and green environment".

Furthermore, this strategy is also fundamental in achieving one of the Council Leader's key priorities for the Council – "Delivering a greener and healthier Kirklees and leading on the climate emergency".

2.2. Cost breakdown

To effectively manage and embed this strategy within Council operations, dedicated human resource within the Council will be required. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining currently unidentified external funding to 'capitalise' this capacity is being considered.

The strategy also aims to co-ordinate existing resource and actions across partners and within the Council, maximising resource use and community capital.

The approval of this strategy will not result in a direct need for capital investment.

Action that stems from this strategy – delivered through the action plans and policies that will feed into it, will also focus on cost-positive measures (ultimately action that saves or even generates residents and the Council money), alongside cost-neutral (i.e. invest to save action).

2.3. Timescale

The strategy sets ambitious targets with dates to drive progress. While some of these targets extend to 2038 and 2050, it will be essential to establish interim / steppingstone targets that reflect the urgency of immediate actions and facilitate effective monitoring of progress. These interim / steppingstone targets will be incorporated within the associate plans, policy and strategies that sit beneath the top tier Environment Strategy.

By implementing both long-term targets and interim milestones, we can effectively drive progress towards the ultimate vision of environmental sustainability in Kirklees, whilst tracking and evolving our approach along the way to ensure maximum effectiveness.

The timeframe of the decision-making pathway for the Strategy through Kirklees Council governance is set out in section 6 of this report.

2.4. Expected impact/outcomes, benefits & risks (how they will be managed)

The positive impacts and outcomes from this strategy include:

- Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing for our residents, as the Strategy promotes a cleaner and healthier environment.
- The creation and development of green jobs, fostering economic growth while ensuring a sustainable workforce equipped with green skills and knowledge.
- Enhanced social engagement, cohesion, and inclusivity across all our communities and places. The Strategy aims to create spaces and initiatives that bring people together, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.
- Inspiring and empowering our young people, providing them with opportunities to actively engage in environmental initiatives and becoming champions of sustainability.
- Establishing a renewed reputation for our district as a green leader, where our actions speak louder than words. This will enhance our standing among other communities and attract attention as a place committed to sustainable practices.
- Saving people money, addressing fuel poverty, and offering value for money in delivery.
- Co-ordinating and bringing together environmental activity across Kirklees, bringing people together under a shared vision, focusing work, generating maximum value and impact for the district.

Through the careful management of risks and proactive measures via the monitoring, evaluation and reporting process outlined within the strategy, any potential risks associated with implementing the strategy will be effectively mitigated.

2.5. Evaluation

As detailed within the strategy, the delivery of its ambition (targets and objectives) will be monitored and evaluated through a pre-agreed process, involving partners via the Environment Strategy Partnership Group.

2.6. Sustainability

Sustainability lies at the heart of this strategy, driving its vision and objectives. The strategy recognises that addressing environmental sustainability in Kirklees goes beyond just minimising negative impacts. Instead, it focuses on maximising the wider co-benefits that sustainable practices bring to our community.

The vision, themes, and targets are firmly grounded in the principles of sustainability. They are designed to create a balance between environmental, social, and economic considerations. By aligning with the three always-on priorities of sustainable economic development, resilient futures, and environment for all, the Strategy ensures a holistic approach that promotes long-term sustainability.

2.7. Services & agencies involved.

The development of this Strategy has been a collaborative and inclusive journey, involving council colleagues, elected members, the Kirklees Climate Commission (KCC), partner organisations and community groups.

This collaborative approach fosters a shared sense of responsibility and ownership, whilst ensures that all voices are heard, and that the Strategy reflects the diverse perspectives and expertise within our community.

In total, the co-design process incorporated 1039 residents and 549 representatives of organisations, involving 14 separate occasions of engagement with Council Colleagues and Ward Councillors, 8 with the Kirklees Climate Commission and 9 with residents.

Implementing the Strategy will require concerted efforts from all sectors of the council, as well as active participation from local businesses and residents. It is through this collective action that we can drive meaningful change, promoting sustainable practices, and nurturing a thriving and resilient Kirklees for current and future generations. We need to work together to make a lasting and positive impact on our environment and community.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with people

This strategy is a partnership document at its core and recognises that we all have a part to play in delivering successful environmental sustainability. That is why the development of this strategy has been centred around a co-design process, involving the people who live, work and study in Kirklees, enabling the targets and objectives to be a reflection of the thoughts and ambitions of Kirklees in the round.

Our commitment to 'Shared by People' has meant that we have actively sought input from the people of Kirklees to help shape this Strategy and we have followed the 'Working Alongside' and the 'Kirklees Inclusive Communities Framework' guidance.

3.2 Working with partners

As a continuation of our co-design process, to successfully deliver this ambitious strategy we need collaborative participation, involvement, and ownership from partners across Kirklees. That is why we encourage people, organisations, and businesses across Kirklees to sign up and pledge their support to deliver our collective ambition for a greener Kirklees.

As of 1st July 2024, we have 10 signed pre-approval pledges: Home-Start Kirklees, River Holme Connections, Moors for the Future Partnership, Uniform Exchange, Holme Valley Climate Action Partnership, Greenhead College, Success 2 Recovery, Kirklees Active Leisure, Kirklees Climate Commission and Third Sector Leaders.

3.3 Place based working

The strategy acknowledges the different needs of communities in Kirklees and promotes a tailored approach to address specific environmental challenges. By adopting this strategy, the Council can create localised solutions, engage communities effectively, address disparities and promote fairness.

The co-design process for the strategy ensured that all 'places' across Kirklees were worked with. During the citizen sessions undertaken, specific consideration was given to those places and communities which are more commonly under-represented in processes of engagement – as emphasised by the resident survey.

Adopting a place-based approach in the delivery of the 'Environment Strategy; Everyday, Life' can help foster a thriving community by aligning environmental initiatives with each area's unique characteristics and aspirations. It can help ensure a sustainable future that benefits all residents in Kirklees.

3.4 Climate change and air quality

Having a positive impact climate change and air quality is fundamental to the 'Environment Strategy; Everyday Life.' The strategy incorporates the Councils 'Net Zero and Climate Ready by 2038' targets, aligning its vision and targets towards achieving the objectives set out within the Kirklees Climate Change Action Plan (as approved by Council on the 16th November 2022).

As a core aspect of the Councils Clean and Green shared outcome, improving air quality is considered one of the expected impacts from implementing this strategy. This is demonstrated by the dedicated objective for air quality within the 'Kirklees on the move' theme, being: *"Continue to reduce air pollutant emissions and subsequent improved air quality for all in Kirklees. (RF) (E4A)"*

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The four themes and three always-on priorities within the 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life' can help to create environments that prioritise the well-being and development of children, providing them with healthier, safer, and more sustainable surroundings to grow and thrive. They support the "Best Start in Life" and "Aspire and Achieve" outcomes.

3.6 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications of approving this strategy on the people who live work and study in Kirklees.

However, indirect financial implications will be seen from the action that stems from this strategy – delivered through the action plans and policies that will feed into it. This includes reduced energy bills by improving energy efficiency of buildings, reduced cost to our health services by improving air quality, access to greenspace and enabling active travel modes, and a reduction in recovery costs from severe weather events by helping to improve the resilience of our people and places to climate change.

The Council is not required to commit any capital investment by approving this strategy.

To effectively manage and embed the strategy within Council operations, dedicated human resource will be required. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining currently unidentified external funding to ‘capitalise’ this capacity is being considered.

Various funding streams available at a regional, national, and international level will also be explored to help Kirklees maximise opportunities for securing financial support, grants, and partnerships to implement the strategy effectively.

It is also important to note that as a top-tier strategy, the support of all areas of the Council is required to help deliver it successfully – the resource implications and follow-on action should not be held by one service area alone.

3.7 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications or binding issues associated with this strategy.

The adoption of the non-statutory Environment Strategy – Everyday Life as part of the Council’s Policy Framework under Article 4 of the Council’s Constitution is a decision for full Council.

The council must have regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and Integrated Impact assessment before making any decision to recommend adoption and adopt the Environment Strategy.

Local authorities have a general power of competence to, “do anything that individuals may do” subject to restrictions or limitations in other legislation (section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and acting reasonably in public law terms. This will authorise the strategy.

The UK legal framework is set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended in 2019) and commits the UK to achieving “net zero” by 2050 by placing a legal duty on the Secretary of State to ensure that by 2050 the net zero carbon account is reduced by 100% compared to 1990 levels. There are no legal target obligations on local authorities. The Council’s climate emergency declaration improves on the UK 2050 target. However, there are numerous government plans and strategies which emphasise the importance of action by local authorities which are key to understanding the available funding, challenges, and opportunities, including the ten Point Plan for Green Industrial Revolution (Nov 2020); the Heat and Building Strategy (2021); the Net Zero strategy (2021); and the British Energy Security Strategy (2022).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021) imposes duties on the Council in relation to biodiversity when exercising its functions.

The strategy could indirectly influence council policy or plans with legal status in the future, such as the Local Plan, which would give consideration to strategies such as this.

3.8 Other (e.g. risk, integrated impact assessment or human resources)

3.8.1 Risk

The approval of this strategy will have no direct impact on the Councils Corporate or Service Area specific risk.

The implementation of this Environment Strategy would function as a mitigating control / action to 'Key Corporate Risk 8 – Climate Change', by helping to embed best-practice environmental and climate change thinking into policies, procedures and decision making throughout the council to reduce risk and address challenges.

The delivery of the strategy will have no direct impact on the Armed Forces Covenant. By delivering against our Always-on priorities and working towards a just transition, action stemming from the strategy will generate benefits that the Armed Forces Community would be able to access.

3.8.1. Integrated impact assessment (IIA)

An IIA has been completed as part of the development of the strategy, the detail of which can be found on the Council website. [Integrated Impact Assessments - IntegratedImpactAssessment \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/IntegratedImpactAssessments-IntegratedImpactAssessment). The case I.D is IIA549496696.

3.8.2. Human resources

The management and delivery of the Environment Strategy Partnership Group will require dedicated human resource within the Council. In-light of on-going budget challenges, the utilisation of existing resource and obtaining currently unidentified future resources is being considered.

The Environment & Climate Change Service Area has had success in obtaining external funding to capitalise full-time council officer roles, through mechanisms such as West Yorkshire Combined Authority, which is an option that will be explored for the strategy.

4. Consultation

As part of the development of this Cabinet Report, the following colleagues were consulted, completing a review of this document and its Appendices.

- Strategy & Policy Team: Completed by Nick Howe (Strategy & Policy Service Manager)
- Portfolio Holder Cllr Aafaq Butt on the 22nd of January 2024.
- Executive Leadership Team: 6th of February 2024
- Executive Board: 12th of February 2024
- Environment & Climate Change Scrutiny: 21st of February 2024.
- Legal Team: 18th June 2024
- Finance Team: 27th June 2024
- Cabinet: 9th of July 2024
- Portfolio Holder Cllr Munir Ahmed on the 6th of August 2024.
- Council: Attendance on the 18th of September 2024.

The Environment & Climate Change Scrutiny Panel recommended.

1. It be made clear in the strategy that the projected cost of transition was a combination of public and private investment.
2. The reference to high inflation rates be revisited prior to Cabinet to ensure current information was included at the time of consideration.
3. It be referenced in the Strategy that reliance on fossil fuels increased vulnerability to national inflation pressures.
4. Elected members continued to be engaged in the delivery of the strategy.
5. The language used in relation to actions and targets be reassessed to ensure the information was accessible as a public facing document.

6. A glossary setting out definitions of key terms and acronyms be included at the close of the strategy to increase accessibility.
7. The Panel's comments in relation to revisiting targets including (i) clarity of language (ii) influence and impact of individual behaviour change and (iii) scope for delivery be reflected upon and reshared with the Panel as an additional stage in the flightpath.
8. Regular updates on progress be provided to the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel during delivery of the strategy.

A response to these recommendations was provided by Officers to the Scrutiny Panel via e-mail, accompanied by an updated, tracked-changed version of the Environment Strategy report to demonstrate where revisions were made.

5. Engagement

This strategy has been co-designed with the people who live, work and study within Kirklees, enabling it to be a reflection of the thoughts and ambitions of Kirklees in the round, and not just those of the council. This includes:

- **Tailored for Kirklees:** Partners asked for the Environment strategy to take a 'tailored for Kirklees' approach, rather than follow an existing technical off-the-shelf model, to enable the unique characteristics of Kirklees and its people, to stand out.
- **Designed with, not for:** Involving 1039 residents and 549 representatives of partner organisations, businesses, institutions, and community groups across Kirklees. Partners were engaged with on multiple occasions, helping evolve the content over time to deliver a strong, ambitious, and successful strategy for all.
- **Engage those who have not yet had their say:** We engaged community groups from across Kirklees who are not commonly involved in the process of helping create a Kirklees-wide strategy. We gave everyone a voice, developed relationships, and sought to incorporate a wider variety of perspectives.

As part of the strategies co-design process, all of Kirklees' Ward Councillors were given an opportunity to be engaged on two-occasions, via their political party group meetings (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green and Independents), held both in-person and virtually.

All ward Councillors were firstly given the opportunity to comment on and influence the ambition outlined within the strategy, before then being fed-back the changes made because of their input, confirming the outcome.

6. Options

6.1 Options considered

The options considered for recommendation are:

- To recommend that this strategy should be adopted.
- To recommend that this strategy should not be adopted.

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

By adopting this strategy, we will demonstrate straight that, as a Council and as a District, Kirklees takes Environmental issues and challenges seriously and are committed to achieving the Clean and Green Shared outcome in 'Our Council Plan 2024 / 2025', the Council leaders' key priority for the Council to deliver a greener Kirklees and lead on the Climate Emergency, alongside addressing the Ecological emergency.

The strategy will also help generate numerous co-benefits for the people who live work and study in Kirklees, supporting our social and economic ambitions.

7. Next steps and timelines

The strategy will be officially launched shortly after approval by Council. This launch will activate our communication strategy and dedicated webpage on the Council website, the publication of the Partnership Pledge, alongside the Councils internal 'Learning & Organisational Development Module' on the strategy.

8. Contact officer

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9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The Council declared a 'climate emergency motion' in January 2019 and established the cross-party Climate Emergency Working Party (CEWP) to identify practical measures to reduce emissions across the district. Found here:

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=10123>

A Climate Emergency was first declared for Kirklees at the Council Meeting of January 2019 considering growing global awareness of the detrimental effects of climate change on people and the environment worldwide. Found here:

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=10123>

Kirklees council has not before had a co-designed top tier environment strategy.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: 'Environment Strategy: Everyday Life' Report

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment: [Integrated Impact Assessments - IntegratedImpactAssessment \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

11. Service Director responsible

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