

Sustainable Economy Strategy Progress Report

REPORT OF: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE Judy Holmes
Contact Officer: Sally Blomfield – Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy
sally.blomfield@midsussex.gov.uk
Lara Southam, Head of Regeneration and Sustainable Economy
lara.southam@midsussex.gov.uk
Report to: Scrutiny Committee Place and Environment
18 October 2023

Purpose of Report

1. This report documents the progress that has been made in 2022-2023 delivering the 14 Objectives set out in the Council's Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025.

Recommendations

2. **Scrutiny Committee is asked to Endorse the progress made in delivering the objectives in the Sustainable Economy Strategy in the year 2022-2023.**

Background

3. On 30 September 2020, the Council approved a revised Corporate Plan which outlined the Council's response to and early plans for recovery from the Covid19 pandemic. The Plan included a way forward for the continued delivery and evolution of the Council's Sustainability Strategy, and, in light of the impacts of the Covid19 pandemic, committed to revise and merge the Council's Sustainability and Economic Development Strategies with the aim of driving a Green Recovery for the District.
4. In April 2022 Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) approved the Sustainable Economy Strategy (SES) and Action Plan. The Strategy combines the Council's ambitions for a thriving and growing economy with its commitment to sustainability. The Strategy seeks to ensure the impact on our environment and climate change from the actions and activities of the council and those living, working in and visiting the district are reduced.
5. The SES sets a clear vision for Mid Sussex "A vibrant District that is attractive, resilient and innovative that balances social well-being, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth". It focuses on three key themes: People, Places and Partnerships with 14 objectives and 52 actions to support delivery. Each objective is directly linked back to the relevant UN Sustainability Development Goals, which guided the development of the strategy.

Summary of progress

6. Measuring progress is really important and therefore in establishing the SES each objective sets out:
 - (a) A series of "Measures of Success" by which we will track our progress of delivery.
 - (b) Specific actions identifying "What we will do"

Due to the complexity and cross cutting nature of the actions, the work taken to deliver them is often relevant to a number of actions. As a consequence, there is an element of repetition in reporting. Therefore, the detail will only be provided the first time an activity is referred thereafter it will be cross referenced.

7. Key highlights from the first year of the SES include the completion of Regulation 18 consultation for the emerging District Plan Review, the completion of the MSDC Local Walking and Cycling Strategy, the adoption of Net Zero Carbon emission targets for the Council and the District and the successful launch of the inward investment platform Opportunity Mid Sussex.
8. Appendix 1 sets out the full Progress Report in the first year of the Plan: April 2022 to March 2023.
9. Whilst recent Government announcements have amended the timescales for specific carbon reduction actions, the overall commitment to the Government's Net Zero target of 2050 has been confirmed. Therefore, this does not impact on the Council's net zero targets and work continues towards achievement of them.
10. Whilst this report reviews work carried out between April 2022 and March 2023, we continue to work at pace to deliver Objective 13 of the SES which includes achievement of the Council's targets for net zero. In respect to achievement of the Council's net zero target, to date we taken the following actions: we procure the electricity supply for Oaklands campus from renewable sources, backed by the governments REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin) certification scheme. We are also developing a Heat Decarbonisation Plan for the Oaklands campus, and we are undertaking energy efficiency audits for Council assets. Reductions are already being achieved through installation of LED lighting, solar panels and upgrading of boilers at the Oaklands campus reducing our usage and emissions. Finally, we are building climate change awareness and skills through Carbon Literacy Training and accreditation.

Other Options Considered

11. The SES sets out a commitment to monitoring delivery of the SES. This is stated in Section 5 of the Strategy. Therefore, no other options were considered.

Next steps

12. The Progress report will be published on the Council's website. Monitoring delivery will continue.

Financial Implications

13. There are no financial implications associated with the preparation of the progress report. However, there are financial implications in respect to delivering some of the actions. Where this is the case, a specific budget is in place.

Risk Management Implications

14. The Council has approved the SES and Action Plan. Therefore, it is important to be clear and transparent about the work that has been undertaken and progress made against these Actions. Without this there is a risk of reputational damage to the Council in not delivering approved Strategies.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

15. There are no equality or customer service implications.

Other Material Implications

16. There are no other material implications

Sustainability

17. Sustainability is embedded within the SES. In particular Objective 6: Promote the benefits of sustainability practices and encourage action to support achievement of Carbon Net Zero and Objective 13: Reduction in Carbon Emissions articulate the specific actions we need to take to improve the overall sustainability of Mid Sussex. Progress against these targets is set out in Appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – SES Progress Report

Background Papers

[Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan](#)