



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	Chairman of the Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee: Annual Report 2023/24	To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented
Meeting of:	Corporate Management Team: N/A	
	Leader and Deputy Leaders: N/A	
	Leader's / Leader of the Opposition's Advisory Group: N/A	
	Council: 18th March 2024	
	Audit Committee / Scrutiny (Regeneration, Development and Market Hall) Committee / Scrutiny (Health and Well Being) Committee / Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee / Scrutiny (Value for Money Council) Committee: N/A	



Is this an Executive Decision:	NO	Is this a Key Decision:	NO
Is this in the Forward Plan:	NO	Is the Report Confidential:	NO
If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:	N/A		

Essential Signatories:

ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE

Monitoring Officer: **John Teasdale**

Date Signature

Chief Finance Officer: **Lloyd Haynes**

Date Signature

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Date: 18th March 2024

REPORT TITLE:	Chairman of the Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee: Annual Report 2023/24
PORTFOLIO:	Leader of the Council
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Chief Executive
CONTACT OFFICER:	James Abbott (Corporate and Commercial Manager) Ext. No. 1244
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Non-specific

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide a summary of the Scrutiny activities undertaken by the Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee during 2023/24.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council's Scrutiny Committees discharge the overview and scrutiny function under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 2.2. The Committees are tasked with:
- 2.2.1. Reviewing and/or scrutinising decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
 - 2.2.2. Reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Council;
 - 2.2.3. Serving as consultees in relation to executive decisions and key elements of service plans when required; and
 - 2.2.4. Producing progress reports and recommendations to the Executive arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process or refer to the Executive entire reports produced as a result of the scrutiny process. However it is

the decision of the Executive whether or not such a report is subsequently submitted to Full Council.

2.3. The Committee met for the first time this municipal year on 26th July 2023.

3. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

3.1. Scrutiny work can contribute to any priority depending on the subject matter of the scrutiny topic in question.

4. Committee Activities

4.1. Scrutiny Work

4.1.1. Over the past year, the Committee has undertaken various scrutiny work, including keeping a watching brief on corporate items and working on a number of specific reviews covering a broad spectrum of subject matter:

4.1.1.1. **Considered Climate Change Objectives with the Portfolio Holder:** At the initial meeting of this Committee in July 2023, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change was invited to give an overview of his portfolio. The discussion topics included: carbon reduction; carbon capture; biodiversity and nature recapture; climate change adaptation; minimising waste pollution; and any opportunities presented by climate change, through economic development, green technology and investment in solar panels, air source and ground source heat pumps. This insight into the Council's work helped the Committee consider its scrutiny programme for the year ahead.

4.1.1.2. **Considered the Climate Change Action Plan:** The Climate Change and Adaptation Officer attended the meeting held in September 2023 to give a presentation on the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. The Committee noted that the Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2020, and set two aims: To make the council's activities carbon-neutral by 2040, and to make the Borough carbon neutral by 2050. The Committee noted several examples given of actions the Council had already taken or would be taking in the future to help reduce emissions.

4.1.1.3. **Considered Tree Planting within the Borough:** The Communities Open Spaces and Facilities Manager, the Project Officer (Open Spaces) and the Climate Change and Adaptation Officer attended the meeting held in January 2024 to give a presentation on tree planting in the borough. Councillors noted the number of trees planted by species; lessons learned and points to note. It was agreed that an invitation be extended for all Councillors to attend the Go Garden project, which would also be provided within the Member briefing.

- 4.1.1.4. **Currently Reviewing Community Engagement Mechanisms Regarding Climate Change:** At the meeting of the Committee held in September 2023, Committee Members agreed to progress a review of Community Engagement Mechanisms Regarding Climate Change. It was agreed that a sub-group of Members would participate in the review. The purpose of this work is to review what actions the Council is undertaking or proposing to undertake to: engage with the local community about climate change; and disseminate climate change information effectively.
- 4.1.1.5. The core themes of this review are: to look into how the Council and other local groups engage with communities in relation to climate change; to consider what actions are being undertaken in the community and what communities are most concerned about; and to look at what data is available that is being or could be shared. The sub-group has met with relevant officers to pose questions and gather the necessary background information. The sub-group is in the process of undertaking a benchmarking exercise and gathering input from local community groups to inform the final report.
- 4.1.1.6. The review is ongoing, with any recommendations arising still to be confirmed, however the full intended scope of this review can be seen in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.1.1.7. **General Scrutiny Responsibilities:** There has been ongoing scrutiny from the Committee of the quarterly Corporate Plan Performance Reports as in previous years. The Committee has continued to scrutinise Executive Decision Records on an ongoing basis, and considered questions submitted to the Committee by members of the public for the first time.
- 4.1.1.8. **Public Participation (Questions from the Public):** At the meeting held in July 2023 the Committee was pleased to receive a written question from a member of the public. The questioner gave some background information and asked: "...what will ESBC do to play its part in reducing pressure on the sewage system?" Some suggestions were also given by the questioner as to what could be done. A written reply to the question was provided by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development and a verbal response to relevant parts of the question by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, who was in attendance at the meeting. The Committee was able to discuss both the question and the given answers, which subsequently informed the consideration of the ongoing programme of reviews (see paragraph 4.1.1.9). Although no further questions have subsequently been submitted by members of the public, the Committee welcomes public participation in scrutiny in line with the Council's Constitution.

- 4.1.1.9. **Ongoing Programme of Reviews:** The Committee continues to maintain a programme of future reviews, with Members highlighting and prioritising potential topics on an ongoing basis. This approach ensures a full and productive programme of work for the Committee, with additional reviews commencing in the near future as existing work is completed. The Committee intends to receive a presentation from relevant partners at its next meeting in relation to sewerage and flooding.

5. **Financial Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: **Lloyd Haynes***

- 5.1. There are no financial issues arising from this Report.

6. **Risk Assessment and Management**

- 6.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

6.1.1. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

- 6.1.1.1. None identified

6.1.2. **Negative** (Threats):

- 6.1.2.1. None identified

- 6.2. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

7. **Legal Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team: **John Teasdale***

- 7.1. Where a local authority operates under executive arrangements then it must also have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee ('OSC'), which is responsible for overseeing and scrutinising the local authority's decisions, for example, scrutinising the financial arrangements and performance of the local authority including its budget and accounting processes (section 9F, Local Government Act 2000). An OSC may be split into a number sub-committees dealing with the scrutiny of different areas, such as health and well-being or climate change.
- 7.2. A local authority operating under executive arrangements must ensure that its OSC has the power to:

- Review or scrutinise decisions or actions taken which relate to the discharge of any functions which are and are not the responsibility of the executive
- Make reports or recommendations to a local authority or its executive relating to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and also those that are not.
- Make reports or recommendations on matters which affect a local authority's area or its inhabitants.

7.3. However, and as this is a summary report, there are no significant legal implications.

8. Equalities and Health

8.1. **Equality Impacts:** The subject of this Report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

8.2. **Health Impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

9. Data Protection Implications – Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

10.1. A DPIA must be completed where there are plans to:

- use systematic and extensive profiling with significant effects;
- process special category or criminal offence data on a large scale; or
- systematically monitor publicly accessible places on a large scale
- use new technologies;
- use profiling or special category data to decide on access to services;
- profile individuals on a large scale;
- process biometric data;
- process genetic data;
- match data or combine datasets from different sources;
- collect personal data from a source other than the individual without providing them with a privacy notice ('invisible processing');
- track individuals' location or behaviour;
- profile children or target marketing or online services at them; or
- process data that might endanger the individual's physical health or safety in the event of a security breach

10.2 Following consideration of the above, there are no Data Protection implications arising from this report which would require a DPIA.

10. Human Rights

10.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

11. **Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

11.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures) **N/A**

12. **Recommendation(s)**

12.1. To note the report

13. **Background Papers**

13.1. None

14. **Appendices**

14.1. Appendix 1: Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee Reviews 2023/24 (***below***).

Appendix 1: Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee Reviews 2023/24

Review of Community Engagement Mechanisms Regarding Climate Change

Summary of Background and Scope

Background

At the meeting of the Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee held on 20th September 2023, Committee Members agreed to progress a review of Community Engagement Mechanisms Regarding Climate Change. It was agreed that a sub-group of the Committee would lead the review on behalf of the Committee. The purpose of this Review is to review what actions the Council is undertaking or proposing to undertake to: engage with the local community about climate change; and disseminate climate change information effectively.

Scope

The core themes of this review are as below:

1. Engagement

- a. How does the Council engage with its communities about climate change?
- b. How do other local councils or local community groups engage with communities about climate change?
- c. Does the Council have data on current engagement?

2. Communities

- a. What actions are our communities undertaking need in relation to Climate Change?
- b. What are communities most concerned about need in relation to Climate Change?
- c. What support do community organisations need in relation to Climate Change?

3. Data

- a. Is there data available that is being / could be shared? E.g.:
 - i. Local emissions data;
 - ii. Energy efficiency data

Approved Recommendations

The review is ongoing with the outcomes from this review still to be confirmed