

Housing and Infrastructure Board

29 June 2021

Net Zero Programme Update

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

This report advises the Board of current progress towards the net zero target of 2040 and highlights priority areas of impact, namely Domestic, Transport, Industry and Nature. Addressed at scale, these areas would give further impetus to SYMCA led decarbonisation commitments within the region. It is recommended that Board recognise the priority areas of impact and endorse the development of interventions within these areas. This report also highlights current areas of activity and the ongoing work programme.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

Climate change is impacting our homes and communities, our infrastructure, agriculture, water supplies, and natural environment in South Yorkshire and it will do so with increasing frequency and intensity in the years ahead. The impacts to our society and our economy will be profound. We all have a role to play and both co-operation on use of resources and collaboration at regional level will be of great benefit in addressing these challenges.

Recent increases in energy costs have exacerbated the need for action across all sectors to reduce consumption and hence bills.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- note progress made on delivering the net zero target and to support the development of programmes within priority areas of impact - namely Domestic, Transport, Industry and Nature - that will also directly contribute towards the Net Zero target whilst delivering additional social and/or economic benefits.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

N/A

1. Background

- 1.1 In November 2019, the MCA declared a Climate and Environmental Emergency. In January 2020, the MCA Board approved the Climate Response Framework (CRF) which split the challenge into five areas: Leadership, Carbon Reduction, Carbon Capture, Climate Adaptation, and Climate Economy to achieve a Net Zero economy by 2040.
- 1.2 The MCA's net zero work programme is cross cutting, being delivered through all policy themes. To achieve our net zero targets, we need to continue to harness the collaborative work of all functional areas
- 1.3 At present, MCA programmes covering transport, housing, infrastructure and the broader activities that the MCA supports, can and do have a beneficial effect on the climate goals of the region, but the impacts so far are modest.
- 1.4 The key net zero activities being undertaken or proposed are set out below. The information in Appendix A also illustrates the contributors to South Yorkshire's carbon emissions and both the reductions that have been made since 2005 and the projected pathway to meet the net zero target. It highlights that policy gaps are evident across a number of sectors, which will require interventions at scale to achieve the reductions necessary.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 For South Yorkshire to meet its net zero target whilst growing the economy and improving opportunity for its residents, embedding sustainability within the decision-making structures of the MCA will be key. Carbon reduction needs to be woven through the activities and plans of the MCA and recognised as both the most important challenge we face and a key opportunity for developing an inclusive economy.
- 2.2 Opportunities exist across the identified main regional contributors to reduce the region's emissions as well as to increase the ability of our natural spaces to sequester carbon.
- 2.3 Whilst a significant proportion of total emissions are outside the direct control of the MCA or constituent Local Authorities, programmes undertaken at regional level can

and will drive down emissions, deliver added benefits and lay the groundwork for further reductions.

2.4 SYMCA officers are examining interventions to tackle carbon emissions and deliver co-benefits for the region across the four main priority areas of:

1. Domestic,
2. Transport,
3. Industry and Commercial sector,
4. Nature recovery.

2.5 The first three areas represent our major sources of emissions, and the fourth area represents an opportunity to develop natural solutions to sequester carbon.

2.6 Domestic

Officers are building the case for a South Yorkshire Retrofit Programme. Initial pre-feasibility and evidence collection has shown there are seven areas which will need to be examined in the development of this programme.

- Housing stock modelling and data management
- Independent technical assistance
- Publicity, outreach and community engagement
- Supply chain development and procurement
- Piloting / showcasing
- Skills development
- Leverage policy and funding

MCA Board approved this work in March 2022, with a view to requesting funding through the “Project Feasibility Fund” later in the year, for the formal business case development.

2.7 Transport

The Mayoral Combined Authority was successful in securing £1.85m from the Government’s Get Building Fund in 2020 for the purchase and installation of electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) and associated infrastructure for use by battery-powered electric vehicles across South Yorkshire.

The MCA has worked in partnership with the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities to develop an initial programme focused on LA and MCA public car parks. This focus was to enable early delivery (as land was in the ownership of Local Authorities) and to support wider public transport and active travel strategic policy ambitions set out in the SEP and Transport Strategy; and plans set out in the Net Zero Framework and Energy Strategy.

Following a procurement process, the MCA and partners have now entered into contract to deliver the SY EVCP programme. This will also support the national agenda to transition to low and zero emission vehicles set out in the Government’s

Road to Zero Strategy, as part of enabling the phasing out of petrol and diesel passenger and light goods vehicles.

The Government recently published both its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and information on potential additional funding opportunities available to support the proliferation of EVCPs

Further work is ongoing on delivering our wider transport strategies through the CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement), ZEBRA Funding and Enhanced Partnership within the bus delivery model. The impact of each of these programmes and their constituent schemes will need to be assessed to determine their contribution to wider environmental targets.

2.8 Industry and Commercial Sector

An ERDF funded scheme is operating in the region managed by Sheffield City Council which is offering targeted support to SMEs in the form of access to expertise in the first instance and the grant funding for decarbonisation projects. It has a target to deliver 280 audits and 140 project grants.

MCA Officers are investigating how best to work with our larger industrial and commercial emitters, to identify in what capacity the MCA can operate to accelerate the decarbonisation of these sectors.

2.9 Nature Recovery

The MCA will be the statutory body responsible for delivering a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, we still await details from DEFRA on the scope of this requirement and the resources that will be provided to deliver it.

2.10 South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre

In conjunction with the University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, our four Local Authorities and a host of private and voluntary sector organisations, SYMCA has created the South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre. The Centre's aim is to act as a hub for knowledge exchange, a way to identify the problems we face in our transition to a stronger, fairer and greener South Yorkshire and critically to work together to find the solutions. Sharing knowledge along the way, ensuring we maximise the impact of the research and innovation we have a global reputation for, to deliver benefits to our region. The centre will help provide the evidence base for our organisations, businesses and communities to make informed decisions, acting as the research arm of the region. This is truly an innovative way of working and has received the endorsement of Research England who have provided £5M in funding. Over time we hope to see the Sustainability Centre grow in capability, impact and reputation.

2.11 Citizen's Assembly

The new Mayor wishes to ensure better engagement with the public over both the need to act and the potential solutions to the climate emergency. Officers are working to understand the implications of this manifesto pledge.

2.12 Prioritising Net Zero Schemes

In the development of the programmes above, officers will determine the scale of interventions that may be required in each of the priority areas. In assessing each, the following tests will be applied;

- **Total carbon abatement:** the total potential reduction in the amount of carbon emissions from action.
- **Enabling potential:** this is particularly relevant for supply chain development, and engagement/communication.
- **Additionality:** ensuring SYMCA efforts are directed most effectively and not acting in opposition to existing programmes delivered by others.
- **Timeliness and control:** some interventions will be delivered more easily in the short-term and deliver more rapid benefits than others.
- **Co-Benefits:** Carbon Reduction projects have the potential to deliver significant additional benefits, in economic growth, reduction in fuel poverty, improved health and wellbeing, higher skills base, amongst others. Assessment of these is crucial to the business case development of programmes.

Availability of quality data to inform decision making remains an issue, the launch of the South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre as described in Section 1.14 is intended to remedy this. Access to co-designed research projects and quality data sources and analysis will improve the quality of investment decisions and the design of projects and programmes.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

To note progress made on delivering the net zero target and to support the development of programmes within priority areas of impact - namely Domestic, Transport, Industry and Nature - that will also directly contribute towards the Net Zero target whilst delivering additional social and/or economic benefits.

3.2 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

These activities alone will not enable us to meet our Net Zero Target. We will need to continue to develop programmes that contribute to the fulfilment of this target, and ensure that the target is embedded in all the strategic, policy and investment decisions made by the MCA.

3.3 Option 2

None

3.4 Recommended Option

Option 1

4. Consultation on Proposal

None

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

N/A

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

There are no Financial and Procurement implications as a result of this report

7. Legal Implications and Advice

There are no Legal implications as a result of this report

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

There are no Human Resources implications as a result of this report

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

There are no Equality and Diversity implications as a result of this report

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

Whilst a significant proportion of total emissions are outside the direct control of the MCA or constituent Local Authorities, programmes undertaken at regional level can and will drive down emissions, deliver added benefits and lay the groundwork for further reductions.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

There are no Information and Communication Technology implications as a result of this report

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

There are no Communications and Marketing Implications as a result of this report

List of Appendices Included

A Emissions Data

Background Papers

None