

Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Building Energy Strategy

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny (E,C&P) – 4th September 2025
Cabinet – 16th September 2025

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Sally Howell (SH)

Report by: Matthew Raby (MR) – Facilities Manager

Ward(s) affected: Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots

Executive Summary:

Huntingdonshire District Council has commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040, as outlined in the Climate Strategy adopted in February 2023.

We have taken a proactive approach to reducing carbon emissions within the buildings by moving to a renewable green electricity tariff as well as completing several projects to reduce carbon and running costs utilising external funding including Salix Recycling Scheme, Public Sector Decarbonisation (PSDS), Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) and Sports England. We have also had the opportunity to use HDC's own resources, a few examples are noted below

- Partial Decarbonisation of Pathfinder House and Civic Suite – PSDS
- Decarbonisation of One Leisure Ramsey – PSDS
- Decarbonisation designs for Pathfinder House, Eastfield House and One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside – LCSF
- Solar Canopy at One Leisure St Ives Indoor – Sport England
- Roof mounted Solar at One Leisure Huntingdon Dry, Ramsey, St Ives Outdoor and St Neots – HDC Funded

The data reveals that between 2019/20 and 2024/25 we have achieved a market-based carbon reduction of 34.1% in building-related emissions. This leaves 1,678 tCO₂e still to be eliminated to reach net zero carbon.

To support this goal, we are implementing a Building Energy Strategy. This strategy aims to enhance the energy efficiency of council buildings, reduce emissions, and identify opportunities for renewable energy installations, thereby delivering both environmental and financial benefits.

Recommendation(s):

To note the required feasibility studies and works within the Building Energy Strategy for the Buildings to become Net Zero by 2040.

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

1. to approve the Building Energy Strategy with a view to complete feasibility studies on the building identified allowing HDC to make informed decisions on future energy and carbon savings; and
2. to delegate to the Corporate Director - Finance & Resources (S151) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finances & Resources to make any consequential amendments to budgets and release of necessary funds to deliver the projects.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to gain formal approval to proceed with the implementation of the Building Energy Strategy and identify opportunities for renewable energy installations delivering both environmental and financial benefits primarily at the sites below.

- Pathfinder House
- Eastfield House
- One Leisure Huntingdon Dry
- One Leisure Huntingdon Wet
- One Leisure Ramsey
- One Leisure St Ives Indoor
- One Leisure St Ives Outdoor
- One Leisure St Neots

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 With the Net Zero target of 2040, decarbonisation and reducing carbon is a key priority. The Building Energy Strategy has been produced to sit alongside and work in conjunction with HDC's Climate Strategy.

To ensure that HDC's net zero carbon commitment is credible, science-aligned, transparent, and effective, the Buildings Energy Strategy has been developed in accordance with the UK Green Building Council's (UKGBC) *Guidance on **Net Zero Carbon – Operational Energy Framework***.

The Strategy will focus on three critical operational energy areas that must be addressed to achieve net zero carbon across HDC's property portfolio as noted below. This would be completed by individual site surveys identifying bespoke options for each site.



Reducing operational energy consumption to achieve targets of low Energy Use Intensity (saving 60% compared to 2020) and a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) of 40B or lower.



Low carbon energy supply (i.e. removing fossil fuels from the process of heating the buildings, from catering and minimising fugitive refrigerant gas.)



On-site renewable energy generation.

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 3.1 The Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 4th September 2025.
- 3.2 Following a question from Councillor Lowe, the Panel heard that plans would be looked at on a site by site basis to balance the Council's journey to Net Zero with the lifecycle of existing plant equipment.

- 3.3 Councillor Pitt expressed concerns regarding the legitimacy of green tariffs nationwide, due to the consistency of the energy these tariffs were comprised of. The Panel were advised that a Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificate had been provided by the Council's energy provider validating the green credentials of the origination of its energy. It was noted that the Council's current energy tariff was due for renewal in October 2026.
- 3.4 Further concern was expressed by Councillor Wells in relation to the energy efficiency rating of the Pathfinder House site, in particular the insulation of the building, despite it being relatively new. The Panel heard that the buildings construction with glass areas was partially the reason for this, however many improvements had been implemented since 2021 and once a review of these changes had been undertaken, further opportunities for energy saving would be investigated.
- 3.5 In response to a question from Councillor Shaw relating to the energy consumption at Pathfinder House on Bank Holidays, the Panel heard that there had been a fault in the system which had not recognised the changes inputted for the Bank Holidays, this had now been rectified and would not be an issue going forward.
- 3.6 Concerns were expressed by Councillors Pitt, Hassall and Alban relating to the various interpretations of green tariffs. Following a discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Pitt to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this was seconded by Councillor Lowe and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;
- 3) that further consideration be given to the relative merits of different Green Energy tariffs, given that the expression "100% Green Energy" is interpreted differently by different people. That the council takes a view on these relative merits, and that this feeds into the procurement process in a timely manner.
- 3.7 In response to a question from Councillor Lowe, the Panel heard that the preference was to keep using and to increase the use of green fuels but that alternatives would be considered on this journey as technologies were developed.
- 3.8 Councillor Pitt expressed further concern over the wording of Recommendation 2 and requested that the implications could be further teased out.
- 3.9 In response to a question from Councillor Hunt relating to the input of the Climate Working Group to the formation of the report, the Panel heard that this feedback had been a valuable part of the process.
- 3.10 The Panel were advised that any future buildings adopted into the Council's Estate would be subject to the same processes as existing buildings. It was specifically noted that the Council would be looking to

develop the plant room at Sawtry Leisure Centre with energy saving options, however scope would depend on collaboration with the landlord as this would be a leased facility.

- 3.11 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations within the report, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

3) that further consideration be given to the relative merits of different Green Energy tariffs, given that the expression "100% Green Energy" is interpreted differently by different people. That the council takes a view on these relative merits, and that this feeds into the procurement process in a timely manner.

4. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

The Buildings Energy Strategy highlights five priorities to achieve net zero emissions by 2040

1. Review HDC's corporate buildings strategy to focus on retained sites
2. Electrification of heat by 2033, in line with the HDC Climate Strategy.
3. Reduce energy consumptions by 60% by 2040
4. Procure electricity from renewable sources
5. Improve the EPC rating of Pathfinder House in advance of imminent MEES regulation evolution

Feasibility studies working with specialist contractors will need to be procured and costed to take place on each of HDC's retained buildings. This will enable us to confirm costings to complete the required works to become net zero, these can then be reviewed in line with carbon reduction benefits and potential paybacks.

Within the Strategy the order of electrification is set out although this could be subject to change dependant on the potential for redevelopment of sites and funding available at the time as during this process HDC can include this within developments or refurbishments.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

[\(See Corporate Plan\)](#)

- 5.1 The decarbonisation of the building's links to Priority 2 of HDC's Corporate Plan.



Lowering carbon emissions

We will take positive action to reduce carbon emissions and become a net zero carbon Council by 2040. We will enable and encourage local people and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity across Huntingdonshire.

- 5.2 The installation of more efficient equipment and management of this will also link with Priority 3 of HDC's Corporate Plan.



Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations

Around 80% of our resources are aligned to business as usual (BAU) service delivery and our third priority focuses on delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory functions. While new activities will mostly focus on delivering outcomes under our two new outward-facing priorities, we will continue to provide a wide range of existing statutory and important services and seek to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Where applicable leases will need to be updated and permissions granted. This will involve both the Estates and Legal departments to make and review the required changes.
- 6.2 Planning permission may be required with decarbonisation works so these would be applied for at the time of implementation.

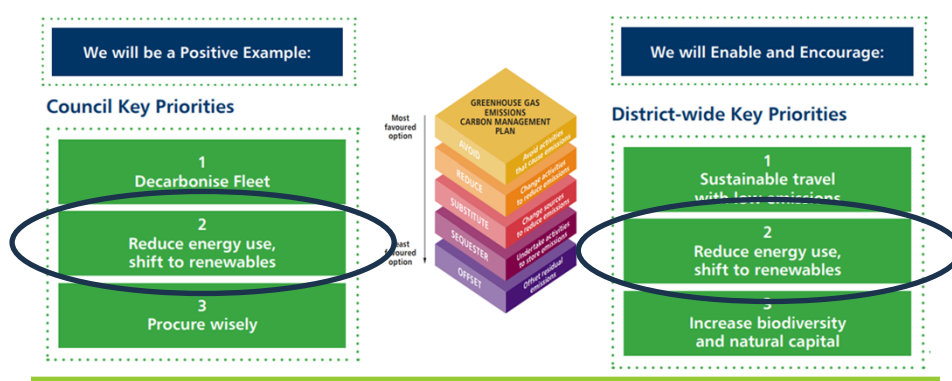
7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No additional resources will be required for the delivery of the Building Energy Strategy. Facilities Management will oversee with the assistance from each of the One Leisure Managers.
- 7.2 Feasibility Studies and Energy Saving Measures will be costed using HDC's procurement processes therefore delegation to the councils Corporate Director - Finance & Resources (S151) to make the necessary adjustments will be required.

8. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In February 2023 HDC agreed its climate strategy with its aim to be Net Zero by 2040. By implementing the Building Energy Strategy this will assist with the pathway to delivering this objective.

Climate Strategy Priorities



Priority*	Action	Theme	Portfolio
High	Review Council assets to establish further opportunities to improve insulation, energy efficiency and adaptation to reduce their carbon impact	Energy and Renewables	Corporate and Shared Services
High	Develop plan for the Council to use 100% renewable energy	Energy and Renewables	Corporate and Shared Services

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 9.1 This provides a pathway enabling HDC to investigate suitable and deliverable schemes enabling HDC to reduce its utility costs and CO2 consumption while assisting the overall HDC goal of being Net Zero by 2040.

10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – HDC Buildings Energy Strategy.

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