

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	06.09.21
	Cabinet		15.09.21
	Council		23.09.21
Subject:	Membership of UK100 and Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy		
Report Of:	Leader of the Council		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	None		

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider whether Gloucester City Council should join the membership of the UK100 network – bringing forward the City Council's net zero carbon commitment by five years, to 2045 – and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the information contained in the report and make any recommendations to the Cabinet.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:
- (1) Gloucester City Council joins the UK100 Local Authority leaders' group and international Race to Zero commitment in advance of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), to be held in the City of Glasgow
 - (2) As a condition of UK100 membership, Gloucester City Council bring forward its 2050 net zero target to 2045
 - (3) Gloucester City Council becomes a signatory to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Gloucester City alongside other Gloucestershire councils declared a climate emergency in July 2019 with a commitment for carbon neutrality by 2050. Since this commitment the county council has brought forward its commitment to 2045 in line with its membership of the national UK100 local authority leaders on climate change.

- 3.2 Both Stroud and Cheltenham districts have net zero targets of 2030 and Forest of Dean, Cotswold and Gloucestershire County Council (by virtue of membership of UK100) are committed to net zero by 2045. Tewksbury do not yet have a district wide target on net zero. Bringing forward Gloucester's target will bring us in line with the majority of our neighbours. In particular, it makes sense to come into line with the County Council who, as Highway Authority, has some control over some of the most important levers necessary to deliver on that commitment.
- 3.3 In advance of COP26 in Glasgow (which runs from 31 October to 12 November), councils through UK100 alongside global leaders in the Race to Zero, are making pledges to become net zero to support action by national governments to reduce emissions in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Membership of UK100

- 3.4 UK100 is the only network for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to play their part in the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and are doing everything within their power to get their communities to Net Zero as soon as possible, and by 2045 at the latest.
- 3.5 To accelerate the transition to this Net Zero society, UK100 brings together local authorities, from cities to the countryside, to share knowledge, collaborate, and petition the UK government with their collective power.
- 3.6 UK100 then works closely with elected representatives and policy experts to develop solutions to the challenges all our local leaders face, and to build public support for the transition.
- 3.7 The pledge which councils commit to when joining UK100 reads:

'As local leaders across the UK we see the challenges our communities face. We recognise our responsibility to tackle the climate emergency and protect our environment to secure the future for them and for people around the world. In 2019, the UK Parliament passed legislation to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050. This was to keep in line with international commitment in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. But science tells us we need to start now and make rapid reductions much sooner. We will do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We will bring our council emissions to Net Zero by 2030 and we will work with our residents and businesses to bring our wider communities' emissions in line with Net Zero as soon as possible (and by 2045* at the latest).'*

- 3.8 Below are the key components which members need to consider before joining UK100:
1. The Net Zero membership pledge - which includes having a net zero target date of 2030 for council emissions, and 2045 for areawide emissions.
 2. Requirements/clarifications for signing the Net Zero pledge - this includes mandatory annual reporting from 2022 - however you choose to do this; to avoid the use of offsets where possible, and where used for them to be as local as possible, etc.

3. An invitation to join the global COP26 Race to Zero campaign, which is additional, but complementary to our pledge and will connect with a global community of local authorities committed to Net Zero.

3.9 There is no membership fee - just a commitment to engage in advocacy to national government for more powers, funding and resources for local government to tackle the climate emergency.

3.10 Current members of UK100 include:

- Cotswold, Gloucestershire County and Stroud. Cheltenham are intending to join in advance of COP26 and are understood to be already progressing this internally with political support.
- Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and the West of England Combined Authority are also all members.

Membership of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

3.11 The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) was established in 2016 by formally amalgamating the Compact of Mayors and the European Union's Covenant of Mayors and the European Union's Covenant of Mayors. It is the largest international alliance of cities, local governments, and partners committed to combating climate change.

3.12 The principal purposes of GCoM are to:

- Help cities maintain a long-term vision on climate action through collective ambition and achievement.
- Amplify the visibility of signatory commitments and actions in the region and globally.
- Serve cities and local governments by mobilising and supporting ambitious, measurable, and planned climate and energy action in their communities by working with city/regional networks, national government.
- Ensure that signatories are continuously supported in their efforts. Cities receive step-by-step guidance and have access to tools, materials, and a dedicated regional/national helpdesk.
- To provide value to participating cities by mobilising the critical financing and technical assistance cities require to access investment.

3.12 Requirements of membership:

- When officially joining the Covenant of Mayors, signatories commit to developing a Sustainable Energy (and Climate) Action Plan within two years.
- Adopted by Full Council, a signatory's action plan describes the steps towards its 2030 targets. In the case of GCC, this would initially be the net-zero carbon footprint by 2030 committed to at 11 July 2019 Full Council.
- To evaluate the progress made towards their objectives, a Covenant of Mayors signatory is requested to submit a Monitoring Report every second year after the adoption of its Action Plan related to the mitigation and adaptation actions planned and at least every four years the emission inventory of the action plan is updated in order to see the progress related to resilience to climate change, reduction of emissions and energy consumption.

- 3.13 In addition to the general benefits GCoM membership outlined in in section 3.11, the specific benefit of membership to Gloucester City Council is that it helps provide rigour to the City Council's decarbonisation programme and reduces the prospect of drift through the delivery of key documents such as a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and regular Monitoring Reports. Membership of GCoM is also an important expression of the City's ambition to take a leadership role in municipal decarbonisation, at the county, regional, and national level.
- 3.14 The GCoM is based on a voluntary commitment. Joining the GCoM is fully free of charge. There will be costs associated with the production of supporting documents, such as biennial monitoring reports. Such costs will, however, be encountered as a product of the Council's work in this area, irrespective of GCoM membership.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The proposals have been made in order to increase Gloucester City Council's ambition and rigour in meeting local and legally-binding national decarbonisation targets.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The Council could decide not to join UK100 and/or the Global Covenant of Mayors. However this is not recommended if the Council wishes to demonstrate leadership in municipal decarbonisation for the City.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To support and bring greater rigour and ambition to Gloucester City Council's decarbonisation programme.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 As noted in paragraph 3.12, when officially joining the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, signatories commit to developing a Sustainable Energy (and Climate) Action Plan within two years; providing a Monitoring Report every second year after the adoption of its Action Plan, related to the mitigation and adaptation actions planned; and at least every four years the emission inventory of the action plan must be updated in order to demonstrate the progress related to resilience to climate change, reduction of emissions and energy consumption.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Joining the both UK100 and GCoM is fully free of charge. There will be costs associated with the production of supporting documents, such as biennial monitoring reports.

However, these costs will be encountered as a product of the Council's work in this area, irrespective of membership of these organisations/agreements.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, the Council's commitments are still subject to compliance with the Council's legislative duties, such as its contract rules and procurement legislation. The Council will need to be mindful of the Duty of Best Value and, if it is intended to deliver any services differently, its consultation requirements.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 The proposals are designed to reduce the prospect of drift through the introduction of greater structure into GCC's decarbonisation work programme. By increasing the level of collaboration and support GCC engages in on decarbonisation, it is anticipated opportunities to reduce the cost of programme delivery, and opportunities to show regional leadership, will arise.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 None anticipated.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None anticipated.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None anticipated.

Background Documents:

1. [July 2019 Council motion declaring climate emergency](#)
2. [January 2021 Council Climate Change Strategy report](#)