

05 January 2022

Agenda Item:5

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the delivery of the Corporate Environment Strategy (CES) and Action Plan.
2. To report the County Council's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Report 2019-20, setting a baseline to measure progress towards the Council's 2030 carbon neutral target.
3. To provide an update on the £550k capital Green Investment Fund allocation and seek approval to develop a phase two proposal.

Information

Background

4. In 2018, the Government introduced its 25-year Environment Plan to protect and enhance the environment by improving air quality, creating richer habitats for wildlife and reducing plastic waste and subsequently committed the UK to achieving a legally binding target of net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.
5. The latest (6th) UK Carbon Budget issued by the Climate Change Committee in 2020 has identified that in 2019 transport (22%), Industry (20%), Buildings (17%), and electricity generation and agriculture (10% each) were the main sources of CO₂, alongside aviation (7%) and Waste (6%).
6. In May 2019, the County Council resolved to bring forward proposals for a new Environment Strategy to support these national aspirations. These proposals were approved by Policy Committee in September 2019 and covered the key activities of the Council interacting with the environment, including:
 - *Use of fuel, energy and water in our vehicles and buildings;*
 - *Waste generation, treatment and disposal relating to our buildings and activities;*
 - *The management of the Council's land;*
 - *New developments and projects;*
 - *Procurement of goods and services;*
 - *Use of goods and materials and their impact on the environment;*
 - *Council projects, strategies, and policies.*

7. Following this, in March 2020 Policy Committee approved the new Corporate Environmental Policy as well as thirteen proposed key strategic ambitions for the environment strategy and in December 2020 considered an environment strategy update report plus updates against 61 actions related to the above ambitions.
8. At this meeting Policy Committee agreed that the Place Department Leadership Team take operational oversight of the strategy, due to most of the actions sitting within the Place Department's operations and approved the establishment of an environmental strategy manager post and a green investment fund to support delivery of the strategy. This post has now been recruited to and an update on the green investment fund features below.
9. The Council's Environmental Policy is due to be reviewed and updated every 2 years, next due in March 2022.
10. At the first County Council Meeting of the current administration in May 2021 enhanced commitments were made when Members unanimously agreed that ***'This Council now formally agrees to declare a Climate Emergency, and to delegate the new Transport and Environment Committee to take the lead in considering, agreeing, and overseeing appropriate measures to achieve this authority's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality in all its activities by 2030'***.
11. And ***"All other Committees of the Council will be expected to ensure that the decisions they take within their remit adhere to this principle, and the relevant actions agreed across all of these committees will be reported to Full Council on a regular basis so that every Member has an ongoing overview of the progress being made"***.

Progress

12. The CES thirteen strategic ambitions were broken down into five main themes, against these themes an action plan was created containing 61 separate actions, spread across the County Council.
13. Services continue to progress and make significant steps to deliver the action plan. A detailed summary of the action plan progress, as of November 2021 can be found in **Appendix A**. Whilst much progress has been made with the delivery of the Action Plan, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an impact upon a number of these actions.

Resource

14. To deliver on our climate change commitments additional capacity is required to make a step change in environmental performance and support services from across the organisation to reduce their carbon emissions.
15. An additional budget of £200k for 2022/23 has been supported in principle, subject to February 2022 budget approval, to deliver further staffing capacity into the Place department to achieve the Council's ambitions. A staffing proposal paper is included in the January 2022 Place and Communities committee agenda, providing further detail.

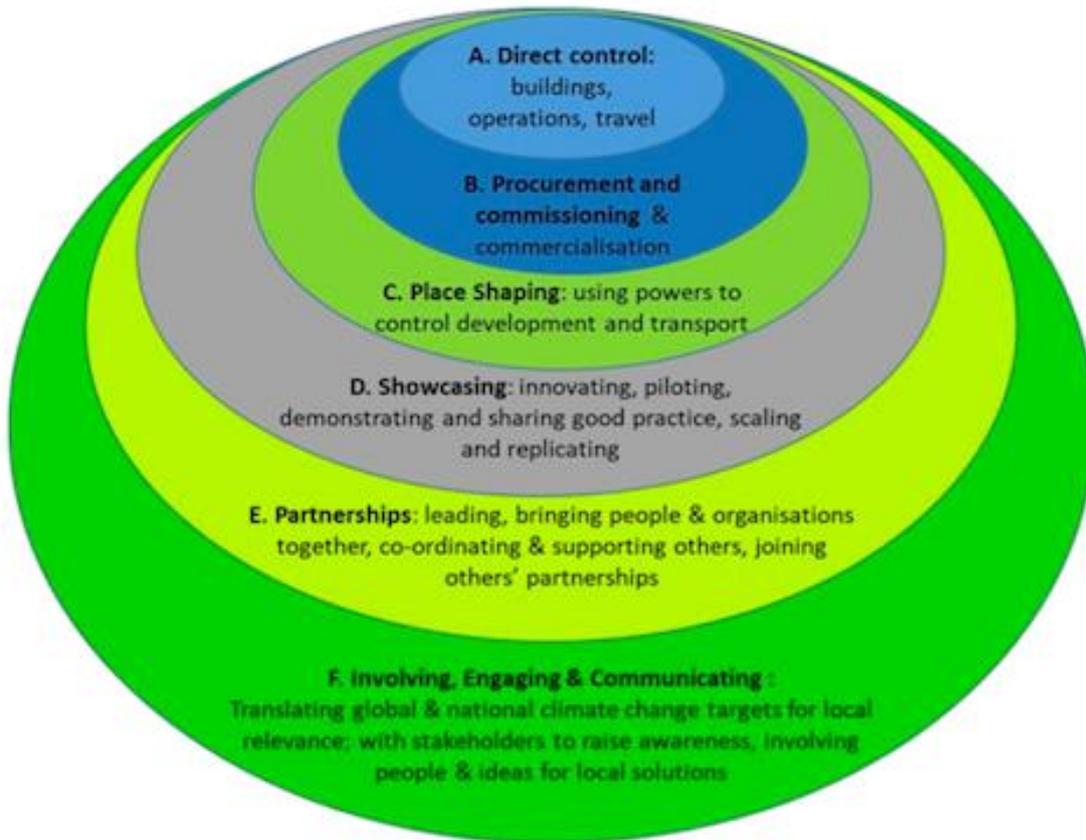
Environment Ambassador

16. In October 2021 to continue our commitment to tackling climate change Councillor Mike Adams, Vice Chairman of the Transport and Environment Committee became the County

Council's first official Environment Ambassador, leading on the ambition to become carbon neutral in all activities by 2030.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report

17. A Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions report has been produced, setting our baseline year for 2019-20, the full report can be found in **Appendix B**. The baseline year report sets the level that the Council is required to get down to neutral to achieve its 2030 carbon neutrality target. This is done through reducing at source where possible and to then to deal with offsetting of any residual emissions.
18. To calculate the Council's GHG emissions the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool has been used. Developed by Local Partnerships and the Local Government Association, the tool ensures the appropriate conversion factors for the reporting year are used and that reporting conforms to nationally and internationally recognised guidance.
19. Within the GHG Accounting Tool emissions are identified in the following scopes:
 - **Scope 1** – Direct emissions, includes emissions released straight into the atmosphere by activities owned or controlled by Nottinghamshire County Council.
 - **Scope 2** – Energy indirect, includes emissions released into the atmosphere associated with the consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam, and cooling, which are a consequence of the Council's activities, but occur at sources the Council does not own or control.
 - **Scope 3** - Other indirect, emissions are discretionary to include that are a consequence of the Council's actions, which occur at sources which are not owned or controlled by NCC.
20. Emissions have been calculated for activities under the Council's direct operational control (scopes 1 & 2), where the level of data required is relatively accurate, although some areas exist where sufficiently robust data for the baseline year does not yet exist. Where this is the case, the report (appendix B) seems to give an indication of the scale and significance of the excluded emissions sources.
21. For context it needs to be remembered that the County Council only contributes 1-5% from activities within in its direct control to overall county wide GHG emissions – represented by section A in the 'spheres of influence' diagram below. Therefore, a large amount of activity that produces GHG emissions is not in our direct control (scope 3). Although we do not have direct control, we do have various levels of influence in these areas and will continue to address this positively through the wider Corporate Environment Strategy action plan. School transport is an area in which we seek to improve the data to report GHG emissions on in the future. Further work could be done to assess the scale of excluded GHG emissions to help identify and inform opportunities for the Council to influence and set future actions.



22. The Councils Alternative Service Delivery Models (ASDMs) are responsible for their own energy performance and will not be included in the Council's baseline year. However, we have a responsibility to work with our partners to ensure they are supported in achieving their own targets those set out in the CES action plan.

23. The table below shows the high-level breakdown of the Council's source of GHG emissions for 2019-20:

Scope	Emissions source	Emissions per tonne (tCO _{2e})	Percentage of Total Emissions
Scope 1	Heating fuels used in NCC buildings (excluding schools)	2,970.46	17.7%
	Fuel used by Authority's Fleet	2,158.31	12.8%
Scope 2	Electricity used in buildings	2330.18	13.9%
	Electricity used by Highway assets (this includes street lighting, traffic signs and signals, lit bollards, subway pumps and other miscellaneous equipment)	6749.55	40.2%
Scope 3	Fuel used by Staff Business Travel	1,818.53	10.8%
	Transmission & Distribution Losses	770.82	4.6%
Total Emissions		16,799.87	100%

24. The table shows the Council's general electricity usage as being the largest source of emissions through streetlighting and other highways assets. The running of our property

estate heating (including electric heating) is also very significant. Emissions arising from energy use in highways and property assets have already been reduced dramatically since 2014/15 by 69% from 35,310 to 10,981 tonnes through numerous activities.

- 25. Other activities are already underway to reduce emissions, such as switching to a green electricity tariff that uses energy from renewable sources, approved at November's Economic Development and Asset Management Committee.
- 26. We can now see where the key sources of emissions are and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 a significant amount of work is required. This will start with the development additional plans to reduce emissions at source, and further consideration of residual emissions. To this end a Carbon Reduction Plan will be developed and brought back to Committee in spring 2022.
- 27. In the short term, all Council decision making reports will consider, within the "sustainability and environment" section of each committee report, the impact of the recommended actions on our environment and carbon emissions, making environmental considerations a fundamental part of our business as usual decision making practices.

Green Investment Fund

- 28. The Green Investment Fund was established with an initial capital budget of £550k for 2021/22 and was approved as part of the 2021/2 budget setting process. The fund will support green projects, and specifically the projects from the action plan in **Appendix A** that lack funding, helping us to deliver the CES ambitions.
- 29. **Appendix C** details the six projects identified to be funded through the green investment fund for the 2021-22 allocated budget. These projects were assessed on the following criteria by Officers and the Council's Environment Ambassador, Councillor Mike Adams, before going through formal approval at CAMG on 6th December 2021:
 - a. **Environment Strategy Action Plan**
The project is required to support the delivery of one or more actions from the CES Action Plan.
 - b. **2030 Carbon Neutrality target**
The project is required to contribute towards the Carbon Neutrality 2030 target, either through reducing GHG emissions from our activities or activities that could off-set any residual emissions, such as tree planting.
 - c. **Financial**
Projects that have the potential to deliver long-term financial savings for the County Council were weighted more favourably.
 - d. **Co-benefits**
As well as reducing GHG Emissions projects that provide co -benefits, such as improving health and boosting the local economy for employees and residents, these schemes were weighted more favourably.
- 30. Significant ongoing financial investment is required to deliver the Council's carbon reduction commitment. Further consideration is being given to securing this investment in the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Net Zero Strategy and Heat & Buildings Strategy

31. The [Net Zero Strategy](#) and [Heat and Buildings Strategy](#) were published by central government on the 19th October 2021, playing an important role in the context of the UK's presidency of the COP26 summit, taking place in Glasgow from 31st October – 12th November 2021. The strategies will begin to guide our work for the foreseeable future, setting out a delivery pathway for national commitments on climate change.
32. The Net Zero strategy presents the government's overarching plan not only for how the UK will decarbonise by 2050, but also how it will achieve a 68% cut in emissions by 2030 (from 1990 levels), as part of a commitment made under the Paris Agreement and a 78% cut by 2035 under the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget. The theme through the strategy sets out three main routes to how these ambitious targets are going to be achieved using electrification, hydrogen and innovation.
33. Throughout the documents local authorities are described as having a vital role in the delivery and leadership of achieving Net Zero nationally by 2050. We have significant control and influence over our services and the strategies give us the opportunity and begin to formalise our responsibility in contributing towards the national Net Zero target as well as our own 2030 target.
34. The strategies detail huge investment over the coming years and it's anticipated several funding streams will become available to help the County Council deliver its ambitions, ensuring the financial resource is there to allow us to adapt.

COP26

35. As part of COP26 the Growth, Infrastructure and Development team were successful in a bid to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy through the East Midlands Energy Hub, to host one of four COP26 Regional Roadshow East Midlands events.
36. A one-day event was organised at the County Council's Worksop Turbine, Digital Innovation Centre bringing regional partners together to deliver on a full day's virtual conference.
37. The event was well attended by partners and local businesses from across the region with over 170 online attendees. Post event a regional action plan is to be developed in partnership with the Environment Agency, summarising the days commitments as we continue to support partners and business in the transition to greener growth.

Other Options Considered

38. None. It is essential that the Council takes immediate action in response to the climate emergency and to minimise the impacts of its operations on the wider environment if we are to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

Reasons for Recommendations

39. It is fundamental the Council prioritises and builds the environmental and carbon impact into all its operational activities to ensure it can achieve the targets it has set.

40. To have a clear understanding of the Council's direct GHG emissions and to ensure a baseline is set for the Council to measure its performance against.
41. The Green Investment Fund was set up to help deliver the CES action plan and the projects will help to improve the environmental performance of the Council's operations.

Statutory and Policy Implications

42. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

43. The £550k capital cost of the Green Investment Fund for 2021/22 was approved as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

44. The County Council has repeatedly committed itself to improving the environmental performance of its operations and recently declared a climate emergency.
45. Making significant changes in the delivery of services will be necessary if the Council is to meet these aspirations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 1) Acknowledges the progress made to date on the Corporate Environment Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2) Agree the Greenhouse Gas Report 2019-20 baseline year to measure future progress towards the Council's 2030 carbon neutral target.
- 3) Endorses the 2021-22 Green Investment Fund allocation and approves the development of a phase two Green Investment Fund proposal to be brought back to the appropriate committee.

Derek Higton
Service Director, Place and Communities

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Mick Allen, Group Manager Place Commissioning, Tel: 0115 77 4684

Constitutional Comments (ADK 07/12/2021)

46. This report falls within the remit of Transport and Environment Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 30/11/2021)

47. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 44 of the report.

48. The £500k capital cost of the Green Investment Fund for 2021/22 was approved as part of the Councils budget setting process.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.