



15 March 2023

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES TO THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND IN RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION IN MAY 2021.

Purpose of the report

1. The report provides a progress update on the Council's activities responding to the challenges of climate change and the Council's response to the climate emergency declaration in May 2021.

Information

Corporate Environment Policy and Strategy

2. In May 2019, the County Council brought forward a proposal for a new Corporate Environment Strategy (CES) to support national aspirations of the UK becoming Net Zero by 2050. 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.*
3. Following this, in March 2020 Policy Committee approved the new Corporate Environmental Policy (subsequently reviewed and updated in September 2022) as well as thirteen key strategic ambitions for the environment strategy and a plan was created to include sixty-one actions to support the delivery of these key strategic ambitions.
4. In May 2021 Full Council enhanced these commitments and declared a climate emergency, and latterly Ambition 9 of The Nottinghamshire plan 2021-2031 was approved and is dedicated to Protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint.

5. The Place Department Leadership Team have operational oversight of the strategy and delivery of the net zero target, due to most of the actions sitting within the Place Department's operations, and a Climate Change team was formed following approval in January 2022.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report and Carbon Reduction Plan

6. In January 2022 the baseline Greenhouse Gas Report 2019-20 was approved at Transport and Environment Committee. The baseline year report set 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.
7. A latest Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions report has recently been produced, for years 2021-22, the full report can be found in **Appendix A** and includes 2020-21 emissions.
8. 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.
9. 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** – All other indirect emissions that occur within the Council's value chain, such as staff business travel and the purchase of goods.
10. 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 A**) gives an indication of the scale and significance of the excluded emissions sources.
11. For context it needs to be remembered that the County Council only contributes 1-5% from activities within its direct control to overall county wide GHG emissions. 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. 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.
12. The Councils Alternative Service Delivery Models (ASDMs) are responsible for their own energy performance and will not be included in the Council's GHG reports. 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 Carbon Reduction Plan (**Appendix B**) and the CES action plan.

13. The table below shows a summary of Nottinghamshire County Council emissions 2019-20 to 2021-22:

Scope	Emissions source	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)			Percentage change from baseline
		2019-20 (baseline)	2020-21	2021-22	
Scope 1	Heating fuels used in buildings	2,970	2,482	2,454	17% lower
	Fuel used by fleet vehicles	811*	639	615	24% lower
Scope 2	Electricity used in buildings	2,336	1,670	1,558	33% lower
	Electricity used by highways assets	6,750	5,232	4,311	36% lower
Scope 3	Fuel used by staff business travel	1,819	777	1,086	40% lower
	Transmission and distribution losses	771	594	519	23% lower
Total		15, 457	11,393	10,543	32% lower

14. Nottinghamshire County Council’s greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 32% since 2019-20. This level of reduction can be largely attributed to the following factors:

- Changes to working practices driven by the Covid pandemic and the adoption of hybrid working policies, enabling staff to reduce fleet and business mileage through use of upgraded ICT, facilitating use of virtual meetings and events.
- Reduced energy use in Council buildings due to lower occupancy levels from home working, investment in energy efficiency measures, and the impact of increasing grid decarbonisation on emissions from electricity use.
- The reduction seen in emissions from electricity use in highways assets reflects continued investment in LED lanterns for street lighting along with the impact of further decarbonisation of the electricity grid.

15. Although this is a positive reduction, we need to continue to make the necessary decisions and changes to see a continued reduction in emissions. This could become increasingly difficult overtime as such projects like the LED Street Lighting programme are completed.

16. Following the publication of the GHG baseline report a Carbon Reduction Plan has been approved (**Appendix B**), setting out a framework for action and scope for the activities for which GHG emissions will be measured and reported in pursuit of the 2030 goal. These activities fall into the three broad areas of energy use in buildings; energy use in highways assets (mainly street lighting); and energy use in work-related travel and transport (both core and grey fleet).

Green Investment Fund

17. The Green Investment Fund (GIF) was established with an initial capital budget of £550k for 2021/22 and was approved as part of the 2021/2 budget setting process. An internally available fund to which Council services from all departments could apply towards small to

medium projects in support of the environment and delivery of the Corporate Environment Strategy (CES) objectives.

18. A further £750k of capital spend spread over three years (2022-2025) was agreed as part of the 2022/3 budget setting process for further GIF projects
19. Twelve projects have been approved to date, details can be found in **Appendix C**, including improving the environmental performance of one of our outdoor education centres and bus stations, creating a woodland, and enhancing existing Local Wildlife sites, replacing a school parking enforcement vehicle for an electric vehicle with EV infrastructure and improving cycle storage provision across the authority's estate.

Staff Engagement and Training

20. A Climate Change learning package has been developed, this includes the accredited Carbon Literacy training course for Leaders and Managers that's been rolled out since July 2022, so far over 80 members of staff have participated and are now certified Carbon Literacy trained.
21. An eLearning module is being developed and will be available from spring 2023, giving staff a one hour online introductory course on climate change.
22. Climate Fresk (a collaborative workshop that summarises the causes and impacts of climate science) and bespoke training sessions have also been offered and delivered to individual services. These sessions have allowed services to understand how they can help incorporate the required changes to tackle the climate emergency into their services moving forward.

Partnership Working and Wider Emissions

23. The appendices within **Appendix B** reference emissions from the County Council's alternative service delivery organisations. Many of these wider emissions, although not within the baseline are addressed through other plans and programmes, many of which form part of the Council's [Nottinghamshire Plan](#) and its Corporate Environment strategy.
24. Activity includes:
 - Supporting the Integrated Care System Green Board.
 - Working with Public Health colleague to implement Nottinghamshire's Food Charter.
 - Support Procurement colleagues as they implement the Sustainable Procurement Policy.
 - Supporting schools and communities to adapt to climate change.

Next Steps

25. The key next step will be for the Climate Change team to collaborate with colleagues to drive the implementation of the Carbon Reduction Plan and to support partners in development of their net zero strategies and plans. Progress will be monitored throughout the year and will be reported on to the Place Leadership Team and the Transport and Environment Cabinet Member.
26. We will continue staff engagement and awareness raising, this will include the creation of an internal Climate Change newsletter and the continued roll out of the climate change learning package.

27. We will support colleagues on Devolution, particularly around the Net Zero theme and the Local Area Energy Planning.

28. From April 2023 we will be welcoming and assessing the next round of Green Investment Fund projects from internal services.

Financial Implications

29. Whilst there are no direct financial implications in the report individual actions are likely to result in capital and revenue costs variations and will be reported and approval sought at the appropriate time.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

30. All the activities noted in this report will contribute to improved environmental performance for the County Council towards the aspiration of being carbon neutral in all its activities by 2030.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Members consider and comment on the report.
2. Members identify the areas of activity that they would like to explore further and determine how this could be carried out.

Councillor Neil Clarke
Cabinet Member Transport and the Environment

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Constitutional Comments (EH 03/03/2023)

31. The report falls within the remit of what the Place Select Committee can consider.

Finance Comments (KP 03/03/2023)

32. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of the report.

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.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.