



REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITIES AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Purpose of the Report

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

Background

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:
 - o *Use of fuel, energy and water in our vehicles and buildings.*
 - o *Waste generation, treatment and disposal relating to our buildings and activities.*
 - o *The management of the Council's land.*
 - o *New developments and projects.*
 - o *Procurement of goods and services.*
 - o *Use of goods and materials and their impact on the environment.*
 - o *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. As well as Ambition 9 of The Nottinghamshire Plan, other key ambitions contribute to the delivery of climate action the Council is taking following the declaration. These ambitions are highlighted below:
 - Attracting investment in infrastructure, the economy and green growth
 - Helping our people live healthier and more independent lives

- Making Nottinghamshire somewhere people love to live, work and visit

Governance

6. The Place Department Leadership Team have operational oversight of the strategy and delivery of the carbon neutral 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.
7. Regular Cabinet Member briefings are shared with the Transport and Environment Cabinet Member and annual Greenhouse Gas Emission Report and Carbon Reduction Plan update are taken for decision.

Information

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting – Progress to date

8. In January 2022 the Greenhouse Gas Report for 2019-20 was approved at Transport and Environment Committee. This set a baseline against which progress towards carbon neutrality by 2030 will be measured. Carbon neutrality will be achieved by reducing emissions at source where possible, and by offsetting any residual emissions where necessary. GHG reports for 2020-21 and 2021-22 showed good progress towards the 2030 target.
9. A Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions report has now been produced, for 2022-23, and the full report can be found in [here](#).
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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, data is becoming more robust for these areas and continues to improve. Where data is not so robust within the report it gives an indication of the scale and significance of the excluded emissions sources.
13. 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 CES action plan.

14. Work is underway with Public Health colleagues to identify the associated co-benefits of climate action; this will support future decision making and help us to understand the level of impact GHG emissions are having locally. This piece of work will also look further, working with Procurement colleagues to influence our supply chains and commissioned services.
15. Looking at wider County emissions a Nottinghamshire Net Zero Framework is in development to document the County Council’s ambitions for a Net-Zero Nottinghamshire. It will detail the Council’s role and priorities and a report is also due to Overview Committee on 14th March 2024 for Members engagement and feedback.
16. The Councils Alternative Service Delivery Models (ASDMs) are responsible for their own energy performance and are not included within 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, these are set out in the Carbon Reduction Plan update (**Appendix B**) and the CES action plan.
17. The table below shows a summary of Nottinghamshire County Council emissions 2019-20 to 2022-23:

Scope	Emissions source	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)				Percentage change from baseline
		2019-20 baseline	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Scope 1	Heating fuels used in buildings	2,970	2,482	2,454	2,087	30% lower
	Fuel used by fleet vehicles	811*	639	615	732	10% lower
Scope 2	Electricity used in buildings	2,336	1,670	1,558	1,387	41% lower
	Electricity used by highways assets	6,750	5,232	4,311	3,476	49% lower
Scope 3	Fuel used by staff business travel	1,819	777	1,086	1,295	29% lower

	Transmission and distribution losses	771	594	519	446	42% lower
Total		15,457	11,393	10,543	9,423	39% lower

*This figure has been adjusted down from the previous Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report due to errors in data which have now been rectified.

18. Nottinghamshire County Council's greenhouse gas emissions reduced by **39%** since 2019.

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. However, the continued increase in emissions from staff business travel between 2020-21 and 2022-23 is a cause for concern. The increase in emissions from fuel use in fleet vehicles in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22 is probably due to the adoption of a more accurate methodology using fuel consumption rather than miles travelled, which has been facilitated by a new fuel card system.
- **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.
- **Reduced energy use in Highways Assets** arising from a continued investment in LED lanterns for street lighting, along with the impact of further decarbonisation of the electricity grid.

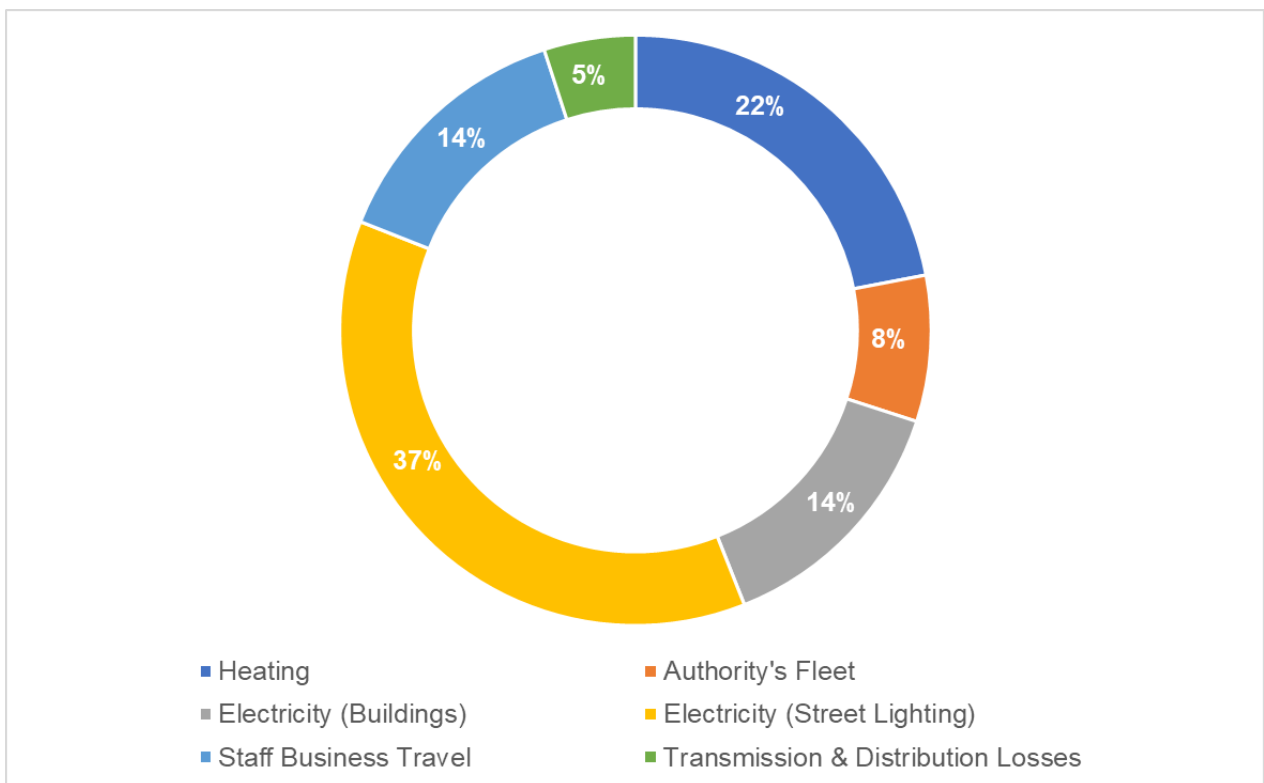
19. This is a positive reduction; we need to continue to make the necessary decisions and changes to see a continued reduction in emissions. The street lighting LED conversion programme completed earlier this year. It will contribute positively to 2023-24 reporting, but thereafter reductions in emissions from highways assets will be less significant unless the grid decarbonises significantly.

20. It should be noted that measures that reduce GHG often deliver other benefits to organisations and society in general, such as reduced utility bills, reduced staff travel costs and improvements to health and wellbeing through cleaner air and increased levels of physical activity. In considering measures to reduce its emissions the Council will look to maximise such co-benefits.

21. For next year's report the conversion factor will increase, this increases in grid carbon intensity as a result of an unexpected reduction in energy generated from onshore and offshore wind farms due to untypical calm weather in and around the UK during 2021. This meant that electricity from natural gas fired power stations increased to meet the shortfall. The emissions factor for a given year utilises the grid mix data from a couple of years previously.

Carbon Reduction Plan

22. The [Carbon Reduction Plan \(Appendix A\)](#) published in February 2023, sets 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).
23. Given that greenhouse gas emissions are long-lasting and therefore accumulate in the earth's atmosphere, it is important to think in terms of an available budget of emissions that should not be exceeded if nations and organisations are to play their fair part in limiting climate change to within safe levels. To remain within the budget of available emissions, significant reductions need to be achieved quickly and therefore this Plan sets an ambitious interim target in line with the emissions reduction trajectory recommended by the UK's independent [Committee on Climate Change](#).
24. The Graph below sets out the 2022-23 Greenhouse Gas Emissions data as percentage per area of emissions. The electricity used on the highway make up 37% of emissions, the electricity and heating used in the Council's built estate make up 36% of emissions, staff business travel 14% of emissions and the authority's fleet 8% of emissions, equalling 22% from work related travel:



25. Although activity was underway in areas prior to the Carbon Reduction Plan publication, the plan has been implemented over the last year and partners have been supported to produce their own plans and align themselves with the Council's targets and ambitions. An update on progress from both Council and Partner activities can be found within **Appendix B**.

26. Highlights include the publication of the Scape Group, Arc Partnership and Via Carbon Reduction Plans. Inspire have reduced their GHG emissions from their built estate by 10% in 2022-23 and are accessing Carbon Literacy training for key staff members.

Key Areas for Action

27. As well as continuing to support our partners on their journey we will continue to deliver the Council's carbon reduction plan and will focus our efforts in the key areas for action detailed below:

Highways Assets – 37% of Council emissions

28. Now that the LED Street Lighting conversion programme is complete, Highways & Transport along with the support of Via East Midlands colleagues are looking to further decarbonise the highway. Firstly, an LED highways signage project is being explored as a possibility.

Properties – 36% of Council emissions

29. The decarbonisation of the property estate will be a key focus. The Property Strategy is currently being updated to include decarbonisation ambitions.

30. Activity that is already underway will continue and help support the decarbonisation further through the Building and Office Rationalisation Programme. Also, holiday office closures and energy audits which have started to be carried out across the estate will inform energy efficiencies and potential renewable energy generation options.

Staff Business Travel – 14% of Council emissions

31. Reducing emissions from staff business travel is always going to be difficult as working patterns and movements change amongst service areas post covid. The current trend is in the wrong direction and with budget pressures impending a Staff Travel project is underway.

32. The Staff Travel project seeks to support better choices and solutions for staff movements. A review and relaunch of existing schemes to support staff is being worked on and a pilot is underway with a high mileage team (Looked After Children team) to determine if the option of a dedicated low emission pool vehicle reduces staff mileage claims and overall team carbon footprint.

Greening of Fleet – 8% of Council emissions

33. Greening of the fleet is moving progressively (see **Appendix B** Carbon Reduction Plan update) but requires significant investment beyond the current allocation.

34. A Fleet Review began in November 2023 that seeks to find innovative solutions to the aging fleet. As part of the review a team of officers took part in a focused piece of work during January 2024. This concentrated predominantly on the Transport & Travel Services fleet vehicles. The key findings are being evaluated and an options paper is to be produced. These options will take into account the greening of the fleet commitment and also the current budget pressures.

Evaluating Carbon impacts of Hybrid working

35. The GHG emission reporting has highlighted that hybrid working is impacting on reducing the county councils overall carbon footprint. We will be evaluating this further over the coming months, taking into consideration the impact in the main office buildings, smaller estate buildings, staff travel changes due to hybrid working and the impact on employees within their home settings.

Staff training and Engagement

36. Carbon Literacy training will continue to be offered and delivered around the County for all staff and Members. At present over 200 employees are now certified Carbon Literate since attending the training.

37. Seeking engagement with all staff and service areas will continue through many forms such as through the Green Investment Fund projects, through working groups and bespoke training, and through various online platforms such as the newly launched Viva Engage page – The Green Exchange, Intranets news and team talk.

38. The Employees Green Initiatives Group – a group of likeminded employees who enjoy learning about the latest topics and sharing solutions will continue to be supported as membership grows.

Supporting Communities

Community Directory

39. As part of the Corporate Environment Strategy action plan, we have committed to influence and collaborate with communities to support behaviour change and help communities become resilient to climate change.

40. To support this action, we have developed a community directory to be part of the Council's climate change webpages. The directory provides sign-posting support, information, and funding opportunities for community groups to help with their transition to net zero. The directory is regularly updated with the latest information including community climate change events across Nottinghamshire.

41. The directory launched in September 2023 during Green Libraries week, were we partnered up with Inspire colleagues to promote the Council's green agenda and initiatives. We've since gone on to promote the directory to Parish Council's and community groups through Nottinghamshire's Rural Community Action Network.

Local Demonstrator Advice Fund

42. The Local Energy Demonstration Fund (LEAD) from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero tests new and innovative approaches to providing in-person energy efficiency and clean heating advice to consumers at a local level.

43. A partnership was formed in Spring 2023 to apply for the LEAD funding across the D2N2 area with several local authorities including Nottinghamshire County Council, the Local Authority Energy Partnership and local energy advise organisations, Nottingham Energy Partnership and Marches Energy. The partnership was successful and awarded £550k to deliver a two-year project.
44. The project started in Autumn 2023 and is being led by the Nottingham Energy Partnership, the project focuses on supporting homeowners across the D2N2 area in homes that are:
- Hard-to-treat buildings – the UK has the oldest building stock in Europe. In-person visits will capture the complexities of these building types, which are harder to address through digital and telephone advice.
 - Hard-to-reach consumers – local, in-person advice may extend the service to certain consumer types, e.g., the elderly, disengaged, those with limited internet access, minority ethnic groups, etc.
45. The project is specifically concentrating on targeting off-gas grid homes, homes in conservation areas, and poorly performing homes. Advice is being provided through a website, free workshops and webinars, as well as in-person retrofit surveys. Homeowners also have access to a network of trusted installers.

Supporting Schools

46. Another Corporate Environment Strategy action, we have been delivering on is the committed to support Nottinghamshire Schools in their transition to net zero, we are doing this through several means.
47. Property Services colleagues continue to support schools, improving their energy efficiency of school buildings through repairs & maintenance to school extension & new build projects. We have improved the school's portal website with net zero advice and sign posting to funding opportunities.

Let's Go Zero 2030

48. We've recently begun working with [Let's Go Zero](#). The organisation has three years of funding (2023-2026) to support schools across the East Midlands with their net zero journey. Dedicated Climate Advisors are working directly with schools to advise and support. The Let's Go Zero project also has funding available to support specific projects.

Notts Outdoor Education Service

49. We work closely with The Notts Outdoor Education Service who are continually working towards educating visiting schools through their programmes and buildings. The service has been successful with two Green Investment Fund (GIF) applications. GIF is an internal funding stream that supports capital projects that are delivering our 2030 Carbon Neutrality target and the wider Corporate Environmental Strategy actions.
50. The funding is supporting improvements to the education centres, so far through the installation of Solar PV panels, EV charge points and Priva building management system

installation. The Priva systems adds a visual aid with a screen showing how much energy is being used and where that energy is coming from i.e., the solar PV panels.

51. The centres are visited by hundreds of schools each a year and provide an educational resource for both pupils and teaching staff.

Audit

52. An internal audit was carried out on climate change and a report was issued in August 2022 that examined the Council's progress on climate change following the Council declaring a climate emergency in May 2021. The review considered the Council's progress on climate change against the National Audit Office's (NAO) publication, "*Climate change risk: A good practice guide for Audit and Risk Assurance Committees*".

53. The Internal Audit report gave Reasonable Assurance, noting that following the declaration of a climate emergency, the Council had quickened the pace of change. The report observed that it was too early to draw firm conclusions and recommended that internal audit review the situation again in 2023.

54. The review is near completion and takes into consideration the recently published Climate Emergency UK assessment of UK council actions progress towards net zero. Climate Emergency UK are a community interest company that have been active since 2019.

55. Their 2023 scoring of local authority progress follows a similar exercise they undertook in 2021. The focus of the scoring is on evidence within the public domain. The Council's scoring has improved since 2021 and we now sit just below the national average.

56. The majority of climate change activity and risk so far has been internally focused, working towards the 2030 carbon neutrality target. The NAO's best practice guide is looking at the broader risk to Nottinghamshire as a county from climate change. To get the most out of the NAO's guide this level of risks needs to be considered at a corporate level.

Financial Implications

57. 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

58. All the activities noted in this report will contribute to the improved environmental performance for the County Council towards the aspiration of being carbon neutral in all its activities by 2030 and will support the delivery of the wider actions detailed in the Corporate Environment Strategy.

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 for Transport and Environment

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Constitutional Comments (KK 05/03/2024)

2. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Overview Committee

Finance Comments (PAA29 05/03/2024)

3. "The financial implications are set out in paragraph 57 of the report. Whilst there are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report, any requests for approval to proceed with projects in support of the Council's climate change ambitions that are not already in the Council's budget will include estimated revenue and capital costs and the proposed funding for these."

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.

- Policy Committee Report, 18 March 2020
- Minutes of Full Council, 15 October 2020
- Transport and Environment Committee, 19 July 2021
- Transport and Environment Committee, 05 January 2022
- Transport and Environment Cabinet, 15 February 2023
- Transport and Environment Cabinet, 05 February 2024

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.