



Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2020

Carbon Management

Report of the Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community and Sustainability, Councillor D Mason

1. Purpose of report

1.1. On 7 March 2019 Rushcliffe Borough Council passed the following motion;

“In the light of the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, declaring a climate emergency, Rushcliffe Borough Council will evaluate the implications of the report and review its 2010 Carbon Management Plan. The review should be undertaken by a relevant scrutiny group, and their findings shall be considered by the Cabinet by no later than March 2020. This Council calls upon the designated scrutiny group to consider the Council setting a carbon neutral target to be achieved by 2030”.

1.2. The Communities Scrutiny Group met in October 2019 and January 2020 to consider the above motion. The Communities Scrutiny Group resolved to recommend that Cabinet set a target date of 2030 to achieve carbon neutral status from the Council’s own direct emissions and approve a ringfenced budget for reducing carbon emissions as part of its financial strategy. On 11 February 2020, Cabinet resolved to recommend approval by Council of the Budget and Financial Strategy 2020/21 (containing a climate change action reserve of £1m).

1.3. Cabinet is requested to consider and if satisfied accept the recommendation of the Communities Scrutiny Group.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) Approve a target date for the Council’s direct operations to become carbon neutral by 2030
- b) Notes the Carbon Management Action Plan (Appendix 1)
- c) Delegates annual scrutiny of delivery and update of the plan to the Communities Scrutiny Group.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 was adopted in September 2019. The Strategy includes a new corporate priority of 'The Environment'. The associated Corporate Action Plan 'Environment' theme states that a target date should be set for the Council to achieve carbon neutral status. In January 2020, the Communities Scrutiny Group considered a draft action plan and decided that even though detailed estimates of the carbon savings and costs were not available for all actions, a target date of 2030 should be set to provide a clear aspiration from which to monitor progress and commit to action across the organisation. The plan includes how the Council will seek to drive carbon behaviour change through its policy and regulation work along with acting in a leadership capacity to positively influence residents and business across the Borough.
- 2.2. The significant scale of carbon emission reductions required to meet net-zero status will not be achievable without additional investment. Establishing a carbon reduction reserve within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy could be used to purchase more efficient plant, vehicles or equipment, develop and promote new initiatives and off-set residual emissions. It is expected that this budget would lead to additional co-benefits identified in the plan such as on-going revenue savings and potentially income returns from any new green investments.

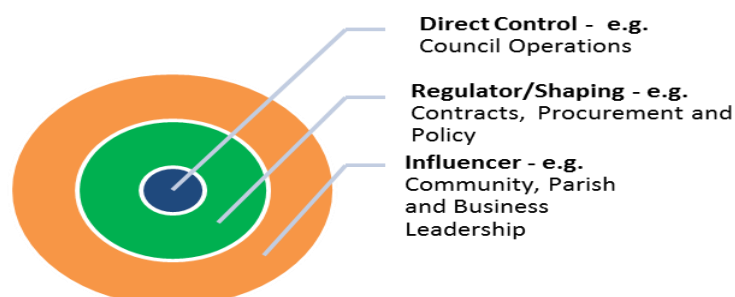
3. Supporting Information

- 3.1. On 26 June 2019, The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 was enacted; this Order changes the Climate Change Act 2008 to require that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 must be 100% lower than the 1990 baseline, i.e. net-zero emissions.

The UK Committee on Climate Change states; "There is a crucial role for local authorities in reducing emissions to meet national carbon budgets" and "The focus of a local authority low-carbon plan should be emissions drivers over which they have significant influence. In particular, residential and non-residential buildings, surface transport, waste and own estate".

- 3.2. To be effective it is important to understand the sphere of influence that Rushcliffe Borough Council can have in terms of tackling climate change and carbon reduction, which is illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1 - Carbon Management: zone of Council influence and control



- 3.3. The Council's existing Carbon Management Plan was approved by Cabinet in June 2011, with a target to reduce carbon emissions by 15% by 2015 and a target of 30% by 2020, from a base year of 2008/09, in line with Government guidance at that time. By April 2018, an 18.2% reduction in emissions had been achieved from actions such as redeveloping leisure provision in West Bridgford, relocating the council offices into a new building, purchasing cleaner more carbon efficient vehicles and working with partners to deliver affordable warmth.
- 3.4. The main source of emissions from the Councils own operations are from leisure centres (around 67%) and fleet vehicles (around 25%), with the remainder being from a range of sources such as buildings and business travel.
- 3.5. In October 2019, the Communities Scrutiny Group considered the scale of the challenge faced, sources of carbon emissions across Rushcliffe and past Council performance in reducing emissions. Councillors endorsed the priority focus of Council action on direct operations and supported the creation of a cross departmental officer steering group to develop and deliver a carbon reduction action plan.
- 3.6. In January 2020, the Communities Scrutiny Group provided feedback on a draft carbon management action plan which has subsequently been updated and is attached at Appendix 1. Councillors acknowledged that additional resources will be required to deliver the actions to reduce carbon emissions and recommended that a ring-fenced budget is established. Councillors debated setting a target date for the Council to become carbon neutral and decided that 2030 would provide a significant challenge and should be recommended to Cabinet for formal approval.
- 3.7. It is important to note that carbon neutral is not the same as zero emissions and it is expected that by 2030 there will still be some residual emissions from the Council's operations and that a degree of offsetting will be required.
- 3.8. The carbon management action plan (Appendix 1) is a live document which will be updated as necessary as it will evolve as research and technology develops. It contains both internal and external actions and has the following eight themes; Property Assets, Fleet and Transport, Contracts and Procurement, Policy and Regulation, Waste and Recycling, Operational Activities, Community and Business and Offsetting. The plan has been developed to integrate with the overarching D2N2 Energy Strategy to support cross boundary initiatives.
- 3.9. On 11 February 2020, Cabinet resolved to recommend approval of the Budget and Financial Strategy 2021 (containing a climate change action reserve of £1m) to Council on 5 March 2020.

4. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 4.1. A different target date could be set for the Council to achieve carbon neutral status. However, a later date would result in cumulatively more carbon emissions being emitted by the Council and be out of step with many other local

authorities both locally and nationally. Given the scale of the challenge faced, an earlier target date would require a very significant increase in resources which would need to be balanced against the budget pressures to deliver other corporate priorities.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1. There is a strong scientific consensus that human activities have caused global warming. Without significant change in behaviour and policy, continued increases in temperature at the current rate will result in global warming reaching 1.5 degrees between 2030 and 2052. This would cause irreversible damage to the environment and result in climate related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply and economic growth (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report; October 2018). This highlights a significant longer-term risk of major environmental and societal damage resulting from inactivity to tackle climate change.
- 5.2. The technology available to deliver the significant carbon reductions required is constantly evolving. The desire to make faster carbon reductions through early adoption of new technology needs to be balanced against the risk that technology may be superseded or become available at a lower cost in the future. The available options will go through a process of due diligence to minimise the level of risk to the Council.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

6.1.1. Improving the environment and reducing carbon emissions represents a significant challenge for the Authority which is likely to require both revenue and capital commitment. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to be presented to Council on 5 March 2020, it is proposed that £1m is transferred from the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to a new Climate Change Action Reserve. Ongoing costs and savings will be identified as part of the business case for potential carbon reduction measures which will be included in the budget going forward. The revenue savings arising from installing more energy efficient technology will not be realised until a later date but can be used to part-fund the ongoing carbon reduction measures required to meet carbon neutral status.

6.1.2. The use of this reserve will result in an opportunity cost by way of loss of interest and this is estimated to be £30,000 at the point the whole £1m is utilised. Any resultant assets created and owned by RBC will attract notional depreciation charged to revenue over the life of the asset.

6.2. Legal Implications

Achieving carbon neutral status by 2030 is not a legal requirement, however Council has agreed a motion that establishes an expectation to

deliver widespread carbon reductions. This report supports delivery of that expectation.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no implications arising from this report that impact on community safety in respect of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Delivery of the action plan will contribute to improvements in public health for example through improved air quality, food consumption and more physical activity.
Efficient Services	Enhancing the energy efficiency of the Council's assets will potentially lead to reductions in operating costs.
Sustainable Growth	Over the longer term it is anticipated that policy changes will lead to improved energy efficiency within residential and commercial developments.
The Environment	Setting a carbon neutral target by 2030, implementing a carbon reduction action plan and establishing a budget to support delivery, are all designed to improve and safeguard the environment.

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) Approve a target date for the Council's direct operations to become carbon neutral by 2030
- b) Notes the Carbon Management Action Plan (Appendix 1)
- c) Delegates annual scrutiny of delivery and update of the plan to the Communities Scrutiny Group.

For more information contact:	David Banks Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
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<p>Background papers available for Inspection:</p>	<p>Report to Communities Scrutiny Group 3 October 2019 'Carbon Management'</p> <p>Report to Communities Scrutiny Group 9 January 2020 'Carbon Management Plan Development and Review'</p> <p>Report to Cabinet 11 February 2020 '2020/21 Budget and Financial Strategy'</p>
<p>List of appendices:</p>	<p>Appendix 1 - Carbon Management Action Plan</p>