



**Communities Scrutiny Group**

**Thursday, 29 April 2021**

**Carbon Management Plan**

**Report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods**

**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 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. On 10 March 2020, Cabinet agreed a target to become carbon neutral by 2030 from the Council direct operations and adopted a carbon action plan to monitor progress against this objective.

1.4. Communities Scrutiny Group is requested to consider progress to date and, if satisfied, accept the recommendation of the report.

**2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) consider and endorse the progress to date of the adopted carbon management action plan
- b) make comment and contribute towards the emerging carbon management actions for 2021/22.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 was adopted in September 2019. In March 2020, the Cabinet set a target to become carbon neutral from its own operations by 2030 and adopted a carbon management action plan to achieve this objective. The carbon management action 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.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. 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".
- 4.2. Greenhouse gas emissions are categorised into three groups or 'scopes' by the most widely used international accounting tool, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol.

**Scope 1 – All Direct Emissions** from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel combustion on site such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.

**Scope 2 – Indirect Emissions** from electricity purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions are created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.

**Scope 3 – All Other Indirect Emissions** from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control. These are usually the greatest share of the carbon footprint, covering emissions associated with business travel, procurement, waste and water, staff commuting, business travel, RBC's leased properties, staff working from home.

- 4.3. There were 67 actions in the first version of the carbon management action plan. These were spread across eight key theme areas; property assets, fleet and transport, contracts and procurement, policy and regulation, waste and recycling, operation activity, community and business and offsetting. The carbon management action plan is a live document which is regularly updated. It is constantly evolving as research and technology develops. The carbon management action plan dashboard (Appendix 1) provides a snapshot of progress to date. The Team Manager for Environment will deliver a presentation providing a detailed overview on Carbon action plan activity and a road map to 2030.

## **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.
- 5.3. Despite significant progress, the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the Council's resources to deliver its corporate priorities, there is current uncertainty on how this has impacted the progress of the carbon management action plan timetable to reach its carbon neutral target from its own emission by 2030 and if any additional action will be required to meet the Council's objectives.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Financial Implications**

Improving the environment and reducing carbon emissions represents a significant challenge for the Council which requires both revenue and capital commitment. As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy presented to Council on 5 March 2020, it was resolved that £1m be transferred from the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to a new Climate Change Action Reserve.

Cabinet, on 10 November 2020, approved the allocation of £200k from the Climate Change Action Reserve in recognition of the proposal for the National Centre for Integrated Zero Carbon Futures project at Ratcliffe on Soar.

### **6.2. Legal Implications**

In 2019, the Government passed legislation to commit the UK to a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. The target requires the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero, compared with the previous target of at least 85% reduction from 1990 levels. The Council's carbon management action plan supports this aim at a local level.

### 6.3. Equalities Implications

Tackling climate change through reducing emissions has the potential to benefit groups vulnerable to heat and air pollution.

### 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 carbon management action plan contributes to improvements in public health for example through improved air quality, food consumption and more physical activity through travel behaviour change.
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	Implementing a carbon reduction action plan and providing a budget to support delivery, are all designed to improve and safeguard the environment.

## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) consider and endorse the progress to date of the adopted carbon management action plan
- b) make comment and contribute towards the emerging carbon management actions for 2021/22.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Dave Banks Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods Tel: 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	Report to Cabinet 10 March 2020 'Carbon Management'  Report to Cabinet 11 February 2020 '2020/21 Budget and Financial Strategy'  Report to Communities Scrutiny Group 9 January 2020 'Carbon Management Plan Development and Review'
<b>List of appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix 1 - Carbon Management Action Plan Dashboard</b>