

**FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 12
SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Report of the Director Commercial and Economic Development
Lead Member: Executive Member for Climate Action, Net Zero, Property and
Assets**

Part A

DELIVERY OF CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Purpose of Report

To provide members with an update on the progress in implementing the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report.

Reason

To ensure that progress on the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan is monitored, in accordance with the Committee's work programme.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Climate Change Strategy was approved by Cabinet at its meeting in May 2018 (minute 113 17/18 refers). The Strategy sets out the Council's activities in response to the challenges of climate change and how it will encourage others in the Borough to take similar steps. The Climate Change Action Plan sets local targets, actions and the context for reporting regularly on progress.

A climate change notice of motion was approved by Full Council on 24 June 2019. The notice of motion set an aspiration for the Council to achieve carbon neutrality from its own operations by 2030. The Council also committed to work with residents, businesses and other public bodies across the Borough and region to deliver this ambitious goal through all relevant technologies, strategies and plans.

The Climate Change Strategy was amended by delegated decision in November 2019 to include the aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. A Carbon Neutral Plan 2030 was adopted by Cabinet on 16th September 2021. The Carbon Neutral Plan is a subset of the Climate Change Strategy, an ambitious plan to achieve carbon neutrality from the Council's own operations.

A review of the existing Strategy in October 2022 concluded that whilst this was appropriate when published, a refreshed Strategy based on the Council's own climate ambition, agreed vision and objectives, will provide focus for actions required to support it. A new Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared to be considered by Cabinet 12th October 2023. This will be an open report with the new Strategy published on the website for the forthcoming October Cabinet. The Strategy and Action Plan are now separate but interrelated documents. The Climate Change Strategy and Action

Plan will help to protect and improve the environment of the Borough to achieve a resilient green Charnwood.

Report Implications

Financial Implications

The strategy and action plan have been delivered within existing resources and through the pursuit and capture of external funding where appropriate.

Risk Management

The risks associated with the delivery of the Action Plan and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Council Service areas and operational managers not sufficiently engaged to deliver the climate change agenda, resulting in failure to achieve performance targets and objectives	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	Ensure there is corporate ownership and engagement with key stakeholders is coordinated across the Council. Report progress to the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Climate Action Board
Council Service areas and operational managers not sufficiently engaged to deliver the climate change agenda, resulting in failure to achieve performance targets and objectives	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	Ensure there is corporate ownership and engagement with key stakeholders is coordinated across the Council. Report progress to the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Climate Action Board
Changes in government policy or funding affect the ability to deliver the action plan in its current form	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	Monitor for anticipated changes in the policy or funding landscape and adapt the action plan through regular reviews
Resources unavailable to achieve actions identified	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	Influence service planning and resources & prioritise projects identified if necessary

Climate Change and Carbon Impact

The Climate Change Strategy is a central pillar to the Council's progress on climate change.

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Caring for the Environment	Yes
Healthy Communities	No
A Thriving Economy	No
Your Council	No

Key Decision: N

Background Papers: Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2030

Appendices: Appendix 1: Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2030 Achievements

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Part B

Background

1. The Climate Change Strategy sets out the Council's approach to addressing climate change. It takes into account the Council's own ambitions to reduce carbon emissions from its own estate and operations as well as means by which the wider community can adapt to climate change and reduce carbon emissions.
2. The current Climate Change Strategy was developed in 2018 with a scope centred on reducing the Council's own carbon emissions rather than at a district level. The strategy is based on taking action under three strategic priorities being raising awareness, reducing our impact on climate change and resilience. Many of the actions set in the strategy are to be refreshed due to a number of factors being the Climate Emergency, Ecological Emergency and COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have changed working priorities, ways of working and national and local government agendas.
3. The Corporate Plan 2020-2024 reiterates the commitment to caring for the environment to 'looking after it for future generations'. The Climate Change Strategy takes account of the Council's current position, new commitments, the importance of partnership working and the implementation of adaptation measures. The Strategy provides a framework that can reflect local priorities and opportunities for action on carbon reduction and climate resilience. In September 2021, the Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030, was approved to achieve carbon neutrality from the Council's own operations by 2030. The Carbon Neutral Plan is a subset of the Climate Change Strategy and its associated actions support the new Strategy.
4. The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in October/November 2021. The summit brought parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. A new global agreement, the Glasgow Climate Pact was reached, which aims to reduce the worst impacts of climate change. In November 2022, Egypt hosted the 27th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27) to move from negotiating changes designed to combat climate change, to implementing the changes. This has led to a wide range of new UK policies, initiatives and programmes that have not been captured within the current strategy.
5. A Climate Action Board was set up in May 2022 to take forward the actions contained in the Council's Carbon Neutral Plan, oversee and manage the Climate Change Strategy and oversee and manage other Council actions that contribute positively to climate change, for example, air quality. A new 2018-2019 baseline was established of a carbon footprint of 1,130 tCO₂e which took into account the decision to procure renewable electricity. The 2021-2022 footprint was calculated as 1,130 tCO₂e. This shows only a 3% increase from 2020-2021 (1,092 tCO₂e) which is encouraging since activities were normalising post the COVID-19 pandemic. Council buildings continue to be decarbonised particularly where we use electricity. To facilitate action, the Climate Action

Board, meets bi-monthly to provide a conduit for ensuring the monitoring of actions that were agreed and to enhance or modify actions as appropriate

6. In August 2022 Environmental Solutions through Partnership (ESP) were commissioned to assist the Council in updating the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The Strategy aims to provide guidance and information on how to reduce the impact on climate change from our own operations and the Borough. Although total emissions for the Borough are outside of the Council's direct control, working in partnership, the Council can influence stakeholders to reduce their emissions. The Strategy will help the Council to meet its statutory environmental duties and address climate change risks.

Review of existing Climate Change Strategy

7. The Climate Change Strategy 2018-2030 was developed in 2018, prior to the call for action by local authorities to address the Climate Emergency Crisis. The scope of the Strategy is centred on reducing the Council's own carbon emissions and influencing change at a district level. It sets out the Council's commitment to local action on climate change. The Charnwood Climate Strategy 2018-2030 review comes at a challenging time. The UK is recovering from the economic effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic and changes to modes of working. There is significant pressure on energy prices, potential disruption to energy supplies, a war in Ukraine and rising inflation. Many UK councils have declared a climate emergency. It is anticipated that councils will declare an ecological emergency. The Covid-19 Pandemic initiated a change in the Council's priorities, finances and resources contributed to many actions being halted and continuing into 2022.
8. The conclusion of this review was that whilst the existing Strategy was appropriate when published, a refreshed Strategy based on the Council's own climate ambition, agreed vision and objectives, will provide focus for actions required to support it. A new Strategy will set out how we are approaching Climate Change within our sphere of influence to create lasting positive change. The achievements and closed actions from the 2018-2030 plan are provided in Appendix 1.
9. The timeframe for development of the new Strategy is shown in the table below.

Tasks	Date
Procurement	July 2022
Gather Evidence, data analysis	September/October 2022
Report writing	November 2022
Draft report	December 2022
SLT	January 2023
Consultation (six weeks)	01/02/2023 to 15/03/2023
Final report	May 2023
SLT	June 2023
CLT	August 2023
Members briefing	September 2023
Cabinet	October 2023

Climate Change Strategy

10. The Strategy and Action Plan has been informed by engagement with officers from across the key service areas and the Climate Action Board. The work was introduced to the Strategic Leadership Team on 20 April 2022. Interviews were held with key members of staff to inform the Strategy and focus the Council's climate change ambitions into objectives, targets and an associated action plan. Consultation with partner organisations has highlighted work programmes in this area and identified co-benefits. An online consultation period of six weeks has been undertaken. The action plan will be a standalone document that can be updated and monitored regularly feeding into the corporate reporting system.
11. The Strategy will provide an unchanging vision for 2030 together with themes, broad aims and objectives. The seven themes are Transport, Planning Land Use and Biodiversity, Buildings Housing & Heating (energy), Resources and Waste, Business and Economy, Governance and Finance, and Partnership and Communications. Each theme contains an aim, objectives, climate change risks and information on managing, mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Climate Change Strategy Action Plan

12. The Climate Change Action Plan will help to protect and improve the environment of the Borough that will benefit the community, economy and environment for future generations. The action Plan will provide a roadmap of key climate achievements from 2005 to date. A table of key SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, timebound) actions. These will be monitored bi-monthly by the Climate Action Board and annually by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Conclusion

13. It is essential to have a Strategy and Action Plan in place to set out how the Council is combating climate change within its sphere of influence to create lasting positive change. When reviewing the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan, we adopt a Plan, Do, Check and Act approach to ensure appropriate action has been taken and that we can understand the further actions that may need to be taken to achieve our Climate Change aims and objectives. Actions will be monitored using the Council's monitoring software, which will help keep track and report on actions. The plan has been prepared with the knowledge that priorities may change over the next seven years. It is to be expected that not all projects will come to fruition and other opportunities may present themselves.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2030 Achievements

The following table shows the actions undertaken and closed from the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan 2018 -2030. The reference number is from the original Action Plan. Actions have been sorted by themes taken from the draft 2023-2030 Climate Strategy.

Theme:	Ref.	Closed action:
1. Transport	2.4.3	1x hybrid vehicle has been purchased. The hybrid was chosen due to the difficulties in sourcing an electric vehicle. 1x electric bike has been purchased.
2. Planning, Land use & Biodiversity	2.1.7	Supporting tree planting across Charnwood to offset CO ₂ emissions, provide habitat for wildlife, enhance natural landscape and reduce flood risk. Tree planting is progressed in our Corporate Strategy and Carbon Neutral Monitoring Plan as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100,000 are to be planted in the 2020-2024 Corporate Plan.• 14,000 trees to be planted at Hathern during Autumn/Winter 2022.• 4,000 trees are being given away to residents.
	3.2.6	The action to maintain an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to inform strategic policies and to manage flood risk, has been closed. The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment remains up to date. This will continue to be monitored outside of the Climate Change Action Plan.
	3.5.1	Monitoring the implementation of Local Plan policies on Landscape, Countryside, Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, is now integral to the Council. This action is now closed as monitoring occurs within our teams outside of this action plan. The latest update: Annual Monitoring Report 2020-2021 was published in December 2021. It notes the following: Local Wildlife Sites - a minimum of 3% of the total resource has been lost since the last assessment in the early 2000's. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - No loss of a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Important Geological Sites - No loss of Regionally Important Geological Sites. • Areas of Local Separation - There have been no decisions taken which are contrary to Policy CS11 (Landscape and Countryside).
	3.5.2	The target for the Local Plan policy to be published and consulted on has been achieved.
	1.2.4	Encourage the improvement of our environment by taking part in Loughborough in Bloom. We will continue to take part in this scheme but remove it from our climate change action list. There are at least 30 'In Your Neighbourhood Groups' as part of Loughborough in Bloom as well as groups operating in other parts of the borough.
	3.4.1	Stonebow and Gorse Covert have been declared as Local Nature Reserves (LNR's). Work will continue to make other areas nature reserves but outside of the Climate Change Action Plan.
	3.2.4	Government funding is no longer available to Community Resilience groups.
	3.3.1	The Leicestershire Resilience Forum are employing a Business Continuity Officer for the 7 District Councils.
	3.2.1	We promoted the community flood warden monitoring scheme subsequently flood wardens were trained.
	3.2.2	We promoted the community flood warded scheme.
	3.2.3	Flooding advice and signposting can be found on our website
	3.1.3	Flood Action Card kept up to date and reviewed annually. This has been replaced with an overarching flood plan.
3. Buildings & Heating (energy)	2.1.1	Reduction in carbon emissions from energy saving schemes. This action is closed as it is actively under investigation through the Climate Action Board under Carbon Neutral Plan Action 1.
	2.1.2	Preparing a Carbon Neutral Plan Annual Monitoring Report for 2021/22 was completed in Autumn 2022. This action will continue as part of the Carbon Neutral Plan 2030.
	2.1.3	Review low carbon solutions across Council buildings, operations and fleet. This action is closed as it is carried out under the Carbon Neutral

		Programme. One project recently approved is the replacement of auditorium house lighting at the Town Hall, which has an estimated annual CO2 saving of 4.43tCO2e (tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalent (e)) and cost saving of £4201.
	2.4.2	Due to significant changes in staff working arrangements, the new agile working policy and home working it has not been feasible to prepare a new sustainable travel plan for the Council. There have been no new travel schemes introduced. Due to home working arrangements staff travel has significantly reduced. There has also been a significant reduction in staff business travel during 2020/21.
	2.2.7	A stock condition survey has been carried out to monitor the energy condition of 1000 properties in our housing stock.
	2.2.6	Provide top-up roofing insulation, cavity wall and boiler upgrade programme for Council housing stock, whilst we have closed this action from the plan it will be ongoing as part of our business as usual. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 355 Heating systems have been installed 1/4/19 to 31/3/21 • 46 heating systems have been installed from 1/4/21 to 31/3 /22. • 18 Roofs have been replaced. 2 insulation installations completed.
	2.2.4	Collective Energy Switching: the council will encourage partners to continually review the current approach and to consider introducing a 'green' category to the supplier's auction. Is closed on 02/12/2022 due to the current energy situation. Previous action included Regular meetings with partners 3 times a year following the auctions. Since October 2020 - all suppliers who take part in the auctions must now supply a green energy tariff.
4. Resources including food and waste	2.5.4	The annual student waste and recycling campaign for 2022 has taken place. An evaluation report is currently being produced.
	2.5.2 & 2.5.3	New recycling targets will be set when the new waste strategy is launched in 2023.
	2.5.5	Work has taken place to phase out single-use plastics within Council offices and buildings.

	3.6.4	We have supported healthy and ethical local food initiatives. Fairtrade was promoted during Fairtrade Fortnight via the Green Rewards programme.
5. Business & Economy	3.3.2	We have collaborated with partners to prepare and assess Council Business Continuity plans.
6. Governance & Finance	2.7.1 & 2.7.2	<p>We have considered environmental and broader sustainability issues throughout the procurement process.</p> <p>1) Procurement toolkit guidelines are adhered to for new systems and upgrades that involve contractual changes.</p> <p>In the procurement of consultancy services and contractors' details of environmental policies and sustainability practices are requested before a decision to award a contract is made.</p>
	2.6.1 & 2.6.2	Monitor and review air quality across the borough to determine whether national air quality objectives are being met. This action is closed as it is now as it is undertaken as part of the corporate plan and is a Statutory responsibility.
	1.1	Climate Change is included in the 2020-2024 Corporate Plan.
7. Partnership & Communication	1.2.5 & 1.2.6	<p>We have encouraged environmental education and promoted climate action through a proactive communication campaign.</p> <p>We encouraged residents to cut down on meat consumption within accepted health guidelines to help reduce the carbon emissions associated with meat production and to bring about health benefits.</p> <p>Face to face, Leicestershire County Council adult weight management programmes delivered 3 x 10-week programmes to men and people with disabilities at Fearon Hall, Loughborough and 2 courses at Gorse Covert Community Centre, Loughborough. In total 22 participants attended.</p> <p>The programmes include advice on diet and nutrition, portion control, boredom eating and introduction to physical activity and exercise. Face to face 'Choose to Move' sessions were held (A physical activity session aimed at all ages and abilities with the goal of being more active).</p>

		<p>Including 1 x block of 10 weeks virtual choose to move programme with 15 attendees per week and 1 x weekly choose to move maintainers virtual session Average of 8 attendees per week.</p>
	2.4.6	<p>We have promoted cycling, walking, running and other physical activity to our own staff and the wider community:</p> <p>The Active Charnwood Team continue to support cycling programmes in Charnwood, working alongside B-Buddies to deliver Dr Bike Sessions and Bike Skills Clubs for children aged 18months to 3 years.</p> <p>Loughborough based community group; B-BUDDIES CIC has been granted up to £3,750 towards the “Let’s Get Cycling” scheme. The group collaborates closely with schools and in the local community to get more children cycling.</p> <p>Active Charnwood are working with Active Together to provide ‘Set, Pedal - Go!’ a learn to ride programme supporting school aged children in Leicestershire to learn to cycle. Across Charnwood seven courses have been delivered. In total 84 children have accessed these courses.</p>
	2.4.4	<p>Provide a bespoke physical activity package to 5 Charnwood based workplaces per year. This action is closed as Public Health are now relaunching their package next year.</p>