

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

LEADER: COUNCILLOR MORGAN

ITEM CARBON NEUTRAL PLAN

The Decision

That the Leader approves the following:

1. that the Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan, contained in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration, be approved;
2. that the short-term action plan for the next three years, set out in Part B of the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration, be approved;
3. that the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Transformation, be given delegated authority to review and update the Carbon Neutral Plan through the Carbon Neutral Project Board.
4. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

Reasons

1. To set out the overall direction and plan of the Council in relation to its climate change commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
2. To enable projects for reducing the Council's carbon footprint to be progressed.
3. To enable the plan to be kept up to date and amendments to be made as necessary to reflect changing circumstances, opportunities, and Council priorities.
4. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

Other Options Considered and Rejected

None

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Decision-Maker

None

Dispensations

None

Implementation of Decision

Unless called in under Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 11.7, this decision will come into effect at noon on the fifth working day after it is published.

Approved: 

Date: ... 17.09.21

Leader of the Council

Date of Publication: 20.09.21

REPORT

Purpose of Report

To recommend to the Leader the decision set out above.

Background

The background is set out in the report submitted to informal Cabinet on 16 September 2021 and the minutes of that meeting (see Cabinet Minute 27 2021/22), attached as an appendix. Also, the report of the Scrutiny Commission on this matter submitted to informal Cabinet on 16 September 2021.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

As set out in the report submitted to informal Cabinet on 16 September 2021.

A Leader's Decision dated 30th July 2021 delegated all Executive functions and decision making to the Leader for a period of three months in accordance with Section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000.

Section 10.9 of Chapter 10 of the Council's Constitution requires that, where executive decisions are the responsibility of an individual member of the Cabinet, details of the decision (including any report) be published after the decision has been taken, as required by law.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The report submitted to informal Cabinet on 16 September 2021 on this matter was considered for pre-decision scrutiny by the Scrutiny Commission on 13 September 2021.

Unless called in under Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 11.7, this decision will come into effect at noon on the fifth working day after it is published.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

As set out in the report submitted to informal Cabinet on 16 September 2021.

Risk Management

As set out in the report submitted to informal Cabinet on 16 September 2021.

Appendices:

1. Report to Informal Cabinet 16 September 2021
2. Minutes of Informal Cabinet 16 September 2021 (Minute 27)
3. Report of the Scrutiny Commission to Informal Cabinet 16 September 2021

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers: None

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CABINET - 16TH SEPTEMBER 2021

**Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration
Lead Member: Councillor Roy Rollings**

Part A

ITEM 9 CHARNWOOD 2030 CARBON NEUTRAL PLAN

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the Charnwood 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan and a short-term action plan.

Recommendations

1. That the Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan, contained in Appendix A, be approved.
2. That the short-term action plan for the next three years set out in Part B be approved.
3. That the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Lead Member for Transformation, be given delegated authority to review and update the Carbon Neutral Plan through the Carbon Neutral Project Board.

Reasons

1. To set out the overall direction and plan of the Council in relation to its climate change commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
2. To enable projects for reducing the Council's carbon footprint to be progressed.
3. To enable the plan to be kept up to date and amendments to be made as necessary to reflect changing circumstances, opportunities, and Council priorities.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

A climate change motion was approved by Full Council on 24 June 2019 to note the findings from the International Panel on Climate Change published in October 2018 (minute 23.1 19/20 refers). The report concluded that we have less than 12 years to act to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The 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.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The Carbon Neutral Plan includes a baseline carbon footprint from 1st April 2018 and covers the period up to December 2030. Implementation of the plan will need to be a whole Council activity embedded in Service Team Plans and decision making. The implementation of the Carbon Neutral Plan will be overseen and reviewed by the Carbon Neutral Project Board.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

The costs of providing strategic management for the implementation of the Carbon Neutral Plan are currently met from within the Planning and Regeneration Service budget. There will be a need for concerted action from across the Council to successfully implement the Carbon Neutral Plan and additional resources will be required to ensure the Council achieves the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

There are a number of projects contained within the Carbon Neutral Plan relating to the period to December 2030. These projects will either be funded from funding opportunities, where available, existing budgets of individual service areas or by the Carbon Neutral Fund as approved by the capital budgeting process.

Risk Management

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Service areas across the Council not sufficiently engaged to deliver projects, resulting in failure to achieve targets	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	Ensure there is a corporate response and engagement with key stakeholders throughout the organisation to deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan. Project Board in place to monitor.
Resources unavailable to achieve actions identified	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	Influence service planning and resources & prioritise projects identified if necessary.
The Council fails to meet carbon neutral 2030 target outlined within its policy commitments	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	Project Board in place to review performance throughout the plan period.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Reputational risk to authority for not pursuing or meeting carbon reduction targets	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	Ensure there is a corporate response and engagement with key stakeholders throughout the organisation to deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan. Project Board in place to monitor.
Carbon neutrality not seen as a strategic priority by the Council	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	The intention for carbon neutrality is reflected the Corporate Strategy. Ensure this is carried forward in future reviews of the strategy.
Potential for an increase in energy demand due to changes in the Council estate and services threatening the ability to meet the carbon neutral target	Likely (3)	Significant (2)	Moderate (6)	Recalculate carbon baseline if necessary, to account for changes.

Equality and Diversity

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Sustainability

The Carbon Neutral Plan will provide a significant contribution towards Sustainability.

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers: None

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Part B

Background

1. The Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan will set out a road map to meeting the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral from its own operations by 2030. In October 2019 Urban Foresight in Partnership with De Courcy Alexander (DCA) were commissioned, following an open tender process, to assist the Council in preparing a Carbon Neutral Plan. The plan aims to provide guidance and information on how to address all aspects of the Council's current carbon emissions so as to achieve the target for carbon neutrality by 2030. Although the main focus of the plan is the Council's carbon footprint, an assessment of the opportunities for the Council to promote meaningful carbon reductions across the wider community in Charnwood is also provided.
2. A Carbon Neutral Board was set up in November 2019 to oversee the preparation and implementation of the Carbon Neutral Plan. The Board Members are Cllr Tom Barkley, Lead Member for Finance and Property, Cllr Roy Rollings, Lead Member for Transformation, Cllr Needham, Climate Change Champion, Eileen Mallon, Strategic Director for Community, Planning and Housing, Lesley Tansey, Head of Financial Services, Richard Bennett, Head of Planning and Regeneration and Justin Henry, Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure.
3. The preparation of the plan has been informed by engagement with officers from across the key service areas. The work was introduced to the Corporate Leadership Team on 6th November 2019 and on 12th November 2019 a stakeholder workshop was undertaken with key members of staff and a Project Team was established including officers from all the key service areas. The workshop focused on identifying a road map for delivering carbon neutrality. A Member Workshop event was held on 4th February 2020 to introduce the work and explain the role of Members.
4. In February 2020 a Carbon Neutral Action Fund was awarded a three-year annual block sum of in £500k in the Capital Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23 to support the delivery of carbon reduction projects. This budget informed the plan prepared. In May 2020 the Carbon Neutral Board endorsed a draft Carbon Neutral Plan but it was agreed that the plan would not be presented to Cabinet for approval in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Council priorities and budgets. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council's finances causing uncertainty about the availability of funding and the potential changes which may result from the review of the Council's assets including Southfields Office.
5. The capital plan three-year annual block sum of £500k for a Carbon Neutral Action Fund was revised in October 2020 to £100k for the financial year 2020/21. In consultation with Property colleagues, a range of carbon reduction projects were funded including the mayoral car electric charging point, Pest Control electric charging point, Beehive Carpark LED flood lights and signage illumination, Barrow and Quorn car park LED and Nanpantan Sports Ground LED outdoor lighting.

6. In February 2021 the Board agreed that work to refresh the Carbon Neutral Plan should be commissioned based on the Council assets as they are now with flexibility built into the plan to accommodate the uncertainties. Consultants Urban Foresight and DCA were reengaged to refresh the plan with relevant service areas. Between April and May 2021 video meetings were conducted with service leads to understand how council services have had to adapt operationally and financially due to COVID, and any impacts this has had on progress made on previously planned carbon neutral priority activities. These insights have been incorporated into the 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan, reflecting the current policy priorities and funding restrictions that are in place.

Carbon Footprint Baseline

7. A new baseline for this Plan has been calculated for the Council's operations in 2018/19. This provides an understanding of the Council's carbon footprint and will allow the Council to measure reductions in carbon emissions as a result of this Plan. Targets and performance in reducing emissions are measured against this figure as a percentage of the baseline value.
8. The baseline figure covers emissions in buildings and activities that the Council has management control and influence over, this includes the buildings the Council owns and occupies, the emissions from Council owned vehicles including the waste fleet and open spaces services. The footprint also includes the purchase of renewable electricity making a direct impact on reducing the carbon footprint of the energy used.
9. The total carbon baseline for 2018/19 was 1,130 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e). This is the baseline figure for working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. In 2019/20 the carbon footprint was 1,378 tCO₂e representing an 18% increase in emissions. This included a rise of 24 tonnes CO₂e in buildings and 138 tonnes CO₂e in transport. However, the biggest impact on the Council's footprint comes from a change in the way the sequestration of carbon emissions is calculated following the publication of new data on carbon storage by Natural England in 2021. Natural England undertook a major review of the scientific evidence for sequestration from different land uses and collated the latest information on how, for example, planting trees has a positive impact on carbon emissions. The report also brought in more evidence of the impact of other aspects of the land use change, including the impact on soil. The positive benefit we get from sequestration is better understood but overall, the effect is less by 86 tonnes CO₂e.
10. In 2020/21 the carbon footprint was 1,092 tCO₂e representing a 3% decrease from the baseline in 2018/19. This follows a significant decrease of 286 tonnes CO₂e or 21% from 2019-2020. Net emissions from all sources have fallen. Transport emissions were impacted by Covid-19. There was a reduction in fuel use by refuse collecting vehicles with a suspension of the garden waste collection. Staff travel was heavily reduced with reported mileage driven 50% less than the baseline year. The nature of the Council's buildings means the impact of Covid-19 energy use and carbon emissions has

been different across the buildings. The combination of changes in working practice meant that water use was also 61% down on the baseline.

Carbon Neutral Plan

11. The Carbon Neutral Plan recognises that reducing carbon emissions is a whole council activity. The plan highlights the importance of dedicated resources and the need to embed carbon reduction in decision making.
12. The tracking of the Council's carbon footprint highlights three priorities to be addressed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. These are:
 1. decarbonisation of the waste fleet;
 2. reducing or eliminating gas use; and
 3. investment in zero carbon energy generation.

There are two key challenges in tacking the Council's carbon footprint. The first is the age and the second is the design of those buildings with the highest energy consumption of gas and the challenges in improving or renovating them. The Carbon Neutral Plan includes a small number of more feasible projects to make progress where we can but eliminating gas use is unlikely to be possible by 2030. The second challenge is the waste collection fleet was only recently purchased (2019) and therefore replacing these vehicles cannot be justified in the short or medium term. There are however opportunities to decarbonise the other fleet vehicles which will be investigated. As most emissions are from the fleet and buildings, and given the uncertainties regarding Council assets, the Carbon Neutral Plan considers what can be achieved in these areas as well as other options. This includes sequestration, which will be important but have a limited impact in reducing carbon emissions, and opportunities for renewable energy generation.

Carbon Neutral Plan Projects

13. The projects identified within the Carbon Neutral Plan have been broken into three distinct themes:
 1. Buildings
 2. Transport
 3. Carbon Positive

The projects within these themes will be a mixture of new stand-alone activities and additional "top-up" activities. Stand-alone projects are those yet to be scheduled into council's planned activities, for example, solar projects. The "top-up" projects are those that accelerate or enhance existing low carbon projects already being delivered, for example, boiler upgrades.

14. A number of projects in each theme will require feasibility studies to ensure they can be moved forward. Overall, the projects will combine both highly visible changes and some that will be behind the scenes. Technological changes may change the nature of the projects, or even create new opportunities that have not been included in this plan. The current economic situation created by COVID will also likely have a long-lasting influence on the funding opportunities and prioritisation decisions made by the Council.

15. The projects presented are designed to complement and build on existing budget plans to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. Making corporate decisions which enable and encourage all service areas to reduce carbon emissions will be the way forward in achieving this Plan. Council wide collaboration will be needed to deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan.

Short Term Action Plan

16. Based on the Carbon Neutral Plan it is proposed that the immediate priorities are as follows:
 - Dedicated resources are identified to deliver the plan.
 - Decision making procedures are reviewed.
 - Pest Control electric vehicles are facilitated.
 - Zero carbon gas tariff procurement is investigated.
 - Smaller energy efficiency projects for Council owned buildings progressed.
 - Smart bins study undertaken.
 - Tree planting continued.
 - Feasibility study undertaken for solar farm on council owned land.
17. Delivering carbon neutral projects will need dedicated resources for owning and delivering projects. The resource implications of the plan will need to be assessed and addressed through the appropriate budget processes as an immediate priority. Embedding climate change in Council decision making will enable joined up decision making to effectively work towards reducing carbon emissions. An immediate priority will be to work with the necessary Service Areas to review the decision making and procurement procedures to ensure there is an assessment of potential carbon impact. Many projects are cross-directorate and will require consideration as part of the planning stages to ensure opportunities are realised.

Communication

18. The Carbon Neutral Plan will be made publicly available on the Council's website and communicated to all staff. Progress updates will be reported to the Project Board and to staff via One Charnwood. To raise staff awareness of the Carbon Neutral Plan and the actions it contains an on-line environmental induction module is available to all new and current members of staff. The Green Rewards programmes will also enable staff and Members to take actions to reduce their individual carbon footprint.

Conclusion

19. It is essential to have a plan in place to ensure the Council can achieve the challenging target of net zero in its operations by 2030 and to ensure there is an action plan in place. The plan has been prepared with the knowledge that priorities may change over the next ten years. It is to be expected that not all projects will come to fruition and other opportunities may present themselves.

Therefore, this plan will be subject to change whilst moving towards the aim of reaching net zero by 2030.

Appendix

Appendix A – Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan



Charnwood 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan

**Charnwood Borough Council's
ambition and action plan to be a
carbon neutral council by 2030**





Summary

In June 2019, the UK Government amended the Climate Change Act (2008) to commit the UK to “reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels by 2050”. This means the UK Government now has a legally binding target for the UK to be generating net zero carbon emissions per year by 2050. This followed on from the findings of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published in October 2018.

Having considered the IPCC report, and to show we are keen to be part of the UK response to climate change, Charnwood Borough Council has committed to achieving carbon neutrality for the Council’s own operations by 2030. The Council made this commitment in June 2019. This builds on the success of our 2015-2020 Carbon Management Plan, which saw us reduce our carbon footprint by 37% between 2012 and 2018. Since then, our footprint has fallen by a further 3%.

Soon after making our June 2019 commitment to work with colleagues across the Council to fulfil our goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, an initial 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan was prepared in conjunction with Urban Foresight and DCA.

However, faced with the unexpected challenge of COVID-19, the Council has had to adapt operationally and financially, creating both new priorities and new ways of working. Previous projects identified had either become less pertinent in terms of impact and priority, whilst new project opportunities have arisen.

The most significant challenge will be the financial situation the UK economy, the public sector and Charnwood Borough Council face following the current Covid-19 crisis. These market challenges will impact on the funding available for projects beyond 2021. The Council recognises the challenges we, and our communities will be facing and the need to use its available funding accordingly.

Therefore, Charnwood Borough Council have updated the 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan and projects in context of the new economic and logistic realities post-COVID. This includes reflecting the new policy and funding context.

A Living Carbon Neutral Plan

The menu of projects presented in this document is a 'point in time' menu of options for the Council, reflecting the situation we are currently in.

It is important that the Carbon Neutral Plan is treated as a living document which evolves over time. As the funding, policy and technology environment changes over time new projects will emerge which will need to be included in the Plan. Similarly, as feasibility studies are delivered projects may be changed or removed from the Plan.

One vital reason for us needing to be adaptable and flexible is uncertainty over the future of how and where the Council will work. In light of COVID-19, we are still reviewing our office estate and home working procedures. These considerations will influence which projects are added or removed from the Plan in future years.

Therefore, rather than being the end of a process or a fixed set of actions the Council is bound to, this 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan is the start of our 10-year journey. The activities outlined are not a fixed plan and will be reviewed regularly as we move through the next ten years and continually consider the best and most cost-effective ways of reducing our carbon footprint.

The projects and activities delivered by the Carbon Neutral Programme will be a mixture of newly conceived "stand-alone" activities and additional "top-up" activities. The "stand-alone" projects are those where carbon neutral funding available will be used to finance brand new low carbon project yet to be scheduled into council's planned activities. The "top-up" projects are those where carbon neutral funding available will be used to accelerate or enhance an existing low carbon project already being delivered.

Overall, the projects will combine both highly visible changes and some that will be behind the scenes. We will be making changes to the way that we use our buildings, how we operate our vehicles and how we generate our energy.

The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme is overseen by a Project Board and has been created in collaboration with a number of Council services. This means the planned investment and efforts being made by different parts of the Council are taken into account to ensure the 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan compliments and adds to what is already planned. This 2030

Carbon Neutral Plan provides a realistic yet ambitious set of projects we can start delivering.

Charnwood's Regional Role

Eliminating the carbon footprint of the Council's assets, operations and services is not about, and cannot be about, one area of Council activity pursuing a stand-alone agenda. Making corporate decisions which enable and encourage all services to reduce carbon emissions will need to become the new normal during the course of this plan and, as such, is a whole Council activity. As a Council we are well placed to make the corporate and cultural changes needed to deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan. Our Lead Member for Transformation sits on the Council's Cabinet with a remit including the Environment and Climate Change agenda. The Council also has a climate change champion Member to promote the Council's objectives.

Looking beyond the Council's own operations and activity, our 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan is an opportunity to outline our vision to further inspire the community of Charnwood to implement other projects that can drive the Borough to become zero carbon. We hope the Council's endeavours will demonstrate how business operations can become net zero, and help our residents reduce both their emissions and their energy costs.

Charnwood is at the geographic centre of an expanding list of local Councils and other organisations that are working towards reaching net zero carbon emissions and we also have potential local allies such as the University of Loughborough and local businesses who are active in the low carbon economy. This 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan presents options for how we can inspire local and regional action whilst reducing our own carbon footprint.

Table of Contents

Charnwood 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan.....	1
A Living Carbon Neutral Plan.....	3
Charnwood’s Regional Role.....	4
Why do we want to be carbon neutral?.....	7
UK response to climate change.....	7
Charnwood Borough Council’s responsibility.....	9
Building on our 2015-2020 success.....	13
Our carbon footprint.....	15
Defining our carbon footprint.....	15
2018-2019 Baseline.....	16
2019-2020 Carbon Footprint & Sequestration Value Change.....	20
2019-2020 footprint.....	20
Change against 2018-2019.....	20
2020-2021 Carbon Footprint and COVID-19 Impact.....	23
2020-2021 footprint.....	23
Change against 2019-2020 footprint.....	24
Forming the Carbon Neutral Plan.....	27
First engagement (pre-COVID).....	27
Face-to-Face Meetings with building managers and Heads of Service.....	27
Workshop with Heads of Services and building managers.....	28
Members briefing event.....	28
Corporate Leadership Team and Board Meetings.....	28
Second engagement (during COVID).....	29
Video Meetings with building managers and Heads of Service.....	29
Delivering the Plan.....	30

Managing and delivering projects	30
Reducing emissions is a whole Council activity	30
Roles and Responsibilities	33
Prioritising Projects	34
Funding and Partnerships	37
External funding.....	37
Carbon Neutral Plan.....	40
Strategy.....	40
The Energy Hierarchy.....	40
The Path of Least Regret.....	41
Main Challenges.....	41
1. Reducing net emissions from buildings.....	42
2. Reducing net emissions from transport.....	45
3. Investing in carbon positive activities.....	48
Actions recap.....	50
Inspiring change: partnership & leadership	56
Appendix 1: Menu of actions and details.....	60
Reducing net emissions from buildings.....	61
Reducing net emissions from transport	63
Investing in carbon positive activities.....	64

Why do we want to be carbon neutral?

Charnwood Borough Council has committed to achieving carbon neutrality for the Council's own operations by 2030. The Council made this commitment in June 2019, having considered the findings of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published in October 2018.

This 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan presents options for how we can do this. Of course, we are very aware that types and costs of low carbon technology will change during the next ten years, as will government policy and legislation. These changes may create new opportunities or priorities which are not featured in this plan. Similarly, the Council's own finances and ways of working may change, especially as we support Charnwood's businesses and communities recover from Covid-19.

Therefore, this 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan is not a fixed plan and will be reviewed regularly as we move through the next ten years and continually consider the best and most cost-effective ways of reducing our carbon footprint.

UK response to climate change

Global scientific consensus, as reported in the 2018 IPCC report, indicates that human activities have caused global temperatures to rise by an estimated 1.0°C above pre-industrial levels. Looking to the future, the same evidence suggests that if the global economy maintains business as usual, then global temperature rise will reach 1.5 °C at some stage between 2030 and 2052.

In response to scientific consensus, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement of 2016 commits the global community to act. At the time, Prime Minister David Cameron called the Paris Agreement "a huge step forward in helping to secure the future of our planet" and Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Amber Rudd declared it as "vital for our long-term economic and global security". This agreement pledges to restrict the rise in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and, ideally, limit the global temperature increases to 1.5°C.

To restrict global warming to below 2°C or 1.5°C, cumulative carbon emissions from human activity need to be kept below a threshold, referred to as a carbon budget. The IPCC state that the global carbon budget needed to stay below a 2°C increase is 900GtCO₂ – or 900 million tonnes.

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

In June 2019, the UK Government amended the Climate Change Act (2008) to commit the UK to “reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels by 2050”. This means the UK Government now has a legally binding target for the UK to be generating net zero carbon emissions per year by 2050.

The UK Government’s 2050 target builds on the Committee on Climate Change’s (CCC) 2019 recommendations in the report *Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming*. Furthermore, the CCC provided recommendations on carbon budgets for the UK divided into 5-year periods, which have also been translated into legally binding targets in the amended Climate Change Act. The current and future carbon budgets, presented in megatonnes (Mt), specified in the Climate Change Act (cumulative over each five-year period) are:

- 2018-2022: 2,544 MtCO₂e
- 2023-2027: 1,950 MtCO₂e
- 2028-2032: 1,725 MtCO₂e

Definition: carbon emissions

In this plan we use the phrases ‘carbon emissions’, ‘carbon footprint’, ‘carbon’ and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

In the context of this plan, we use the terms interchangeably. Carbon dioxide, released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels, is one of several greenhouse gases (GHGs) which contribute to climate change. Rather than talk about each GHG individually, we use the phrase ‘carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)’.

The Council’s carbon footprint is the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) created by our operations and assets. In order to reduce our carbon footprint, we need to reduce the volume of our CO₂e emissions – or for short, carbon emissions.

These carbon budgets represent milestones towards a net zero 2050. Whilst latest monitoring indicates that the UK is on course to meet the 2018-2022 carbon budget, the CCC forecasts that the 2027-2032 budget will not be met without more ambitious action. This will require strong policy from national government and action from local authorities like Charnwood, both to reduce our own contribution to the carbon budget and climate change, and to inspire action from our communities and business.



Charnwood Borough Council's responsibility

The Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) 2019 recommendations outlined that:

“Local authorities are well placed to understand the needs and opportunities in their local area.they have important roles on transport planning, including providing high-quality infrastructure for walking and cycling, provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, and ensuring that new housing developments are designed for access to public transport. They can improve health outcomes for people who live and work in the area by implementing clean-air zones that discourage use of polluting vehicles and other technologies.”

The scientific evidence shows that climate change is likely to lead to more extreme weather, whether that be high winds and storms, higher peak temperatures in summer or more rain and flooding. In Charnwood, colder winters and warmer summers will put vulnerable people at risk, with the River Soar having already demonstrated the damaging consequences of flooding. Changing climate may also have significant impacts on agriculture and our rural economy.

Although the Climate Change Act did not include a statutory target for local authorities to reduce carbon emissions, other parts of the UK have done so. For example, the Welsh Government has set a target of achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. Whilst Charnwood Borough Council do not face such government targets, like all councils around the country we will have to act to reduce our carbon footprint.

This is for two reasons. Firstly, local authorities contribute significantly to the UK carbon footprint and the 2050 target will not be achieved unless all councils act. Secondly, as a visible local institution, it is equally important that Charnwood Borough Council shows

leadership and develops policies to that support businesses and citizens in reducing their carbon emissions as well.



Action on climate change will not only reduce negative climate impacts, but it also has the potential to increase prosperity, happiness and social cohesion in the Borough. For example, studies have shown that investment in renewables typically provides 27% more jobs than investment in fossil fuels. In fact, the green economy has recently contained many of the fastest growing sectors in the UK. In addition, many of the projects that achieve carbon neutrality promote green spaces, reduce air pollution and create energy.

As part of the UK Climate Change Act there are national targets which relate to our activity and the lives of Charnwood's residents and businesses. The Government have legislated to end sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035. This won't just impact on the Council's own fleet vehicle purchasing. It also means we must ensure our employees, residents and businesses have the infrastructure needed to support the transition to electric vehicles. For example, the CCC estimated that the UK will require 3,500 rapid and ultra-rapid chargers near motorways to enable longer journeys, and 210,000 public chargers in towns and cities to meet the 2035 target.

HGVs and large vehicles are currently not subject to this target, but these will need to decarbonise too. For Charnwood Borough Council this means planning to reduce emissions from our waste collection vehicles in the long-term and supporting development of zero carbon refuelling of HGVs, buses and taxis. This is particularly for vehicles that have key routes through Charnwood, including Junction 23 of the M1 Motorway.

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Similarly, March 2020 saw the announcement of the proposed new Future Homes Standard. Proposed revisions to Part F and L of the Building Regulations, require that from 2025 all new homes built must have 80% lower carbon emissions than today. At the time of writing, no changes have been made whilst the Government review the findings of a second round of consultation which took place from 18th January to 13th April 2021. As a Council we will have to monitor policy changes and then help enable these to happen, both through the homes we build and through those we give planning permission for.

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) said in its report *UK Housing: Fit for the Future (2019)* “Buildings constructed now should not require retrofit in 15 years' time. Rather, they should be highly energy efficient and designed to accommodate low-carbon heating from the start.”

More energy efficient homes and local energy generation will help Council's meet national fuel poverty targets. In England, the Government target is for all homes to have a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C. Charnwood Borough Council take this one step further, with our Housing Strategy 2015-2020. This strategy details how our own Charnwood Standard is committed to ensuring our sheltered accommodation and social housing exceeds national standards. We also have a role to play, alongside organisations like National Energy Action, in helping residents to reduce their energy bills. Our Home Energy Conservation Act Progress Report 2017-2019 outlines the action we have taken during the last two years.

Linked to reducing the carbon emissions of transport and housing is the need to decarbonise electricity generation. March 2020 saw the UK Government reverse legislation banning onshore windfarms, providing Councils with large rural areas like Charnwood the ability to influence renewable energy generation through the planning system or by investing in and developing windfarms themselves. This is something many Councils already do for solar energy generation.



It is this combination of changing our operations in response to the global challenge, and international and national policy, whilst also enabling and encouraging others to do so, which is at the heart of our Carbon Neutral Plan.

This is also reflected in a series of our other policies. As a Council we will encourage and enable residents, businesses and other public bodies across the Borough and region to deliver this ambitious goal through relevant technologies, strategies and plans.

Our [Climate Change Strategy 2018-2030](#) seeks to minimise the environmental impacts of our own activities and contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action. We play a significant role in protecting and enhancing the environment of Charnwood and the strategy sets out how we will meet the challenges and opportunities of climate change. It outlines three strategic priority areas for action to protect the environment for future generations:

- raising awareness
- reducing our impact on climate change
- resilience.

Our Corporate Strategy (2020-24) sets out our commitment to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and this carbon neutral plan is part of that action, laying out how we can achieve this ambition.

Our commitment to reducing carbon emissions, mitigating and adapting to climate change is reflected across our strategic policies including our Open Spaces Strategy 2018-2036, Local Plan Core Strategy and our new Draft Local Plan. The local plan sets out a vision and a framework for the future pattern, scale and quality of development in Charnwood. It outlines policies for mitigation measures which reduce our impact on

climate change and looks to ensure our built and natural environments are resilient and can adapt to climate change over the short and longer term.

Our commitment in the Corporate Strategy to ensure 100,000 trees are planted in the Borough is also underway. The carbon savings from sequestration by these trees will be factored into the final year of this Carbon Neutral Plan, to consider the time taken to complete the planting programme and for the trees to reach maturity.

Building on our 2015-2020 success

In 2015, Charnwood Borough Council developed a Carbon Management Plan which aimed to achieve a 15% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 against a 2012-13 baseline.

Definition: What is a carbon emissions baseline?

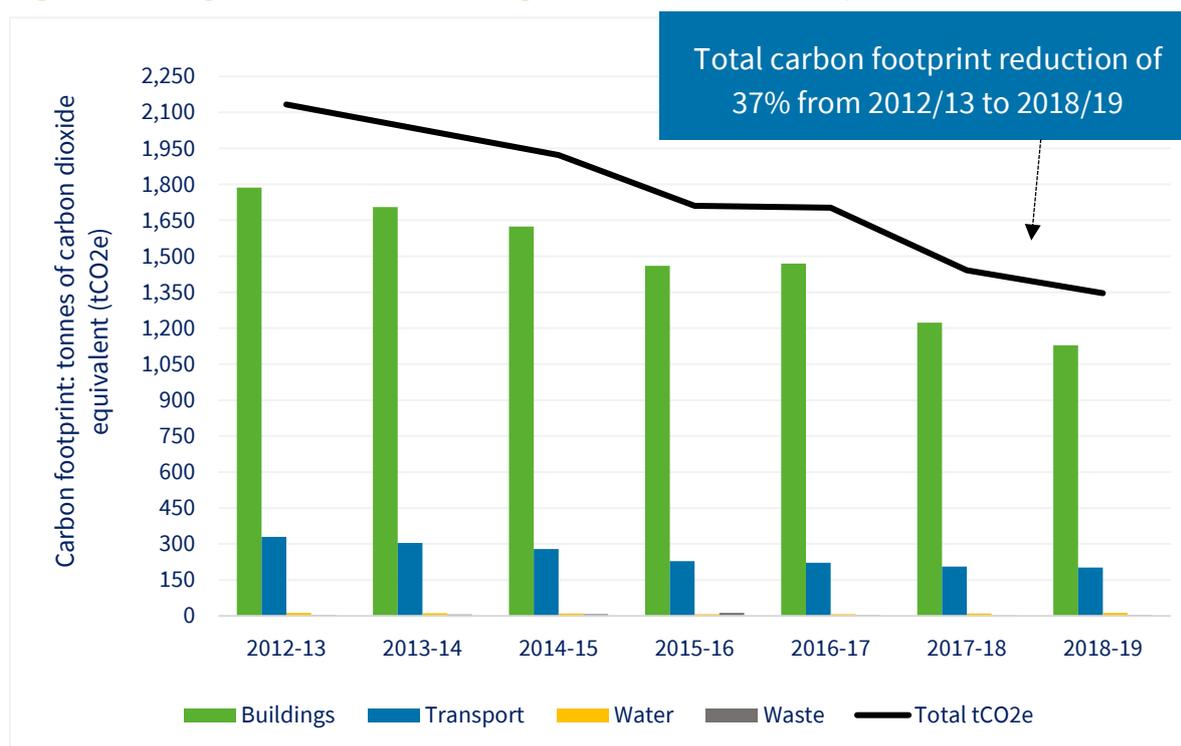
The baseline for the Carbon Management Plan refers to the total carbon emissions the Council created in the final year before we started developing the plan.

The baseline was used to show what the Council's total emissions would be each year if our operations and activity continued without implementing any projects to reduce emissions. To measure reductions in our carbon emissions resulting from projects, we compare how our emissions have changed compared to the baseline.

Within a year from 2015-16, as a result of energy savings across the Council operations, we achieved and surpassed that target and recorded a 21% decrease in emissions. Progress continued as more energy saving projects across our buildings were implemented.

As a result, the most recent monitoring report for the Carbon Management Plan shows that carbon emissions from Council operations fell by 37% in comparison to the 2012-13 baseline – well in excess of the 15% target. In absolute terms this was a reduction of 787 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) (Figure 1). This is the equivalent of heating and lighting nearly 200 households based on Committee on Climate Change latest figures (2014).

Figure 1: Change in Charnwood Borough Council’s carbon footprint over time



Not only did the projects implemented as part of the Carbon Management Plan achieve significant carbon reductions, but they also delivered financial savings to the Council. Despite a rise in the price of energy, the projects within the Carbon Management Plan helped reduce energy and fuel costs by a cumulative total of over £280,000.

Energy and fuel costs in 2018/19 were £33,000 less compared to 2012/13. This is equivalent to 3% of our 2019/2020 budget for maintaining parks, sports grounds, and public spaces in Loughborough, and would pay for the maintenance of Carillion Tower more than twice over.

The biggest changes in energy use, carbon emissions and costs came earlier on in the programme, with fewer projects being delivered in 2018/19. The new Carbon Neutral Plan 2030 will therefore help renew the momentum and impetus the 2015-2020 Carbon Management Plan created.

Our carbon footprint

The target of reaching net zero emissions by 2030 is challenging, but we have already shown that we can act decisively and effectively to reduce carbon emissions. As a council we have been reducing our carbon emissions for many years through our Carbon Management Plan and are building on a solid record of success.

Despite the achievements of the Carbon Management Plan, there is much more that the Council must do to achieve carbon neutrality. To this end, a new baseline for this plan has been calculated for the Council's operations. This provides an understanding of the Council's current carbon footprint and will allow the Council to measure reductions in our carbon emissions as a result of this plan.

Defining our carbon footprint

What are the GHG Protocol and PAS 2060 standards?

GHG Protocol establishes comprehensive global standardized frameworks to measure and manage greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains and mitigation actions. Building on a 20-year partnership between World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the GHG Protocol is used by governments, industry associations, NGOs, businesses and other organizations.

PAS2060 is an international standard of carbon neutrality. Published by the British Standards Institution, it aims to create transparency and accountability around declarations of carbon neutrality to build trust and confidence. The standard is widely used by organisations across the world to demonstrate validated evidence of carbon neutrality.

In keeping with the globally recognised GHG Protocol, we have broken down carbon emissions into Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions.

Understanding different scopes:

Scope 1 emissions are those created within buildings owned and occupied by the Council, such as the Southfields offices, and fleet vehicles owned and used by the Council.

Scope 2 includes any emissions created on the Council's behalf. For example, through the purchase of electricity generated from gas-fired power stations.

Scope 3 covers the other emissions that are the consequence of actions of the Council which are not included in Scope 1 or Scope 2 – this includes outsourced services, employee commuting, and the use of employees' personal cars for Council activity.

Our footprint also includes some of our procurement, such as how we purchase electricity. Purchasing more renewable electricity reduces the carbon footprint of the energy we use, making a direct impact on our footprint.

A long-term goal of many organisations is to reach a level on a par with globally recognised carbon neutral standards, such as PAS 2060. For the Council to achieve this will require a full audit of our procurement processes and to measure the emissions resulting from every product and service we purchase. At this stage in the Council's journey however, it has been decided to focus on emissions we can directly control. This means for example, that the electricity used in our own buildings is counted, but electricity used by our tenants in buildings that we own, but do not occupy, is not.

2018-2019 Baseline

2018-2019: our carbon footprint was 1,130 tCO₂e

To demonstrate the impact of our decision to purchase renewable electricity we have presented the emissions of our electricity consumption calculated using both a location-based and market-based methodology (see below box).

A new methodology for a new plan:

Location based method: the location-based method for calculating carbon emissions from electricity use is based on the carbon impact of the local electricity grid. In the UK our electricity is generated from both fossil fuel, zero-carbon, and renewable energy. The location-based method takes Charnwood Borough Council's electricity use and calculates the carbon emissions based on the national mix of how electricity is generated. **The location-based method was used in the 2015-2020 Carbon Management Plan.**

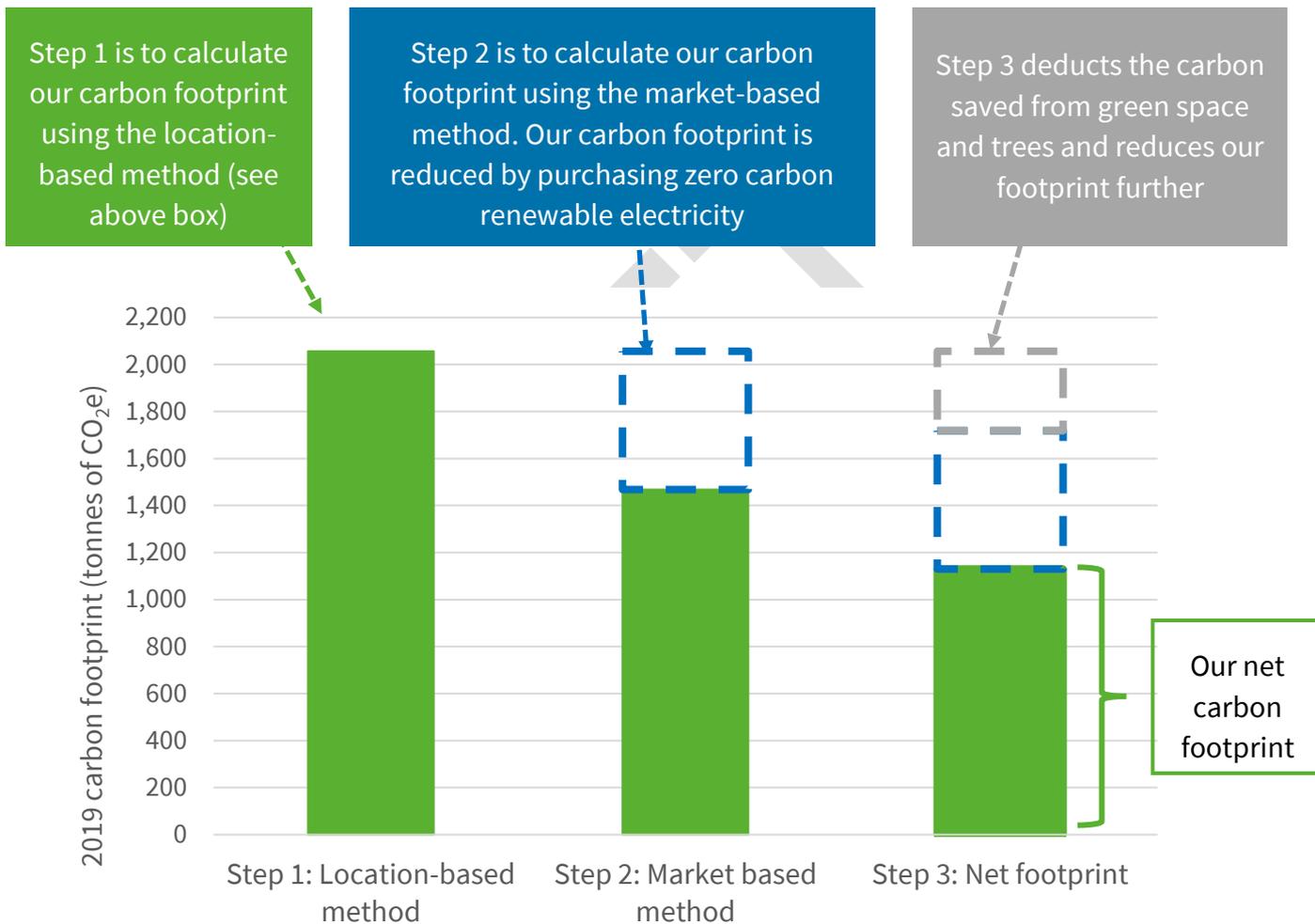
Market based method: Our 2020 baseline for the **Carbon Neutral Plan 2030** uses the **market-based method** to calculate emissions from electricity use. This method takes into consideration how the energy the Council actually purchases is generated. If we procure more 100% renewable energy, our footprint goes down.

The location-based methodology is the first step in a three-step process to calculating our carbon footprint based on our total gas and electricity consumption. The market-based method is the second step, which accounts for the fact we use 100% renewable electricity at Council buildings meaning this electricity use creates zero carbon emissions.

The third step is to calculate the net footprint – which is the emissions we generated and calculated at Step 2 minus any emissions we offset. We offset emissions by reducing the carbon emissions by activities that either take carbon dioxide directly out of the

atmosphere or reduce the carbon impact of others more than would happen without our involvement. This accounts for the positive impact of green spaces and trees throughout Charnwood on absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (a process known as sequestration) and carbon positive activity like producing renewable energy.

Overview of the three steps



Step 1: Gross carbon footprint using location-based method

Using the location-based methodology to calculate the emissions from electricity consumption the gross carbon footprint in 2019 is 2,056 tCO₂e (Table 1). This is the same method used in the Carbon Management Plan 2015-2020.

Table 1: Step 1 – Gross 2018-2019 carbon footprint of the Council operations by scope using location-based method

Source	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)			Total emissions
	Scope 1: emissions directly from Council owned and operated activity	Scope 2: emissions created through energy supply	Scope 3: emissions from outsourced services and grey fleet	
Building	298	542	46	886
Transport	123	0	1,026	1,149
Waste	0	0	6	6
Water	0	0	16	16
Total	421	542	1,093	2,056

Step 2: Gross carbon footprint using market-based method

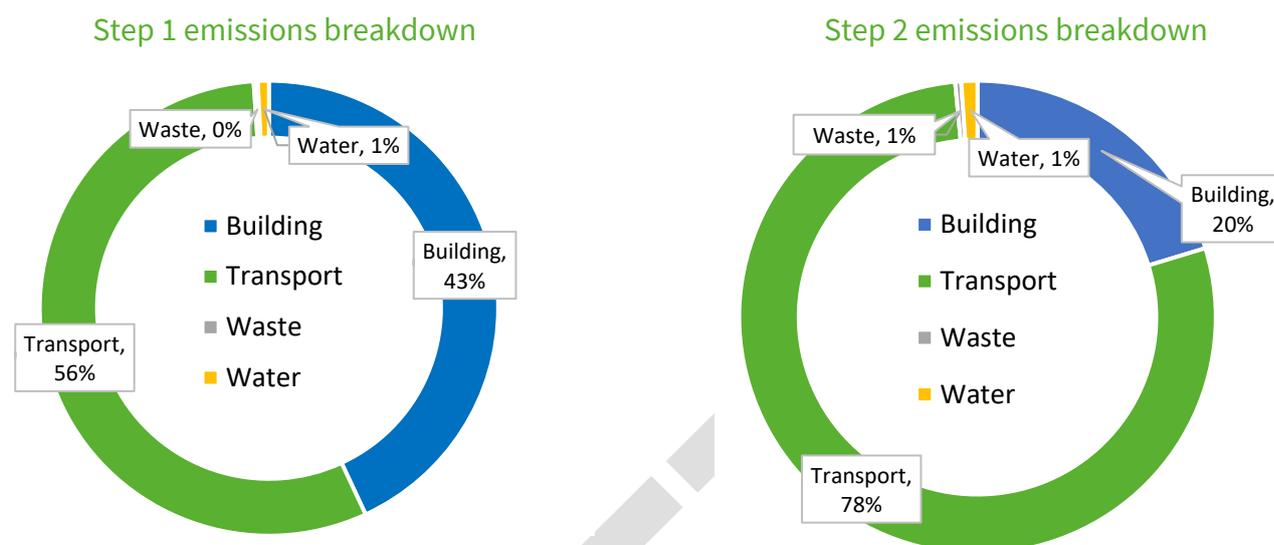
Adopting the more accurate market-based method for calculating emissions from electricity shows that any electricity used at Council buildings does not create any carbon. The Council’s positive procurement choice to purchase renewably sourced electricity for all its own operations saves 588 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), reducing the carbon footprint by 35% to 1,468 tCO₂e (Table 2).

Table 2: Step 2 -Gross 2018-2019 carbon emissions of the Council operations by Scope, using market-based method (gross emissions taking account of renewable energy purchase)

Source	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)			Total emissions
	Scope 1: emissions directly from Council owned and operated activity	Scope 2: emissions created through energy supply	Scope 3: emissions from outsourced services and grey fleet	
Building	298	0	0	298
Transport	123	0	1,026	1,149
Waste	0	0	6	6
Water	0	0	16	16
Total	421	0	1,468	1,468

The impact of adopting the market-based method is to reduce Scope 2 & 3 emissions from our buildings. The fact that these buildings use 100% carbon zero renewable energy means that the only emissions from buildings are through fossil-fuelled heating and cooling. The change in the make-up of emissions at Step 1 compared to Step 2 is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: breakdown of emissions by source



Step 3: Net carbon footprint

The final step to complete our carbon footprint calculation is to subtract our carbon-positive activity from built and land assets we own. This includes sequestration by trees and green space or renewable energy that we generate in our own renewable energy installations and then export to the National Grid.

Across the Borough’s owned green space and natural assets, 338 tCO₂e was sequestered or removed from the atmosphere in 2018/19. Subtracting this from the emissions we generate means that in 2019 our carbon footprint was 1,130 tonnes of tCO₂e (Table 3).

Table 3: Step 3 – 2018-2019 Net- carbon emissions of the Council operations

Source	Total tCO ₂ e (location-based method)	Total tCO ₂ e (market-based method)	Total tCO ₂ e sequestered
Building	886	298	
Transport	1,149	1,149	
Waste	6	6	
Water	16	16	
<i>Total emissions</i>	<i>2,056</i>	<i>1,468</i>	
Sequestration			338
Renewable generation			0
<i>Total offset</i>			<i>338</i>
Total net baseline			1,130

2019-2020 Carbon Footprint & Sequestration Value Change

2019-2020: our carbon footprint was 1,377 tCO₂e

2019-2020 footprint

Our 2019-2020 energy use shows the important positive impact our decision to purchasing 100% renewable electricity. In fact, purchasing renewable electricity has reduced the carbon emissions from our buildings by 70%, saving 737 tonnes of CO₂e (Table 4).

Table 4: 2019-2020 carbon footprint

Source	Total tCO ₂ e (location-based method)	Total tCO ₂ e (market-based method)	Total tCO ₂ e sequestered
Building	1,059	322	
Transport	1,279	1,279	
Waste	6	6	
Water	23	23	
<i>Total emissions</i>	<i>2,233</i>	<i>1,496</i>	
Sequestration			-252
Renewable generation			0
<i>Total offset</i>			<i>-252</i>
Total net baseline			1,377

Change against 2018-2019

Our carbon footprint has increased compared to 2019. This includes a rise of 24 tonnes CO₂e in buildings and of 138 tonnes in transport (Table 5).

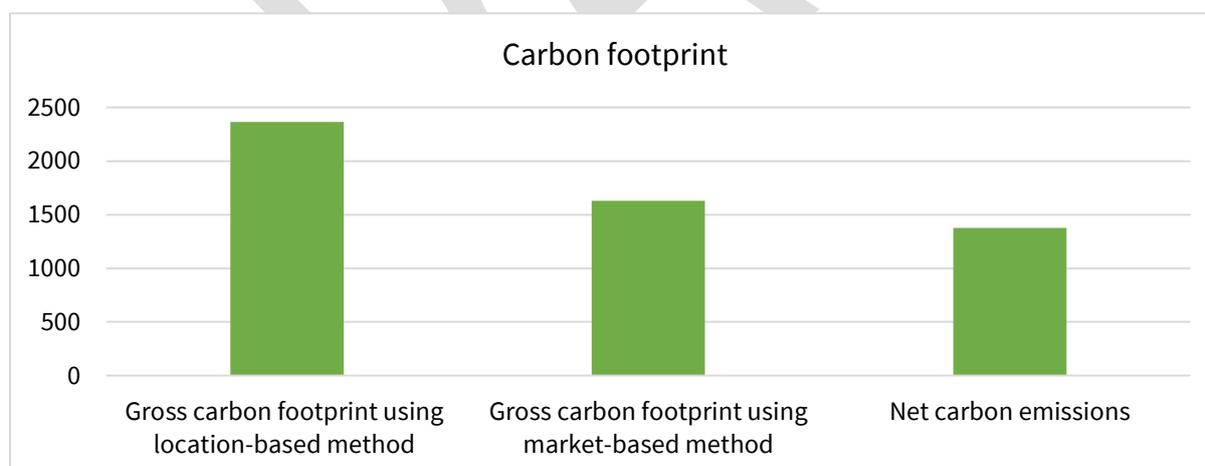
However, the biggest impact on our footprint comes from a change in the way the sequestration of carbon emissions is calculated following the publication of new data on carbon storage by Natural England in 2021. Natural England undertook a major review of the scientific evidence for sequestration from different land uses and collated the latest information on how, for example, planting trees has a positive impact on carbon emissions. However, the report also brought in more evidence of the impact of other aspects of the land use change, including the impact on soil. The positive benefit we get from sequestration is better understood but overall the effect is less by 86 tonnes CO₂e.

Table 5: 2019-2020 carbon footprint compared to 2018-2019 baseline.

Source	tCO2e generated (market-based method)		
	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Change
Buildings	298	322	7%
Transport	1,149	1,279	10%
Waste	6	6	0%
Water	16	23	30%
<i>Total emissions</i>	1,468	1,496	2%
Sequestration ¹	-338	-252	-34%
Renewable generation	0	0	0%
<i>Total offset</i>	-338	-252	25%
Total net baseline (Emissions minus offset)	1,130	1,378	18%

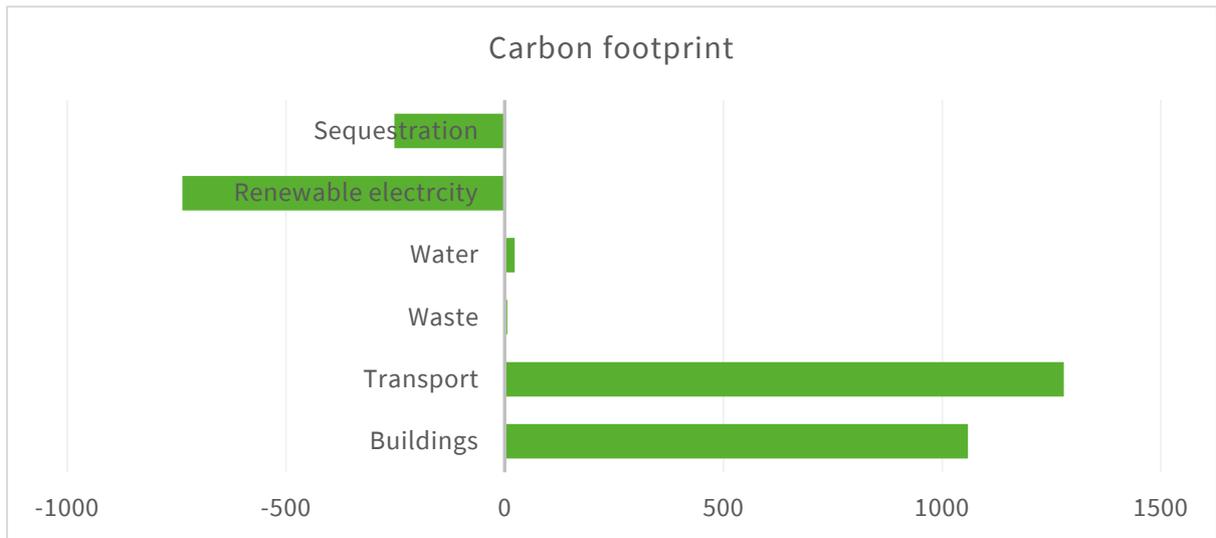
The 2020 carbon footprint uses the same three-step method developed in 2019. The impact of the Council’s decision to purchase renewable electricity, and the carbon sequestration of trees and green space is shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Figure 3: The three steps to calculate the 2020 carbon footprint



¹ Sequestration values are impacted by a newly updated Natural England conversion factor used for 2020 and 2021

Figure 4: The impact of renewable electricity and carbon sequestration



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2020-2021 Carbon Footprint and COVID-19 Impact

2020-2021: our carbon footprint is 1,092 tCO₂e

2020-2021 footprint

Our 2020-2021 energy use shows the important positive impact made by our decision to purchase 100% renewable electricity. In fact, purchasing renewable electricity has reduced the carbon emissions from our buildings by 76%, saving 631 tonnes of CO₂e (Table 6).

Since September 2020, as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response, the NHS have leased the ground floor of the Southfields Road building. The Council do not have access to this space, and as such, the emissions generated need to be excluded from the buildings carbon footprint for 2020-2021. However, the building is not sub-metered meaning there is no definitive record of energy consumed by the NHS. Therefore, an estimate has been made using floor space leased and operational hours. The emissions of the NHS have been estimated based on the NHS using 32% of the buildings operational time (calculated as square metres an hour per week).

Table 6: 2020-2021 carbon footprint

Source	Total tCO ₂ e (location-based method)	Total tCO ₂ e (market-based method)	Total tCO ₂ e sequestered
Building	833	202	
Transport	1,133	1,133	
Waste	6	6	
Water	9	9	
<i>Total emissions</i>	<i>1,981</i>	<i>1,350</i>	
Sequestration			-258
Renewable generation			0
<i>Total offset</i>			<i>-258</i>
Total net baseline			1,092

Change over time

Our 2020-2021 carbon footprint has reduced by 3% compared to 2018-2019 (Table 7). There has been a larger decrease 286 tonnes CO₂e or 21% from 2019-2020 (Transport emissions were impacted by COVID-19, as staff travel was heavily reduced. Reported mileage driven was 50% less than baseline. Similarly, there was a reduction in the use of some contracted vehicles, including a reduction in fuel use by refuse collecting vehicles.

The nature of the Council’s buildings means the impact of COVID-19 energy use and carbon emissions has been different across the buildings. These differences can be seen in Table 9. The combination of changes in working practice and, particularly, the closure of some leisure facilities, meant that water use was also 61% down on the baseline.

Table 8). Net emissions from all sources have fallen.

Table 7: 2020-2021 carbon footprint compared to 2018-2019 baseline.

Source	tCO ₂ e generated (market-based method)		
	2018-2019	2020-2021	% Change
Buildings	298	202	-32%
Transport	1,149	1,133	-1%
Waste	6	6	0%
Water	16	9	-44%
<i>Total emissions</i>	<i>1,468</i>	<i>1,350</i>	<i>-8%</i>
Sequestration ²	-338	-258	24%
Renewable generation	0	0	0%
<i>Total offset</i>	<i>-338</i>	<i>-258</i>	<i>24%</i>
Total net baseline (Emissions minus offset)	1,130	1,092	-3%

Transport emissions were impacted by COVID-19, as staff travel was heavily reduced. Reported mileage driven was 50% less than baseline. Similarly, there was a reduction in the use of some contracted vehicles, including a reduction in fuel use by refuse collecting vehicles.

² Sequestration values are impacted by a newly updated Natural England conversion factor used in 2020 and 2021.

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

The nature of the Council's buildings means the impact of COVID-19 energy use and carbon emissions has been different across the buildings. These differences can be seen in Table 9. The combination of changes in working practice and, particularly, the closure of some leisure facilities, meant that water use was also 61% down on the baseline.

Table 8: 2020-2021 carbon footprint compared to 2019-2020.

Source	tCO ₂ e generated (market-based method)		
	2019-2020	2020-2021	% Change
Buildings ³	322	202	-37%
Transport	1,279	1,133	-11%
Waste	6	6	0%
Water	23	9	-61%
<i>Total emissions</i>	<i>1,496</i>	<i>1,350</i>	<i>-10%</i>
Sequestration	-252	-258	2%
Renewable generation	0	0	
<i>Total offset</i>	<i>-252</i>	<i>-258</i>	<i>2%</i>
Total net baseline (Emissions minus offset)	1,378	1,092	-21%

Table 9: Changes in emissions from gas use before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Building	Tonnes CO ₂ e from energy use (market-based method)			Notes
	2018- 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	
Southfields	88	99	69	The NHS have leased the ground floor of the Southfields Road office as part of the response to COVID-19. Their estimated contribution to the building's emissions have been removed from the 2020-2021.
Loughborough Town Hall	113	118	86	Building closed since Monday 16th March 2020.

³ Buildings and renewable electricity analysis include more stock in 2020 and 2021 compared to 2019

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Building	Tonnes CO ₂ e from energy use (market-based method)			Notes
	2018- 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	
Woodgate Chambers	51	55	35	Building occupancy was impacted by COVID-19 resulting in an overall decrease in energy usage in last year. Many tenants work with vulnerable people which meant Glebe House, CAB and Aspire Life Skills being fully or partially closed, under LCC guidance.
Charnwood Museum	30	27	20	Building closed since Monday 16th March 2020. Park-facing café has been open for takeaway between 4 th June 2020 and 15 th November 2021 and opening again in Spring 2021. Energy consumption is not metred separately.
ICS Building	12	13	16	The ICS building continued to be in operation during the pandemic. It is speculated that the small increase energy usage could have been caused by more continuous connection of remote workers IT equipment to the servers.
The Oak	4	4	5	Building remained open to tenants. Heating supplied centrally from one boiler, so occupancy does not affect gas use.
Other locations	4	5	4	Locations include Public Conveniences, Shelthorpe Golf Course, Queen's Park Bowling Club, Nanpantan Sports Ground, Limehurst Depot.
Total	302	322	235	

Forming the Carbon Neutral Plan

Building the Carbon Neutral Plan has required consultation with all parts of Charnwood Borough Council. There were two stages of internal stakeholder engagement both pre-COVID and during COVID. These required different parts of the Council being engaged to ensure our projects match the ambition of the Council, are aligned with service delivery plans and budgets, and are financially prudent.

The Pre-COVID stakeholder engagements occurred between November 2019 and May 2020. The more recent engagement occurred between April and May 2021, which revisited many of the stakeholders to understand progress and priority changes to their respective Carbon Neutral projects plans.

First engagement (pre-COVID)

Face-to-Face Meetings with building managers and Heads of Service

In November and December 2019, multiple visits were made to Charnwood Town Hall, Charnwood Museum, Woodgate Chambers, the Oak Business Centre, the Ark Business Centre, and our Southfield Road and ICS building complex.

Building managers played an important role in providing information and data to inform our projects, as well as describing what they would like to happen and the challenges they face. A carbon footprint and energy audit has been prepared for each of the buildings. These include technical details on the projects in this plan, and a number of other potential projects which have been ruled out.

Meetings with corporate and delivery services have taken place throughout the project, starting in November 2019 and continuing to April 2020. This has been to ensure the projects we propose complement existing plans rather than conflict with them, and to inform the timeline of project delivery.

Workshop with Heads of Services and building managers



In 2019 a half-day workshop was held with around 20 staff from Charnwood Borough Council, representing a range of delivery and corporate services and building managers.

Working in groups, participants created a vision statement for how to achieve a net carbon neutral Council. Then, reflecting on achievements so far, participants brainstormed and prioritised a number of projects and delivery actions. The range of projects in this plan match those identified in the workshop and the roadmap designed by each group. A key area of focus from each group was the importance of culture change at a Corporate Leadership level to enable large and impactful projects to happen.

Members briefing event

In February 2020, an evening briefing event was delivered to Members. Led by Councillor Rollings, over 30 Members attended to learn about our Carbon Neutral Plan 2030 and to ask questions. During the discussion, the enthusiasm of the Members to be engaged and involved in successfully reaching our aim was clear.

Corporate Leadership Team and Board Meetings

Our work on the Carbon Neutral Plan began with an introductory meeting to the Corporate Leadership Team to capture their priorities. This has been followed up by quarterly Project Board meetings to discuss the proposed projects. The Project Board is made up of Officers and elected Members.

Second engagement (during COVID)

Video Meetings with building managers and Heads of Service

Between April and May 2021, due to social distancing restrictions, multiple video meetings were conducted with the same Charnwood Borough Council's service leaders engaged prior to COVID.

This was to understand how council services have had to adapt operationally and financially due to COVID, and any impact this has had on progress made on previously planned carbon neutral priority activities. These insights have been incorporated into the 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan, reflecting the current policy priorities and funding restrictions that are in place.

Delivering the Plan

Managing and delivering projects

Co-ordinating the whole Council activity to ensure that Carbon Neutral projects are embedded across our capital programme and services is likely to require additional resources.

To be most effective, there is a need for a dedicated resource with an overview of each Service area to coordinate activity between Service Managers within and across Directorates.

Many of the projects in this plan are cross-directorate and will have a golden ‘window of opportunity’ to deliver. For example, if a building is being renovated then this is likely to be the most efficient and cost-effective time to deliver carbon saving and energy generation projects. It will be essential to ensure that these carbon reduction projects are considered and included in the plans for renovation and that such opportunities are not missed. We will consider the support required for Council Services in writing funding bids, identifying best practice examples, and working with procurement, partners and suppliers during project delivery.

This plan is designed to be flexible. The menu of projects and the prioritisation tool later in this report allow the Council to respond to funding opportunities and new technologies and delivery models which may emerge.

There will be a need for concerted action from across the Council and additional resources will be needed to drive forward our ambition to become a carbon neutral council by 2030. This will include resources for selecting projects, delivering them, and identifying new opportunities. Using the Carbon Accounting Tool provided, there will also be a need to ensure monitoring and evaluation of projects is overseen, with accurate and timely progress reports provided to members.

Action 1

Ensure dedicated resources are in place to implement the management and delivery of the Carbon Neutral Plan.

Reducing emissions is a whole Council activity

In developing this Carbon Neutral Plan, we have worked closely with different areas of the Council responsible for service delivery. The projects presented are designed to complement and build on our existing budget plans to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint.

Eliminating the carbon footprint of the Council’s assets, operations and services is not about, and cannot be about, one area of Council activity pursuing a stand-alone agenda.

Making corporate decisions which enable and encourage all services to reduce carbon emissions will need to become the new normal during the course of this plan and, as such, is a whole Council activity.

As a Council we are well placed to make the corporate and cultural changes needed to deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan. Our Lead Member for Transformation sits on the Council’s Cabinet with a remit including the Environment and climate change agenda. The Council also has a climate change champion Member to promote the Council’s objectives.

Action 2

Formalise and embed a process for evaluating the impact arising from the council’s decisions on carbon emissions.

For the Council to become carbon neutral by 2030, there are four key enabling factors; taking responsibility, joined-up working, procuring outcomes, and learning from data. Unlocking these factors requires changes to the way we work at a corporate level (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Enabling factors for long-term carbon neutral project delivery



directorates and corporate functions of the Council, we will not be able to grasp the available opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint.

3. Learning from data

Monitoring the impact of the projects in this plan is important. This means that embedding a standardised way of collating and reporting on tracking and the monitoring of data is important. To achieve this, the different teams responsible for delivering the projects understand the value of data in:

- Clearly tracking which projects have been deployed and at what cost to demonstrate progress to Elected Members and citizens.
- Monitoring changes in energy use, vehicle fuel use and energy generated to show the progress towards net carbon neutrality.
- Reporting on financial savings and revenues to make the case for further investment as the plan progresses.
- Creating feedback loops from pilots to learn what works in order to inform future projects.

4. Procuring outcomes

Internal standards can be used so that procurement considers carbon emissions and data collection – either by explicitly asking tenderers to answer a question on carbon emissions in tenders, or by simply by making an internal assessment of potential carbon impact. This can enable the Council to maximise opportunities to achieve carbon savings, embed monitoring data, as well as achieving the intended social and economic outcomes.

Strategic procurement should focus on long-term benefits over quick wins. Whilst technology applications change rapidly, underlying infrastructure such as low carbon vehicle infrastructure or housing can be designed and built in a way that is future proofed from the start. For example, new or renovated buildings can be built in a way that enables them to adopt fully zero-carbon heating, power, and mobility in the future, even if these are not available now.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Carbon Neutral Projects identified have been specifically chosen to build and add value to existing council activities and plans (at all levels), by filling delivery gaps and joining-up resources to support Council commitment to achieve Carbon neutrality by 2030.

Council-wide collaboration is needed to deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan. To provide clarity on roles and responsibility the PACE framework for project management will be used for each project during the life of the Carbon Neutral Plan.

PACE is designed to enable fast decision making, accountability and consensus building to co-ordinate the different council stakeholders.

Each letter within PACE specifies the level of ownership and responsibility for a given Council stakeholder. For Carbon Neutral projects, roles and responsibilities will be assigned as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: PACE framework roles and responsibilities

Role		Responsibility
P	Project Owner	Responsible for planning and monitoring projects to ensure they are on time, on-budget and meet requirements. They coordinate and inform other stakeholders and seek necessary approvals.
A	Approver	Responsible for reviewing key project milestones and approving any final decisions.
C	Contributor	Responsible for providing expert consultation and enabling support.
E	Executor	Responsible for “on the ground” project implementation.

Prioritising Projects

A Carbon Neutral Project Screening Tool can be used by project managers and Heads of Services who are responsible for developing and promoting carbon reduction projects.

The Tool provides a mechanism for scoring projects against 11 criteria which have been designed to reflect different considerations in our decision-making process, from carbon emissions reduction to financial payback.

To turn these 11 individual scores into recommendations, the tool calculates two combined scores:

- **Impact score:** 6 impact criteria scores added together.
- **Deliverability score:** 5 financial deliverability criteria scores added together.

These two scores can then be plotted on two-by-two matrix which will recommend whether projects should be prioritised. For example, projects which have a high impact score, and high deliverability score are prioritised as 'must do', as shown below (Figure 6).

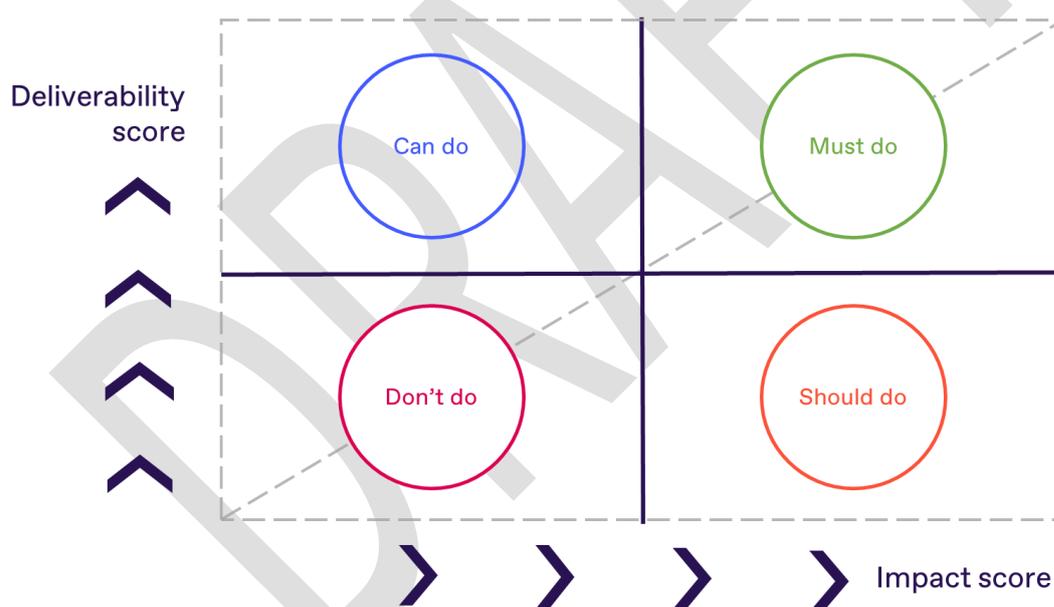


Figure 6: Prioritisation matrix

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

The impact criteria are:

C1	Targeted	Is the project tackling the biggest carbon emitters and most urgent priorities to address Is the project tackling a major source of Charnwood Borough Council's carbon emissions?
C2	Carbon impact	Scale of carbon reduction Does the project make a significant contribution to reducing carbon?
C3	Visible	People see and feel the benefits of the Net Zero Plan Charnwood Borough Council staff see real change and the project is a visible demonstration of action to communities across the Borough.
C4	Scalable	Is the project scalable across the whole Charnwood Borough Council estate/fleet/operations, if required? If the project is a pilot, or focusing on just a part of Charnwood Borough Council's estate or fleet, will it be scalable across the rest of the estate or fleet?
C5	Intelligent	Responsive and future-proofed solutions Is the project using the best solution or technology for the long-term and is preparing Charnwood Borough Council for integrating future technologies or responding to future policy?
C6	Added value	Is the project adding value to or topping-up planned Charnwood Borough Council activity rather than duplicating or conflicting? Is the project using Carbon Neutral Plan budget to enhance or improve the energy and carbon performance of activity planned by different Services across Charnwood Borough Council rather than funding a new or stand-alone activity?

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

The deliverability criteria are:

D1	Deliverability	Ability to deliver and realise benefits in the short term.
		Does Charnwood Borough Council have the ability to deliver with current capacity and resources?
D2	Readiness	Project readiness level
		Is the project 'off the shelf' or already progressed through stages of design and feasibility, meaning it can be implemented
D3	Cost	Scale of investment needed
		Is the level of investment needed affordable within existing budgets or known sources of funding?
D4	Return on investment	Timescale for payback
		Will the project payback either through revenue generation or cost savings within five years? If funded by external loans, will annual savings exceed loan repayments?
D5	Alignment with funding opportunities	Does the project provide an opportunity to secure funding?
		Is the project aligned (in terms of outcomes, sector, focus, and scale) with priorities of UK government funding for Local Authority internal projects, research funding via universities, or private investment funds?

Funding and Partnerships

Financing large scale energy efficiency and energy generation schemes is a big challenge for local authorities around the country. This is no different for us here in Charnwood, especially as we emerge from the unprecedented situation created by COVID-19.

As the costs of the required carbon neutral projects are outside our available budget additional forms of funding and finance are needed. The majority of this will be from external sources.

External funding

We recognise the need for a step change in how we develop projects to reach net zero, and a number of national organisations can be important partners in navigating different finance options.

A key organisation to engage is Local Partnerships. Local Partnerships is described as a joint venture between HM Treasury, the Local Government Association and Welsh Government. Local Partnerships focus on helping the public sector deliver projects to reduce carbon emissions and maximise value for money.

Local Partnerships run the Re:fit programme. Re:fit is a procurement initiative for public bodies wishing to implement energy efficiency measures and local energy generation projects on their assets. Local authorities can access the Re:fit framework for development and delivery of long-term capital programmes to reduce carbon emissions and improve the performance of existing and newly created assets.

Forming a regular dialogue with Local Partnerships will be an important aspect of delivering the plan. This will include understanding fully how Local Partnerships can help us deliver the Carbon Neutral Plan and to help us access the wider range of guidance on finance provided by the Local Government Association.

Loans and debt finance

Government funding and finance often takes place in phases and waves. For example, two funding streams became available for short periods in the first half of 2021:

- **Phase 2 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme replaced the SALIX Energy in 2-Efficiency Loan Scheme.** This scheme, funded by BEIS and administered by SALIX provides Local Authorities with loans to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures, with a focus on a whole buildings approach.
- **The Public Sector Low Carbon Skills.** This fund provided grants to help all eligible public sector bodies to source specialist and expert advice to identify and develop energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrade projects for non-domestic buildings.

It is likely that that these schemes will re-open for new phases in the future and it is important we are fully prepared for this event. To do this, we will:

- Maintain dialogue with the Local Government Association and BEIS so we know when application rounds are coming
- Continue with feasibility studies and project proposal development so we have ‘off the shelf’ projects ready for a quick response to funding calls.

Progressing feasibility studies and project proposals will also be required to access established forms of public sector borrowing.

As well as waves of funding, there are established, and emerging forms of finance backed by the UK Government.

The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is the most established source of finance for local authorities. The PWLB generally offers the lowest rate of interest available to local authorities and is provided on a more flexible basis than most private sector funding. Warrington Borough Council borrowed £58.7m from the PWLB to build two solar farms which opened in 2019 and 2020. Projects do not have to be delivered withing Charnwood for us to access this finance. For example, Warrington’s projects are a 34.7MWp solar farm plus a 27MW battery storage facility near York and a 25.7MWp solar farm in Hull.

Community Municipal Bonds are a relatively new but growing way for Local Authorities to raise finance for infrastructure investment. A form of public sector crowdfunding, with members of the local community able to invest in projects for a rate of return. West Berkshire Council raised £1m to fund new rooftop solar power on Council-owned buildings. A total 640 investors, 20% from within the local authority, invested with West Berkshire Council paying returns of 1.2 per cent per year over a 5-year term.

The Salix Recycling Fund provides capital investment in energy-efficient technologies across the public sector. It is a ring-fenced fund with capital provided by Salix and matched by the partner organisation, to be spent on energy-saving projects with paybacks up to 10 years. The financial savings delivered by the projects are returned to the fund allowing further spending on front line services, hence the term ‘Recycling Fund’.

The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) will provide a total of £4billion loans to local authorities for strategic infrastructure projects. Unlike private projects, local authority projects do not need to be revenue generating in themselves, but the Bank will seek evidence that the project is financially sound, and that the authority has the ability to repay the loan. The minimum loan is £5million. This is a larger amount than we may need, however the UKIB provides advice to support collaboration and partnership working meaning we can work together with other organisations and local authorities. The UKIB is planning to start further engagement with local authorities during Summer 2021 and will also be releasing further guidance. Liaising with UKIB and exploring opportunities for collaborative projects will be important.

Grants

A selection of available and relevant grants is summarised below. An aspect of delivering the Carbon Neutral Plan will be to monitor new grant announcements on a regular basis. Ensuring sufficient resources and capacity is available to work on funding bids will be important to avoid missing opportunities that arise.

The Office for Low Emissions Vehicles (OLEV) Workplace Charging Scheme a voucher-based scheme that provides support towards the up-front costs of the purchase and installation of electric vehicle chargepoints at workplaces, including public sector organisations.

The Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) is a government funding programme to increase the number of heat networks being built in towns and cities. The scheme offers grants and loans to both the public bodies for heat networks serving 2 or more buildings. This could provide an opportunity to help other organisations in Charnwood decarbonise their heating at the same as we do for our own buildings.

Defra's Air quality grant programme provides funding to eligible local authorities to help improve air quality. Primarily funding goes to community-wide projects, however this is not always the case. For example, in March 2021 Buckinghamshire Council were awarded over £97,000 for a pilot of an electric vehicle employer salary sacrifice scheme.

The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) opened 26 April 2021 as part of the Government's Nature for Climate Fund, supporting the planting of 44,000 large 'standard' trees over a two-year period: 2021/22 to 2022/23. Funding is open to both block bids and individual applications. A block bid is designed for organisations to apply for funding for multiple projects that can be geographically dispersed

The Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) is a £10 million programme which supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects. Grants of up to £40,000 for a feasibility study for a renewable energy project. Following this, grants of up to £100,000 are provided for business development and planning of feasible schemes. This funding is available to town and parish councils which are designated as rural. Developing projects would require partnership working between us and parish councils, and the Midlands Energy Hub who administer the funding.

Carbon Neutral Plan

Investment the Council makes will achieve meaningful carbon reductions and be cost effective. This Carbon Neutral Plan is the start of our journey, presenting key challenges and actions which can be delivered.

An immediate work programme of action to address our carbon emissions is set out in this section, underpinned by the steps needed to deliver the plan discussed in the previous section.

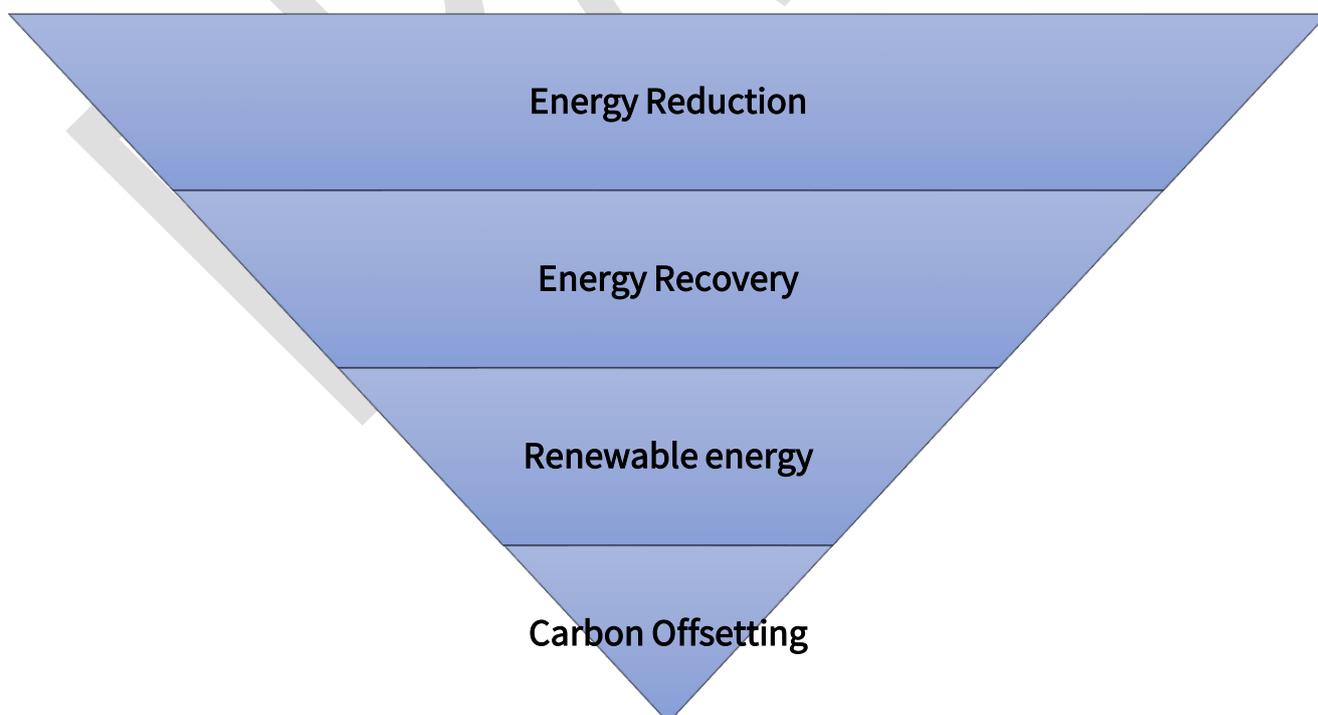
The work programme reflects the main challenges we need to address during the next ten years. It is important to acknowledge that reducing emissions over the next ten years will be more difficult than the previous five years as we have successfully completed 'quick win' projects, with outstanding actions much more substantial in scale.

Strategy

Our strategy to become carbon neutral is based on two principles of best practice: the energy hierarchy and navigating the "path of least regret."

The Energy Hierarchy

The energy hierarchy takes the following format:



Therefore, the analysis below identifies ways in which energy is currently being used to identify projects that can realistically reduce the energy consumption of the site to the point where renewable energy can reduce the footprint to zero.

The Path of Least Regret

Within the analysis, there are inevitably options in which a trade-off between the energy hierarchy principles and achieving the goal of zero-carbon is necessary. For example, technological advances may change the nature of the projects, or even create new opportunities that have not been included in this plan. The current national and local socio-economic situation created by COVID-19 will also likely have a long-lasting influence on the funding opportunities and prioritisation decisions made by the Council, between 2021 and 2030.

Main Challenges

The tracking of our carbon footprint demonstrates we have three main challenges which we need to address to reach carbon neutrality by 2030:

1. Reducing net carbon emissions from buildings
2. Reducing net carbon emissions from transport
3. Investing in carbon positive activities

To succeed, we will also need to ensure that there are sufficient resources available at the right time. Given that we are in the early stages of this programme, and that some of the projects that we are going to undertake will be complicated, we have included feasibility studies as well as short-term projects in our plan. Some of the larger projects have costs that cannot be predicted at this moment. A selection of these projects is shown in Appendix 1 alongside indicative costs and benefits of projects in the work programme, and these will be reviewed as the funding and technology environment changes.

1. Reducing net emissions from buildings



The carbon footprint of our buildings is dominated by gas consumption. While we will continue to look at reducing our electricity use, not least because it makes financial sense not to waste energy, our focus will be in decarbonising our use of heating and hot water, which is currently largely driven by burning fossil-fuel gas.

Challenge: Gas use must be reduced or eliminated.

Opportunity	Sub-Challenge	How we are responding
Reduce gas demand in buildings through energy efficiency improvements.	The age and design of buildings with the highest energy consumption means they are difficult or impossible to improve or renovate.	The Carbon Neutral Plan includes a small number of more feasible projects to make progress where we can. Larger scale investments will be considered as part of a 'whole buildings' approach.
Replace gas use in buildings with alternative energy forms.	Switching from gas to electricity is expensive. In some buildings changing the heating system is physically difficult or impossible.	Feasibility studies have been included in the Carbon Neutral Plan to explore options. Where we have no choice but to keep current heating systems, we will prioritise energy efficiency measures.
Procure green gas, in the same way we do electricity.	This project would not actively reduce our gas use. As green gas is likely to have a higher price, it would add to	Sourcing green gas shows our commitment to ending reliance on natural gas and reducing emissions from the

	our energy bills if we did not simultaneously reduce our consumption.	UK gas network. This enables us to make progress towards net zero whilst we plan how to tackle the bigger challenges.
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Our Southfields office on Southfield Road is one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions from our built estate. However, there is uncertainty on how this building will be used in the future due to changes in staff working patterns following COVID-19. There is an ongoing review of our buildings with a decision yet to be made on the future of Southfields. For this reason, we have not included any projects at Southfields in this plan.

Loughborough Town Hall requires feasibility study to assess the overall heating upgrade potential of the building, including new more energy efficient heating system and insulating the backstage area which is currently an uninsulated metal wall. This major heat loss area challenge needs to be addressed for other town hall projects, such as installing a new boiler, to be effective. The boiler itself is 20 years old and there are currently no plans to change it until it fails beyond economic repair. A simple upgrade to the rear door of the building which currently allows heat to flow out and cold air in can be delivered in the meantime.

For **Charnwood Museum** two stand-alone projects were identified relating to wall, roof and glazing insulation. In addition, a new round of **LED lighting upgrades initiatives across all council buildings** and other locations have been identified that will save further energy and money. However, because the Council already use zero carbon electricity, replacing lights with LEDs cannot be officially counted towards carbon footprint reduction targets. The current LED programme status is that some of the buildings LED upgrades have been completed in full, whilst the Town Hall aims to have all fittings, hard wired lights complete by Sep 2021 and the museum will introduce LEDs and sensor controls in staff areas.

The final project is an overall procurement project. Building on the success of our renewable electricity procurement, we will also invest in procuring **renewable gas**. This will involve supporting, through our purchasing power, the introduction of non-fossil fuel gas into the gas grid in the same way that our procurement of renewable electricity helps to decarbonise the whole grid. We will use Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin (RGGO) to demonstrate that our gas is zero carbon.

Action 3	Install a solid and better insulating door at the rear entrance of the Town Hall (stage door) to eliminate the current loss of heat and cold draughts.
Action 4	Commission a technical feasibility study for low or zero carbon heating options to replace the 20-year-old boiler at the Town Hall.
Action 5	Renew quotes for double glazing and flat roof insulation at Charnwood Museum and procure the best option.

Action 6	Complete LED installations in Museum staff areas with person-in-room sensors.
Action 7	Continue to replace bulbs when needed with best available LED option across the estate.
Action 8	Procure renewable gas

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2. Reducing net emissions from transport



The carbon footprint of our vehicles is dominated by diesel consumption and makes up 84% of our total emissions. We have already started to introduce electric vehicles, but we are also looking at ways to reduce the mileage travelled by our fleet. Fuel consumption from fleet vehicles has reduced during 2020-2021, however the long-term impact of COVID-19 on fleet use remains to be seen.

Challenge: Council-owned fleet of vehicles are biggest contributor to our carbon footprint and must be decarbonised.

Opportunity	Sub-Challenge	How we are responding
Switch our owned and operated vehicles to electric.	Our fleet is heterogenous and some of the vehicles are specialised. There are operational and HR concerns from moving to electric vehicles.	We will run a pilot programme which will ensure that we can successfully retire our fossil-fuel powered vehicles by 2030.
Switch our waste collection vehicles from diesel to electric.	Our fleet is only recently purchased (2019) and we cannot justify replacing this in the short or medium term.	We will plan to replace our fleet after 2030.
Introduce biofuels into our waste collection vehicles instead of diesel.	The investment needed to build biofuel storage tanks and pumping stations is likely to be prohibitive. Compatibility between engines and fuel needs to be confirmed.	Short to medium-term options for mitigations will be explored and we will plan to replace our fleet after 2030.

Pay for diesel offsetting from third party providers.	These schemes do not always prevent emissions ⁴ , and would require research to find schemes where carbon savings from tree planting are genuinely realised.	We will consider options to procure high quality credits to offset any of our emissions, not just diesel as a last resort measure in 2028-2029.
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Two feasibility studies and two implementation projects have been identified for the Council’s transport related low-carbon projects. The transport projects of the Carbon Neutral Plan mainly focus on activities that relate to fleet vehicles.

In the long-term, we can eliminate nearly all carbon emissions from our fleet vehicles, including waste and maintenance fleets. In coming years, we will be able to capitalise on technology and market developments. For example, forecasts suggest electric cars could be cheaper to buy than petrol or diesel cars from 2025 onwards. This means the ideal time to migrate to a new system of electric vehicles to reduce the carbon emissions is now.

Successful projects have been undertaken or are underway. The mayoral car that has already been replaced by an electric version in 2021 and **electric vehicles ordered for the upgraded street management pest control fleet**. Charging points for these vehicles have been installed and funded. The pest control fleet is being reduced to two vehicles, with the current diesel vans being replaced with electric vehicles. Street management already have two electric cars which are being upgraded, and this project will see the current diesel van switched to electric.

Despite progress, there are still several challenges to delivering these projects that need to be addressed.

The part of our fleet that has the largest footprint is our waste collection fleet. We have already purchased a more fuel-efficient fleet of waste collection, recycling and street cleaning vehicles that will reduce our carbon emissions by over 10% per year. However, we need to do more. Other Councils have used **Smart Bins** to optimise their waste collection frequency. Smart Bins operate by installing low-cost sensors in existing bins in high streets, parks and other open spaces to monitor waste fill levels. The sensors would then enable the council’s street cleaning teams to remotely check when specific bins need emptying. This real time information on fill levels will help the council understand the optimal times for waste collections and provide up-to-date recommendations on the most efficient collection routes. This smart bin technology has potential to reduce unnecessary waste collection travel, especially in rural areas, reducing mileage, fuel use and CO₂ emissions, and improve service delivery.

⁴ <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/the-biggest-problem-with-carbon-offsetting-is-that-it-doesnt-really-work/>

As a council we will have to conduct a **cross-service electric pool car and charging feasibility study** to decide whether, and when, some of these vehicles can be replaced with electric alternatives – and whether future ways of working and office locations make pool cars effective. We do not yet know for sure how many staff will be working in each of our buildings each day. However, if different staff are on site each day spreading demand for pool cars across the week, then just a small number of electric pool cars could be part of this flexible working pattern. A smaller fleet would also make charging the vehicles easier.

There are 31 diesel fleet vans which will be due for replacement by 2026. At the time of writing there are a range of practical barriers to this electrification, including issues around charging infrastructure and the fact that operatives keep vehicles at home. This will require joint working across a range of departments including HR. Therefore, initially, we will run a **cross-service maintenance vehicle feasibility & pilot project**. A feasibility study will be undertaken to identify the optimum number and locations of electric vehicle chargers; the best operatives and vehicles to take part in the pilot; and to estimate the time and fuel cost savings from using electric vehicles.

Following the feasibility study, we will undertake a pilot with a small number of vehicles to identify operational and HR issues prior to full electrification of the fleet in 2026. The project will include charge points at sheltered accommodation so that operatives can plug in when they arrive on site and leave the vehicle to charge whilst working. The pilot project will collect on the ground data on the operational impact of using electric vehicles after which a decision on a future roll-out can be taken.

Action 9	Upgrade and switch to electric vehicles in the street management & pest control fleet.
Action 10	Smart bin feasibility study.
Action 11	Cross-service electric pool car and charging feasibility study.
Action 12	Cross-service maintenance vehicle feasibility & pilot.

3. Investing in carbon positive activities



Swithland Wood Country Park in Charnwood Forest. Source: www.britannica.com. Image: Kev747

To achieve carbon neutrality, we will invest in carbon positive activities as well as reducing the footprint of our existing operations. We will use both renewable energy and sequestration to achieve this. Ultimately, we may also need to invest in other forms of activities, and we will revisit this as the decade progresses.

Challenge: We will need to invest in projects that will create a positive carbon footprint.

Opportunity	Sub-Challenge	How we are responding
Charnwood has existing assets which could be used for renewable energy installations.	The Council is reassessing its estate and investment in renewable energy is a long-term commitment which is not prudent given the current economic uncertainty.	We are looking at both existing and potential assets rather than limiting ourselves to the sites we own now.
The Borough has several sites that have been identified for renewable energy installations.	The current economic uncertainty means that it is hard to predict what will be possible to invest in over this decade.	Feasibility studies have been included in the Carbon Neutral Plan to explore options. We will work with partners to develop more substantial investments which will give us economies of scale and reduce project risks.
Charnwood has many sites that could be replanted. This sequestration could provide a substantial positive footprint.	There is a lot of competition for land within the Borough. Sequestration does not provide a good financial return on investment, and	We are committed to working with local partners to ensure our tree planting programme is cost effective and delivers the benefits we need.

	other benefits, like amenity, are sometimes hard to justify.	
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Our tree planting strategy to secure the planting of 100,000 trees in the Borough is already underway with many reaching maturity and starting to remove carbon from the atmosphere. A significant part of tree planting programme will come from using funding to plant woodland on former agricultural land. Most notably, we will be planting **13,000 to 14,000 trees at Hathern during Autumn/Winter 2021-2022.**

These larger council tree planting projects are supported by smaller initiatives such as the Earthwatch (green recovery fund), which enabled 600 trees to be planted in Holt drive Loughborough.

In addition to the Carbon Neutral Plan and Local Plan, we are currently developing our report *'Nature P.O.Sitive; Understanding the potential for biodiversity net gain in Charnwood open space'*. This recommends three actions:

1. Introduce the pilot project to reduce mowing frequency on selected CBC sites from the start of 2022. Review the success of the project after two years and if appropriate identify additional sites.
2. Engage with Parish Councils and the LCC to explore opportunities to provide local community led biodiversity enhancements and restoration of select roadside verges. Review progress towards this goal after two years
3. Investigate the feasibility of introducing cut and collect mowing techniques and the use of grass cuttings for small scale local energy generation.

Embedding Nature P.O.Sitive in the Carbon Neutral Plan is an important next step. As well as reducing the cost of grass mowing the Carbon Neutral Plan Accounting Tool can be used to assess the impact on emissions from reduced mowing. Similarly, as biodiversity is increased, the impact on climate change mitigation and our net carbon footprint through carbon sequestration should be measured. This would require a further technical study as different plant species and soil types will absorb carbon emissions at different rates.

We have identified that there are opportunities for a portfolio of renewable energy developments to generate zero carbon electricity. This includes **land-based solar PV installations, rooftop solar PV installations, and wind energy generation.** To achieve carbon neutrality, it is likely that the portfolio will include both large developments, which could have a capacity in excess of 2MW, and smaller installations, which could be as small as 4kW. For example, a preliminary assessment of the opportunity in Nanpanten identified that a 2.5 MW solar PV array could produce a positive carbon impact of up to 320 tonnes CO₂e per annum.

All energy generation projects will require feasibility studies before a decision can be made to take them forward and implement. These feasibility projects could be delivered individually or as a package.

What are solar PV projects?

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) is a technology that converts sunlight (solar radiation) into direct current electricity. Solar PV technology is generally deployed on a panel. A solar PV project is the term we use to describe the installation of solar panels, either on an existing building roof, a purpose-built structure, or on the ground.

Electricity can be sold to the national grid, directly to tenants, or used directly by the Council. For consistency, across all the solar PV projects in this plan we have assumed a sale of electricity to the grid. This means the financial benefits are a conservative estimate.

Action 13	Progress tree programme including 13,000 to 14,000 trees at Hathern during Autumn/Winter 2021-2022.
Action 14	Embedding Nature P.O.Sitive in the Carbon Neutral Plan
Action 15	Site feasibility studies for solar PV installations on Council owned land, including land purchased for the purpose.
Action 16	Borough-wide feasibility study for land-based solar PV installations, for example at Council-owned car parks.
Action 17	Feasibility study for rooftop solar PV installations across our built estate.
Action 18	Site feasibility studies for wind energy generation taking account of Local Plan Opportunity Areas.

Actions recap

An actions recap is shown in Table 11 alongside an indication of roles and responsibilities using the PACE framework, and potential KPIs for monitoring progress.

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Table 11: Actions

Action	PACE Roles and Responsibilities	KPI(s)
<p>Action 1</p>	<p>Ensure dedicated resources are in place to implement the management and delivery of the Carbon Neutral Plan.</p> <p>P – Head of Planning & Regeneration A - Senior Leadership Team C - Carbon Neutral Board E – Group Leader for Plans, Policies and Place-Making & Human Resources</p>	<p>Resource review completed and implemented</p>
<p>Action 2</p>	<p>Formalise and embed a process for evaluating the impact arising from the council’s decisions.</p> <p>P – Sustainability Officer A - Senior Leadership Team C - Carbon Neutral Board E – Procurement</p>	<p>Number of decisions made with a beneficial carbon impact</p>
<p>Action 3</p>	<p>Install a solid and better insulating door at the rear entrance of the Town Hall (stage door) to eliminate the current loss of heat and cold draughts.</p> <p>P = Strategic Asset Manager A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure C = Town Hall Manager, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board E = Strategic Asset Management Team</p>	<p>Building gas use reduced</p>
<p>Action 4</p>	<p>Commission a technical feasibility study for low or zero carbon heating options in the Town Hall. This replace the 20-year-old boiler and would be installed as part of a full building renovation.</p> <p>P = Strategic Asset Manager A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure C = Town Hall Manager, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board E = Strategic Asset Management Team</p>	<p>Preferred option identified</p>

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Action	PACE Roles and Responsibilities	KPI(s)
Action 5	Renew quotes for double glazing and flat roof insulation at Charnwood Museum and procure the best option. P = Strategic Asset Manager A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure C = Museum Manager, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board E = Strategic Asset Management Team	Building gas use reduced
Action 6	Complete LED installations in Museum staff areas with person-in-room sensors. P = Strategic Asset Manager A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure C = Museum Manager, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board E = Strategic Asset Management Team	Building electricity use reduced
Action 7	Continue to replace bulbs when needed with best available LED option across the estate. P = Strategic Asset Manager, Head of Landlord Services, Property Manager A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure, Strategic Director for Community, Planning and Housing C = All Building Managers, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board E = Strategic Asset Management Team, Housing Management Team	Building electricity use reduced
Action 8	Procure renewable gas P = Sustainability Officer/Dedicated Officer A = Senior Leadership Team C = Carbon Neutral Board, Building Managers E = Procurement	Building gas use reduced.

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Action	PACE Roles and Responsibilities	KPI(s)	
Action 9	Upgrade and switch to electric vehicles in the street management & pest control fleet.	<p>P = Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces, Fleet Manager</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services</p> <p>C = Carbon Neutral Board, Procurement</p> <p>E = Strategic Environmental Team</p>	Fuel use reduced from fleet.
Action 10	Smart bin feasibility study.	<p>P = Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services</p> <p>C = Carbon Neutral Board, Procurement</p> <p>E = Strategic Environmental Team</p>	<p>Decision made on whether to procure.</p> <p>If procured: mileage and fuel use reduced in waste collection fleet</p>
Action 11	Cross-service electric pool car and charging feasibility study.	<p>P = Sustainability Officer/Dedicated Officer</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services</p> <p>C = Fleet Managers, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Environmental Team</p>	Preferred option identified
Action 12	Cross-service maintenance vehicle feasibility & pilot	<p>P = Improvement and Organisational Development Manager</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services</p> <p>C = Fleet Managers, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Environmental Team</p>	Feasibility study complete and viable pilot project identified.

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Action	PACE Roles and Responsibilities	KPI(s)
<p>Action 13</p> <p>Progress tree programme including 13,000 to 14,000 trees at Hathern during Autumn/Winter 2021-2022.</p>	<p>P = Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services</p> <p>C = Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Environmental Team</p>	<p>14,000 trees planted</p>
<p>Action 14</p> <p>Embedding Nature P.O.Sitive in the Carbon Neutral Plan</p>	<p>P = Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services</p> <p>C = Carbon Neutral Board, Ecologist</p> <p>E = Strategic Environmental Team</p>	<p>Carbon emissions impact calculated</p>
<p>Action 15</p> <p>Site feasibility studies for Solar PV installations on Council owned land, including land purchased for the purpose.</p>	<p>P = Strategic Asset Manager</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure</p> <p>C = Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Asset Management Team</p>	<p>Short-list of options identified</p>
<p>Action 16</p> <p>Borough-wide feasibility study for land-based solar PV installations, for example at Council-owned car parks.</p>	<p>P = Strategic Asset Manager</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure</p> <p>C = Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Asset Management Team</p>	<p>Technical supplier procured and preferred option identified</p>

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Action	PACE Roles and Responsibilities	KPI(s)
<p>Action 17</p> <p>Feasibility study for rooftop solar PV installations across our built estate</p>	<p>P = Strategic Asset Manager, Head of Landlord services, Property Manager</p> <p>A = Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Asset and Leisure, Strategic Director for Community, Planning and Housing</p> <p>C = All Building Managers, Procurement, Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Asset Management Team, Housing Management Team</p>	<p>Short-list of options identified</p>
<p>Action 18</p> <p>Site feasibility studies for wind energy generation taking account of Local Plan Opportunity Areas</p>	<p>P = Sustainability Officer/Dedicated Officer</p> <p>A = Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>C = Procurement, Planning, Carbon Neutral Board</p> <p>E = Strategic Assets</p>	<p>Short-list of options identified</p>

Inspiring change: partnership & leadership

Our 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan is more than just a chance for us to become a more efficient and responsible council. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate leadership.

Loughborough has a history of innovation in low carbon technology, whether that be research undertaken at the Gas Research Technology Centre in hydrogen fuel cells more than twenty years ago, or the recent Low Emission Freight and Logistics Project co-ordinated by Cenex. Building on this reputation will enable the Council to co-create innovative projects that could demonstrate technologies and techniques that could radically reduce emissions nationally

Partnership example:

County-wide solar charging hubs

The Council is already working in partnership with other local authorities in Leicestershire. Recognising the need for joint action to tackle climate change, we are part of a multi-council collaborative bid for funding to build solar powered electric vehicle charging hubs across the county. We would hope to see two of these in Charnwood, demonstrating our commitment to helping residents, visitors, and businesses travelling in and through the Borough to switch to electric vehicles.



Example solar charging hub in Sunderland.

As a Council, we have a powerful potential ally locally in the University of Loughborough, which has a strong sustainability aspect to its business school teaching, and the world-renowned Centre for Renewable Energy Systems Technology (CREST). Local businesses are also well placed to support radical climate action, including Cenex and Intelligent Energy, many of which are clustered in the Loughborough University Science &

Enterprise Park. Other potential corporate allies taking significant climate action, such as 3M and the National Grid, are also located in the District and may be collaboration partners.

At the same time, Charnwood is at the geographic centre of an expanding list of local Councils working towards reaching net zero carbon emissions and have set the same target for carbon neutrality by 2030. Joining Charnwood in Leicestershire are Blaby District, Harborough District, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, Leicester City, North West Leicestershire District, Oadby and Wigston Borough and with Leicestershire County Council. The County Council have started the process for developing a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and we will explore opportunities for shared projects as this develops.

Partnership opportunity:

Renewable Energy Centre

Loughborough used to have a refuse disposal site which included a landfill site on the east of the town. This space is contaminated land and provides opportunities to work in partnership with neighbouring Councils or private investors to develop the site for energy generation. One example could be a Renewable Energy Centre (REC). As well as a solar array, the site may be appropriate for biogas extraction and storage. This would also provide substantial education opportunities. A £4.5million (including £1m for R&D, feasibility and procurement) REC would generate 5GWh per year.

Partnership working will be required. The opportunity naturally lends itself to partnering with neighbouring local authorities and the County Council who will benefit from the scheme, Loughborough University, and organisations like Green Fox Community Energy Co-op, who operate a solar farm in Northwest Leicestershire and an energy Co-op in Hinckley.

These partners, along with other specialists from further afield can help Charnwood to build a compelling set of effective sustainable leadership initiatives. Our Borough's history and geography is also a helpful asset. The Borough is home to numerous shallow mines and quarries, including Newhurst Quarry, the site of a proposed energy from waste plant. These may offer ideal energy storage or large-scale renewable energy sites, potentially using technologies pioneered at the proposed Renewable Energy Centre. Similarly, Loughborough's strong history of hydrogen research, which included the installation of a trial hydrogen refuelling station by Air Products, means that the District is well placed to help lead in the decarbonisation of heating using green hydrogen.

The Borough's location, as a potential transport hub, could be supported by the creation of intermodal goods transfers; a zero-emission, last mile delivery system based on cross-docking at strategic locations, such as the motorway junction and railway station. This

would be an opportunity to demonstrate this technology. Similarly, over the coming decade the implementation of a zero-emission fleet across the Council, including refuse vehicles, will help demonstrate to local businesses the viability of a zero-emission fleet.

Charnwood has also been recognised by Highways England as part of the strategic electric charging network. A wide application of electric charging points across the Council owned estate could be a very powerful resource for vehicle to grid (V2G) applications, which is an emerging technology heavily supported by energy providers. The Council could also inspire a generation of drivers in Charnwood and the wider East Midlands to become zero-emission themselves.

We want to demonstrate strong political leadership to further inspire the community of Charnwood to implement other projects that can drive the Borough to become zero carbon. Demonstrations of zero carbon living in the Council's own stock, particularly considering the Future Homes Standard and the recent drive across the UK to build houses that use demonstrably less energy, could become beacons for developers, builders and refurbishers. For example, we are planning to complete an insulation feasibility study for our estate of sheltered accommodation in 2021-2022. As we have a total social housing stock of 5,868, this also provides us with the opportunity to positively impact a sizeable number of our own citizens and their own carbon footprints.

The Carbon Neutral Plan presents an opportunity to link to other strategic initiatives. For example, the Loughborough Town Deal Board has prepared a Town Investment Plan and has secured £16.9m from the Towns Fund. The Town Deal Board is an extensive partnership, featuring Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough University, Loughborough College, Love Loughborough, Leicestershire County Council, the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Charnwood Together Economy and Skills Group, local businesses and Loughborough MP. Projects which facilitate more walking and cycling, and which reduce the need to travel by providing better local facilities and events are likely to be confirmed in a final list of projects, which will be decided by the Board in the late summer of 2021.

Similarly, we hope the Council's endeavours will demonstrate how business operations can become net zero carbon in a way that is financially prudent and improves service. We have an opportunity to help business in Charnwood learn from successful action by some companies in the Borough to reduce emissions on their sites. Local examples include Samworth Brothers, which have been operating on 100% renewables since October 2017 and the demonstrator work at West Beacon Farm, which uses a variety of renewable energy and low carbon heat sources⁵.

⁵ [Renewables – West Beacon Farm](#)

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Charnwood's 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan gives us the opportunity to produce a clarion call that will inspire communities and business across Charnwood to reduce their own carbon emissions and help the whole Borough become carbon neutral.

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Appendix 1: Menu of actions and details

This Appendix sets out the indicative costs and benefits of the work programme, as well as a number of additional potential projects which were not included for various reasons.

As we move closer to 2030 newer technologies like electric vehicles and electric heat pumps are likely to get cheaper, whilst government policy is likely to make fossil fuels more expensive. Therefore, it is important that we continue to review these projects in the coming years as projects which are less financially viable today are likely to be more viable in the coming years. Where possible at time of writing, an estimate of the costs and benefits have been given and are subject to final feasibility assessments.

The following are a some of the projects not included in the Carbon Neutral Plan work programme but provide further potential areas for reducing emissions from our buildings and fleets:

For the **Server Rooms in ICT**, a few stand-alone projects were identified. However, the hot/cold server initiative cannot be explored until after the Council's current cloud computing migration is completed. There is also a possibility of the servers themselves eventually being relocated from ICT, but this requires a decision from accommodation before proceeding.

For **Woodgate Chambers**, stand-alone projects were identified including a roof replacement to enable thermal savings and a more efficient air handling /heat recovery system. However, given the age of the building, a decision needs to be made by the council on whether to keep building or not before exploring any further.

An **EV depot, waste fleet, charging scoping and feasibility study** will be required to decarbonise our fleet either shortly before 2030 or shortly afterwards. This will likely require an adjustment of the contractor procurement criteria to ensure future contractors can access a depot with the electric vehicle charging needs. The feasibility study will also have to take into consideration that the current waste vehicles being used are 30 Tonne capacity vehicles. Currently the maximum capacity of electric waste vehicles is only 26 Tonne. Therefore, moving to these smaller capacity electric vehicles would require more collection rounds, which may offset any cost efficiencies gained from electrification of the vehicles.

Reducing net emissions from buildings

Feasibility Studies		Cost
Actions within work programme:		
Action 4	Commission a technical feasibility study for low or zero carbon heating options to replace the 20-year-old boiler.	£40,000
Action 5	Renew quotes for double glazing and flat roof insulation at Charnwood Museum and procure the best option.	£5,000
Additional potential actions:		
	New server room efficiency, cooling and heat recovery feasibility study.	£10,000
	Woodgate Chambers roof replacement for thermal savings	£35,000
	Support the Housing Revenue Account Team to undertake a feasibility study for the best performing insulation option in Sheltered Accommodation.	£50,000

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Projects	Indicative capital cost	Indicative savings per year	Indicative tCO ₂ e reduced	Indicative payback (Years)	
Loughborough Town Hall:					
Action 3	Install a solid and better insulating door at the rear entrance of the Town Hall (stage door) to eliminate the current loss of heat and cold draughts.	£1,000	£160	1.3	6.3
Indicative follow on from Action 4	Boiler Upgrade	Additional £117,000 on top of standard boiler	£7,100	114.3	16
Woodgate Chambers:					
Switch-off campaign	£0	£710	3	Instant	
Charnwood Museum					
Indicative follow on from Action 5	Internal Insulation of walls and roof as only as part of wider wall redecorating or refurbishment.	£5.20/m ² as top up funding to normal re-plastering.	£6.90/m ²	8.9 kg/m ²	9 months

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Action 6	Complete LED installations in Museum staff areas with person-in-room sensors.	£2,090	£251	5.1 (to UK grid, not CBC)	11.1
Procurement:					
Action 8	Green gas procurement. Capital costs include procurement and cost of change.	£17,000	-£8,000	102	N/A

Reducing net emissions from transport

Feasibility Studies		Cost
Action 10	Smart bin feasibility study.	£5,000
Action 11	Cross-service electric pool car and charging feasibility study.	£25,000
Action 12	Cross-service maintenance vehicle feasibility & pilot.	£10,000

Projects		Capital cost	Savings per year	tCO ₂ e reduced	Payback (Years)
Action 9	Upgrade and switch to electric vehicles in the street management & pest control fleet.	Lease costs estimated at £700 higher per vehicle per year.	Fuel cost savings estimated to be up to £900 per vehicle per year.	7.3 from pest control. 5.4 tonnes from street management.	1 month. Fuel cost savings offset increase rental costs.

Investing in carbon positive activities

Energy Feasibility Studies		Cost
Action 15	Site feasibility studies for Solar PV installations on Council owned land.	£65,000
Action 16	Borough-wide feasibility study for land-based solar PV installations, for example at Council-owned car parks.	£40,000
Action 17	Feasibility study for rooftop solar PV installations across our built estate	£25,000
Action 18	Site feasibility studies for wind energy generation taking account of Local Plan Opportunity Areas	£20,000

Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan 2030

Projects	Capital cost	Savings per year	tCO ₂ e reduced	Payback (Years)
Action 13	Progress tree programme including 13,000 to 14,000 trees at Hathern during Autumn/Winter 2021-2022.	TBC	0	29.2 in year 1.
Action 14	Embedding Nature P.O.Sitive in the Carbon Neutral Plan	N/A		

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Charnwood



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Foresight

DCA

**INFORMAL CABINET
16TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: The Leader (Councillor Morgan)
The Deputy Leader (Councillor Barkley)
Councillors Bailey, Bokor, Harper-Davies, Mercer,
Poland, Rattray and Smidowicz

Councillor Seaton

Chief Executive
Strategic Director; Environmental and Corporate
Services
Head of Strategic Support
Strategic Director; Commercial Development,
Assets and Leisure
Head of Landlord Services
Head of Regulatory Services
Head of Planning and Regeneration
Head of Leisure and Culture
Head of Financial Services
Head of Customer Experience
Group Leader Plans, Policies and Place Making
Democratic Services Officer (EB)
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Rollings

The Leader stated that this **informal** meeting would be livestreamed and recorded, and the recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

20. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

Councillors Bokor, Morgan and Rattray declared interests in respect of item 10 on the agenda (Loughborough BID Ballot) as Directors of Loughborough BID. They would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

21. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2021 would be submitted to the next formal meeting of the Cabinet for confirmation as a correct record.

23. QUESTIONS UNDER CABINET PROCEDURE 10.7

Mr M. Hunt – Study of Houses in Multiple Occupation

- “1. In December the Council published A study of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Charnwood by Professor Darren Smith and Dr Andreas Culora of Loughborough University costing over £20,000 over three years, so why was this charged to the Loughborough Special Expenses when it clearly relates to the Borough as a whole and contributes to the Evidence Base of the Draft Borough Local Plan and the Borough Housing Needs Assessment?
2. Given that the first aim of the Study was “the creation of a comprehensive database identifying HMO in the Borough which can be updated as new information becomes available”, which are the contributing data sources to that database?
3. As the Study states “the database (HiMOG) provides an opportunity and baseline to annually update of the identification of HMOs and to identify the total number of bed spaces within each dwelling (i.e. total occupancy counts for each dwelling)”, is it in active use and if so why has the database never been updated?
4. Would the Council include this contract in a forthcoming internal audit?”

The following response had been published prior to the meeting:

1. *The study was commissioned in response to a recommendation from the Council’s Budget Scrutiny Panel following calls from Loughborough ward councillors to have a better understanding of HMO saturation in Loughborough in light of emerging research from Loughborough University into HMO geographies. As part of the budget setting process for the 2015/16 financial year, funding for the costs of the study was agreed by the Cabinet and Council (minute references Cabinet 84.4 2014/15 and Council 78.1.15 2014/15) in the form of a contribution towards the cost of a PhD thesis.*

While the study considered the impacts of HMOs across the whole Borough, the HiMOG database is only used in relation to planning decisions in Loughborough where an Article 4 Direction is in place. Similarly, Policy H7 in the Pre-submission Draft Local Plan only applies the threshold approach that makes use of the database to Loughborough.

The budget reports, including the allocation of this expenditure to the Loughborough Special Expenses, were prepared by the Council’s Head of Finance and Property Services and agreed by the Council’s Section 151 Officer who is responsible for the proper financial management of the Council.

2. *The HiMOG database was created in 2018 from the following datasets:*

- *HMO Licences*

- *Planning Register*
- *Student registration data*
- *Electoral Register*
- *Council Tax exemptions*
- *Information provided by local residents.*

3. *The HIMOG database is in active use and is updated.*

4. *Following the end of the project, and the handing over of the HIMOG database to the Council in 2018, there has been no contractual arrangement between the Council and Professor Smith.*

24. TENANCY POLICY 2021-2025

Considered, a report of the Head of Landlord Services setting out an updated Tenancy Policy for the period 2021-2025 (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

At the request of T. Edwardes, Chair of the Housing Management Advisory Board, the Head of Landlord Services presented verbally the views of the Board, as follows:

“The Housing Management Advisory Board considered the Tenancy Policy at its meeting on 12th May 2021. The Board heard that the policy promoted the targeted use of fixed-term tenancies to prevent anti-social behaviour, whereby prospective tenants with a history of serious ASB would be offered a fixed-term tenancy of 2 years commencing after the 12-month introductory tenancy period. If there was serious ASB then the Council could decide not to issue a new tenancy at the end of the 2-year fixed term.

The Board also heard that fixed term tenancies would be used to support the best use of housing stock, with high demand four bedroom and above and wheelchair accessible properties being offered on a 10-year fixed term tenancy in addition to the introductory tenancy period.

The Board was provided with assurances that throughout the period of fixed term tenancy, advice and support would be offered to tenants on the conduct of the tenancy and re-housing options as appropriate, that household vulnerability would be considered when making a decision not to renew a tenancy at the same address, and that each case would be considered on its own merits.

The Board was generally supportive of the policy, which was noted”.

The Head of Landlord Services assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the Tenancy Policy 2021-2025, attached at Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Landlord Services, be approved;
2. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Landlord Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Public Housing and the Head of

Strategic and Private Sector Housing, to make minor amendments to the Tenancy Policy 2021-2025;

3. that the views of the Housing Management Advisory Board be noted.

Reasons

1. To update the Council's policy on its approach to (amongst other things) the type of tenancies it will grant, where tenancies are granted for a fixed term, the length of those terms, and the circumstances in which it will grant tenancies of a particular type.
2. To enable minor changes to the policy to be made to support the effective management of tenancies in a way that is consistent with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
3. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Housing Management Advisory Board.

25. DRAFT NEW TENANCY AGREEMENT FOR COUNCIL HOMES

Considered, a report of the Head of Landlord Services setting out a draft updated Tenancy Agreement for introductory and secure tenants prior to notification of variation to the existing tenancy agreement being issued to the Council's tenants as part of a legally required consultation process (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

At the request of T. Edwardes, Chair of the Housing Management Advisory Board, the Head of Landlord Services presented verbally the views of the Board, as follows:

"The Board heard that it was good practice for landlords to update their tenancy agreement on a periodic basis to reflect current legislation, and to support a robust approach to tenancy management. This was a key document that defined the relationship between the Council and its tenants, and after full consideration the Board recommended a number of amendments, which the Chair of the Board was pleased to say had been incorporated into the final draft.

The Board was supportive of the draft new tenancy agreement, both noting and commending it to Cabinet."

The Board was thanked for its work in considering this and the previous item.

The Head of Landlord Services assisted with consideration of the report. In response to a question, he confirmed a typo on agenda page 44, first sentence of paragraph entitled *Crime and Disorder* should read "The draft new Tenancy Agreement contains terms which will enhance the Council's ability to take enforcement action to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), hate incidents, and domestic abuse".

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the draft Tenancy Agreement, attached at Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Landlord Services, be approved for consultation in accordance with Section 103 of the Housing Act 1985;
2. that following consultation, the draft Tenancy Agreement be updated with regard to the tenant response;
3. that subject to there being no significant amendments to the draft Tenancy Agreement, the Head of Landlord Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Public Housing, to implement the updated Tenancy Agreement;
4. that the views of the Housing Management Advisory Board be noted.

Reasons

1. To obtain Cabinet approval of the content of the draft Tenancy Agreement before a legally required consultation process commences.
2. To have regard to feedback received from tenants.
3. To implement, efficiently, an updated Tenancy Agreement which clearly sets out the rights and responsibilities of the Council as a landlord, and those of its tenants.
4. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Housing Management Advisory Board.

26. CORPORATE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND HATE INCIDENT POLICY 2021-2025

Considered, a report of the Head of Landlord Services, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Regulatory Services setting out a new Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incident Policy for the period 2021-2025 (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Seaton, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report setting out the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Head of Landlord Services and the Head of Regulatory Services assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incident Policy 2021-2025, attached at Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Landlord Services, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Regulatory Services, be approved;

2. that delegated authority be given to the Head of Landlord Services, in consultation with the Head of Neighbourhood Services, the Head of Regulatory Services and the relevant Cabinet Lead Members, to make minor amendments to the Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incident Policy 2021-2025;
3. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

Reasons

1. To set out a corporate policy on the Council's approach to managing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents.
2. To enable minor changes to be made to support the effective management of ASB.
3. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

27. CARBON NEUTRAL PLAN

Considered, a report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration setting out the Charnwood 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan and a short-term action plan (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Seaton, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report setting out the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Group Leader Plans Policies and Place Making assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the Charnwood Carbon Neutral Plan, contained in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration, be approved;
2. that the short-term action plan for the next three years, set out in Part B of the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration, be approved;
3. that the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Transformation, be given delegated authority to review and update the Carbon Neutral Plan through the Carbon Neutral Project Board.
4. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

Reasons

1. To set out the overall direction and plan of the Council in relation to its climate change commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

2. To enable projects for reducing the Council's carbon footprint to be progressed.
3. To enable the plan to be kept up to date and amendments to be made as necessary to reflect changing circumstances, opportunities, and Council priorities.
4. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

Having declared interests, Councillors Bokor, Morgan and Rattray left the meeting prior to the consideration of the following item.

28. LOUGHBOROUGH BID BALLOT

This item was chaired by Councillor Barkley.

Considered, a report of the Head of Leisure and Culture setting out the Loughborough Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Proposal (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Leisure and Culture assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Deputy Leader** for his decision:

1. that the BID Renewal Proposal be endorsed;
2. that the supporting information to support the BID Renewal Proposal including the BID Business plan be noted.

Reasons

1. To ensure the Cabinet is aware of the proposal and has no objection to it.
2. To enable the ballot to proceed within legal requirements.

Councillors Bokor, Morgan and Rattray returned to the meeting.

29. CAPITAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPORT

Considered, a report of the Head of Financial Services setting out proposed changes to the 2021-2023 Capital Plan and its financing (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Financial Services assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the current Capital Plan for 2021/22 - 2022/23, as amended by the changes shown in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Financial Services, in the budgeted sum of £59,343,800 be approved;
2. that the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) scheme be increased by £68.6k, in line with the Disabled Facilities Grants received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the total DGF Capital budget being £2,116,900 in 2021/22;
3. that the Outwoods Country Park – Visitor Centre and Cafe scheme be reduced by £50k, the reason being the external funding will not be received towards this scheme;
4. that a virement be made of £3k from the Replacement Hardware Programme Capital Budget to Planned Buildings Improvements for the purchase of docking stations;
5. that additional decisions, taken by Officers, in relation to new S106 schemes added to the Capital Programme also included in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
6. that amendments to the Capital Programme since 10th December 2020 Minute 64 be noted.

Reasons

1. To enable the current Capital Plan to be the basis for capital spending by the Council and so that schemes may proceed.
2. To confirm that the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme be increased which is funded by an external grant.
3. To confirm that the Outwoods Country Park – Visitor Centre and Café scheme be decreased by the external funded amount.
4. To enable the capital scheme budget to be available in 2021/22.
5. To note the new Capital Schemes as part of S106 Agreements implemented by Officers for Third Parties.
6. To note amendments to the Capital Programme since Cabinet 10th December 2020 minute 64.

30. ROTHLEY CENTRE S106 REFURBISHMENT

Considered, a report of the Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure setting out a project to deliver refurbishment of Rothley Centre, a community asset within Rothley Parish, using a Section 106 contribution received from a developer and specifically allocated to this area (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the spend of the S106 fund included in the 2021-22 Capital Plan to the Rothley Centre Project amounting to £367,600.00 be approved;
2. that the inclusion of the Rothley Centre Project into the Charnwood Borough Council Annual Procurement Plan 2021-22 be approved;
3. that authority is delegated to the Strategic Asset Manager, in consultation with the Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure and the Section 151 Officer, to carry out the procurement and management of works.

Reasons

1. To ensure the timely spend of a S106 contribution intended to benefit the residents and users of the facility.
2. To ensure the scope of works procured meets the requirements of tenant (Rothley Parish Council) and delivers a sustainable community asset for the long-term benefit of the residents and visitors to the area.
3. To ensure the project is delivered in a timely and efficient manner.

31. FEASIBILITY WORK FOR NEW COUNCIL OFFICES

Considered, a report of the Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure setting out a proposal to begin the exploratory works required to construct a new Council office (item 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Councillor Seaton, Chair of the Scrutiny Commission, presented a report setting out the Commission's pre-decision scrutiny of the matter and recommendation (copy filed with these minutes).

The Scrutiny Commission was thanked for its pre-decision scrutiny of this matter and items earlier in the meeting.

The Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the recommendation of Southfield Extension Car Park as a potential site for new Council offices be accepted and that approval be granted to undertake exploratory works to determine construction feasibility with a budget of up to £150,000 funded from Capital Plan Reserve;

2. that authority for the same be delegated to the Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure, in consultation with the Statutory Officers, the Leader and the Deputy Leader, to undertake the works.
3. that the report of the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

Reasons

1. To understand the site's suitability for building and to determine if there are any specific conditions that should either be factored into design or scope of works.
2. To allow for the timely completion of the works such that the next phases of the project can be planned and submitted for scrutiny and approval.
3. To acknowledge the work undertaken by and the views of the Scrutiny Commission.

32. AMENDMENTS TO ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLAN

Considered, a report of the Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure setting out proposed amendments to the Annual Procurement Plan 2021/22 (item 14 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director; Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

1. that the contracts, over £25,000 and up to £75,000 as listed in Appendix A to the report, be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules;
2. that the contracts, over £75,001 and up to £500,000 as listed in Appendix B to the report, be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.

Reason

- 1.& 2. To allow contracts of the Council to be let in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.

33. CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY 2022-25

Considered, a report of the Head of Customer Experience setting out an updated Customer Service Strategy for the period 2022-2025, for recommendation to Council (item 15 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Customer Experience assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the following **be recommended to the Leader** for his decision:

that it **be recommended to Council** that the Customer Services Strategy 2022-2025, as set out in the Appendix to the report of the Head of Customer Experience, be approved.

Reason

To identify the priorities against which the Council will seek to maintain and enhance its Customer Service capabilities over the period 2022-2025.

NOTE:

This meeting was informal for the purpose of recommending decisions to the Leader or Deputy Leader.

A Leader's Decision dated 30th July 2021 delegated all Executive functions and decision making to the Leader for a period of three months in accordance with Section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000.

A Leader's Decision dated 16th September 2021 delegated all Executive functions and decision making to the Deputy Leader until 30th September 2021 in accordance with Section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000 in circumstances where the Leader in considering a matter may under the provisions of the Code of Conduct have a 'personal interest which might lead to bias', in the Leader's absence or other situations where the Leader is unable to make a decision.

CABINET – 16TH SEPTEMBER 2021**Report of the Scrutiny Commission**ITEM 9 CHARNWOOD 2030 CARBON NEUTRAL PLANPurpose of Report

To consider the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission in relation to the Charnwood 2030 Carbon Neutral Plan.

Recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission

That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission welcomes and supports the recommendations set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration.

Reason

The Commission, having carefully considered and asked questions on the report felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.

Meeting Discussion

- i. The existing Carbon Management Plan came to an end in 2020 and had achieved a 37% reduction in carbon emissions. That plan was now replaced, however, due to constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, there had only been a 3% reduction in emissions over the past two years against the new 2018/19 baseline, illustrating the need to have a plan in place. Funding had been secured for the plan through the Capital Plan process. This new plan would consider challenges and had built-in flexibility.
- ii. All activities of the Council were to consider carbon-neutrality and a reduction in carbon emissions and external consultants had been employed to assist.
- iii. Projects to reduce carbon-emissions included tree-planting schemes and investment in solar energy as well as looking into how carbon-emissions could be reduced from the Council's buildings and fleet. A 'Green Awards' scheme was in place in the Council and all staff and councillors were able to contribute.
- iv. The base-line for carbon-neutrality had recently been reset and the way in which carbon-emissions were measured had changed.
- v. Whilst the plan focussed on what the Council could do to cut carbon emissions, it was important to encourage businesses and organisations across the borough and the county to cut emissions.

- vi. The plan emphasised the need to work with concerted action across the Council to address the challenges to ensure that the carbon-footprint was reduced. This would involve some direct projects and action but would also top-up existing projects such as boiler-replacements and insulation.
- vii. The latest IPCC report was not included in the report being presented, as it was released after the plan had been finalised, but had been noted. The IPCC report had laid out the greater challenge.
- viii. Projects would be reviewed over time through the Carbon-Neutral Board and the plan kept under review to ensure that the best outcomes from investment were secured.
- ix. There had been a high-level of officer buy-in to the plan and 'green awards' had been made within departments. With many people working from home there had not been the same ability to communicate between officers for the same sort of outcome. However, officers were aware of the need to stay on top of the plan and to review it.
- x. The target of carbon neutrality by 2030 was monitored through the corporate monitoring system. A Sustainability Officer was working to the service plan with the targets in mind, however, the need to concerted action across the council was stressed, with a particular regard to thinking what can be done to achieve the bigger target.
- xi. Future committee reports were recommended to include a section on how they contributed to the green agenda.
- xii. Risks were identified such as 'the Council fails to meet carbon neutral 2030 target outlined within its policy commitments', 'reputational risk to authority for not pursuing or meeting carbon reduction targets' and 'Carbon neutrality not seen as a strategic priority by the Council' were considered to be low due to investment from the Council. The commitment of the Council was monitored through the Corporate Performance Indicators and the Sustainability Officer had good networks across the Council to bring initiatives into play. If these initiatives were followed then it was anticipated that the Council could achieve its target.
- xiii. Companies Urban Foresight and DCA had been commissioned to prepare a carbon-neutral plan for the Council. Urban Foresight had done a lot of similar work around the country and DCA had skills in using the data from building audits to identify projects. The companies had worked collectively and had written a plan in consultation with the Council. The companies had met with the Corporate Leadership Team and had held an officer and member workshop and a there was a further member briefing in the summer of 2021. When the plan was refreshed, the companies had carried out follow-up interviews with those originally involved. Urban Foresight and DCA had also undertaken a re-basing of the carbon footprint standard.

- xiv. The priority was a reduction in energy usage in buildings and the fleet. Renewable energy was then considered, and then carbon-positive options were considered such as planting trees to take Carbon Dioxide out of the atmosphere. The design and the age of Council buildings made being carbon-neutral difficult. It was acknowledged that technology would change, however, the need to be realistic was also realised and as such the need for carbon-offsetting was identified.
- xv. It was recognised that the best options for carbon-reduction may not be the cheapest and the costing over time needed to be considered, including long-term cost savings. In terms of investments such as double-glazing normal Council maintenance budgets would be used, but could be topped up by the Carbon Neutral Fund where this would assist the Council meet the carbon neutral target.
- xvi. In terms of waste management, in the long term it was sought to make all processes carbon-neutral, however it was important to look first at what the Council could immediately control and make carbon-neutral.
- xvii. The fund was initially £500k per annum for three years, however, in October 2020 this was revised to £100k for 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with £500k per annum from 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- xviii. If plans covered a long period it may be found that technology had moved on in that time, such that new projects are introduced or previously discounted projects become viable. It was recognised that it was important not to waste money and to use departmental budgets effectively.
- xix. It was recognised that it was possible that projects may create more carbon than they saved, especially since construction was seen as a large carbon-emitter. However, it was also recognised that many of the schemes introduced had substantially decreased the costs incurred by the Council.
- xx. With regard to requiring developers and private companies and their premises to conform to carbon-reducing standards, the Council's leadership role was highlighted. It was clarified that government planning policy intended to encourage than require energy efficiency. The Building Regulations provide the regulatory and enforcement role. However, it was highlighted that customers of housing projects were looking for energy efficient homes which had features such as electric car charging points. Attitudes were changing and accelerating towards energy efficiency, in part due to the cost of energy. With regard to Council car parks, it was suggested that more energy-efficient LED lighting was used and not illuminated all night. With regard to the relationship between the Council and the wider role with building regulations, there was a limit to what could be done at a local level and the need for national changes to planning policy was emphasised. It was recognised that there had been moves in the right direction regarding the proposed future homes standard and banning the sale of petrol and diesel cars from 2035.

- xxi. In response to a suggestion that if action was not taken quickly on emissions then 'green air levies' such as the one in Birmingham may have to be introduced, it was clarified that the Council needed to focus mainly on its own emissions, but it also needed to look more widely to encourage businesses throughout the borough and county to reduce emissions.
- xxii. Concern was raised over the amount of retrofitting that may be needed in new housing and it was emphasised that developers needed to make housing sustainable.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Scrutiny Commission Procedure Rule 11.12 sets out the procedure by which a report of a Scrutiny Committee should be considered by Cabinet.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The information on this in the Cabinet report is not affected by the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

There are no further financial implications associated with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission.

Key Decision:	Yes
Background Paper:	Scrutiny Commission Minute 29 2021/22, 13th September 2021
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