

ROTHERHAM COUNCIL: CLIMATE EMERGENCY PROGRESS SUMMARY AND 2021/22 ACTION PLAN

Priority area	Key progress 2020/21	Key actions 2021/22	Challenges / opportunities
<p>THEME: OVERARCHING ACTIVITY</p> <p>Summary: The focus in 2020/21 has been on laying the foundations of the response to the climate emergency, including baseline development, understanding gaps, and developing governance arrangements, whilst taking initial action and achieving quick wins across the priority themes.</p>			
<p>Monitoring and reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council agreed to Net Zero (NZ) 30 and Net Zero (NZ) 40 targets and a series of associated actions. • A working group of councillors has been established to oversee progress and a network of climate champions are in place across the Council. • The Council’s “Climate Champions” – officers across services collaborating on the Climate Emergency agenda – has been established to support the delivery of NZ30 and NZ40 targets. 	<p>Introduce carbon impact assessments for all cabinet reports, ensuring consideration and mitigation of potential emissions associated with proposals is embedded across the Council.</p> <p>Continue to develop baseline data i.e. on emissions in areas such as transport and housing.</p>	<p>Officers require support to develop their understanding of emission impacts.</p> <p>Building baseline data will support the Council’s evidence base to identify and act on environmental strategic priorities. Understanding and using emission data can be highly specialised; developing this expertise is difficult with existing capacity and may require additional resources.</p>

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<p>THEME: ENERGY</p> <p>Summary: This theme focuses on reducing the energy used in Council operations and raising awareness within the workforce and across the borough. In advance of a comprehensive decarbonisation plan for Council buildings a large number of projects have been commissioned to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency.</p>			
<p>Decarbonising buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has reduced energy consumption and CO2 emissions in operational buildings by 54% and streetlighting by 73% (against 2014/15 baseline). Over 80 projects have been commissioned and over £1.5m invested in energy efficiency measures, saving over £390k each year and reducing annual emissions by over 1.8k tonnes of CO2 A programme of decarbonisation assessments has been carried out across 37 operational buildings identifying 237 new installations and 256 upgrades of technologies to be included in the Council's Decarbonisation Plan. A proof of concept capital allocation of £1m is included in the 2021/22 budget proposals, which will look at a project or projects to produce decentralised low carbon electricity. 	<p>Develop a site decarbonisation plan and implement energy efficiency upgrades based on detailed site surveys.</p> <p>Continue to support the private sector led development of Templeborough biomass heat network following initial government investment of £8.4m.</p>	<p>In the short term, decarbonisation measures can be capital-intensive; cost often correlates to extensiveness. However, by reducing energy consumption, these can result in significant cost-savings in the long term.</p> <p>The owners of the plant have deemed the project a risk and are unwilling to invest the additional – £8m capital required to complete the network. Other investors are being sought.</p>
<p>Awareness-raising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on developing awareness training was halted by Covid. Options for this workstream are once again being considered, including: procuring learning material through external consultants and collaboration with the University of Sheffield. 	<p>Monitor and report CO2 emissions publicly, improving data capture processes – especially for energy generation – and making data publicly available.</p> <p>Implement energy awareness training for Council workforce using targeted packages in varying formats.</p>	<p>Technical challenges to collecting data.</p> <p>Developing awareness training will require capacity. Potential support and resource-sharing is being discussed with University of Sheffield.</p>

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THEME: TRANSPORT			
Summary: This includes emissions from the Council's fleet and from public and private transport usage across the borough. Significant investment in public transport and cycling infrastructure is set to be delivered in 2021/22.			
Promote electric vehicle charging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council-owned and operated electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in Rotherham saved 6.5t CO2 in 2020. 	Further expansion of electric vehicle infrastructure and support for uptake , including the development of plans for neighbourhood charging hubs. Discussions are underway via the combined authority to secure funding to improve charging infrastructure across South Yorkshire.	Electric vehicle uptake is dependent on progress within relevant technology and engineering fields, as well as market developments effecting affordability. Electric vehicle uptake is dependent on progress within relevant technology and engineering fields, as well as market developments effecting affordability. These developments are likely to present further opportunities for decarbonising the Councils fleet and transport across Rotherham.
Develop cycling strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft cycling strategy to be presented to Cabinet in March 2021. This is estimated to reduce overall emissions from transport by ~2% across the borough. 	Delivery of cycling and public transport infrastructure through delivery of the earlier part of the Transforming Cities programme, including public transport improvements in the Parkgate area due to commence in 2021. Together with the Active Travel Fund, this will deliver £12m worth of improvements for public transport, walking and cycling by March 2023.	Cycling and active travel have a limited capacity to reduce transport emissions: even if all car trips up to 2 miles were eliminated, it would save just less than 3% of car mileage. There are uncertainties as to the demand for public compared to private transport in post-Covid context.

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Fleet transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fleet replacement strategy is under development, although this does not yet consider EV/ULEV conversion. 	Develop our approaches to monitoring vehicle usage, emissions and fuel efficiency.	There is a tendency towards inaccurate odometer readings and fuel usage reporting, which must be addressed alongside the collection of additional data.
		Roll out telematics across the fleet to improve driver behaviour, fuel efficiency, and support the monitoring of vehicle use.	As well as reducing emissions, improved fuel efficiency will reduce fuel costs.
		Continue to develop a timeline for electric vehicle conversion, or for conversion to other low emission technologies where electric is not currently financially viable, e.g. biogas.	EVs are typically significantly higher cost than combustion vehicles, and the technology is still in development. Costs may be reduced by seeking funding and better understanding market projections.

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THEME: HOUSING			
Summary: Focused on reducing emissions associated with domestic energy usage, with funding having been secured from government for an initial retrofitting programme.			
Green housing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is underway to develop standards and programmes to improve energy efficiency in domestic properties, with a successful application for a Local Authority Delivery (LAD) grant. • Government data shows Rotherham as 1 of 4 local authorities in England and Wales to install over 2,500 energy efficiency measures through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme that is funded by utility company contributions (as at 21st January 2021). This supports residents to reduce energy costs, improve energy efficiency and access government grants. 	<p>Delivery of schemes under LAD funding, including the retrofitting of 217 homes by September 2021 following the successful phase 1 bid. The Council has secured £1.14m through the Green Housing Grant – Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme to bring 217 properties up to a “Band C” Energy Performance Certificate rating at The Lanes, East Dene. The aim of the project is to create Rotherham’s first retrofit ‘Eco Village’ and the Council will use LAD funding to compliment internal funding sources, to fund improvement works to the fabric of the buildings and install additional energy efficiency measures that will support our existing low-income households in reducing fuel poverty.</p> <p>Develop a “road map” to zero carbon for council housing which considers short, medium and longer term actions. This will be achieved using Parity software, which has been procured to baseline Council-owned housing stock and develop a roadmap for investment through HRA.</p>	<p>Retrofitting existing housing stock is a capital-intensive endeavour. Incremental retrofitting is more cost-effective in the short-term but is likely to result in a greater total cost and may not be able to reliably deliver on existing NZ30 and NZ40 targets.</p> <p>However, the rollout of retrofit programmes in other areas has corresponded with supply chain development and subsequent cost-reduction, which may present an opportunity for the Council to mitigate costs.</p>

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		<p>Establish energy efficiency specifications for new Council homes which meet future requirements for all new homes to be carbon neutral.</p>	<p>To meet the Council’s 2030 target we will need to apply changes to energy efficiency specification earlier than Government proposals.</p>
		<p>Establish housing stock emission baselines, consolidating the available intelligence and gathering further data as required, using both Parity software with existing data on council-owned housing stock, and developing intelligence on the wider housing stock across the Borough.</p>	<p>Data currently held on private housing stock is not comprehensive enough to identify all opportunities for intervention.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Community Energy Support Scheme 	<p>The Community Energy Support Scheme will be launched on 1st March 2021 to provide support for Rotherham residents to reduce energy costs, improve energy efficiency and support with potential Government grants. The project works alongside National Energy Action funded programmes to support all communities and reduce fuel poverty.</p>	<p>Will rely on effective community engagement.</p> <p>Energy cost reduction provides the opportunity to address socioeconomic inequality; particularly relating to food poverty.</p>

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THEME: WASTE			
Summary: Working across the South Yorkshire authorities through the South Yorkshire Waste Strategy, the Council continues to explore the sustainable processing and reduction of waste			
Waste from households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling rates continued to increase and Rotherham agreed a joint waste plan with Barnsley and Doncaster that will help the move away from landfill towards greater reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery. A review of the South Yorkshire Waste Management Strategy is under development, with the view of being published in Autumn 2021. 	<p>Review the South Yorkshire Waste Strategy to ensure it reflects the NZ 30 and NZ 40 ambitions.</p> <p>Recycling improvement and contamination reduction through engagement activities: A business case has been considered and funding identified to undertake a behaviour-focused campaign to reduce waste and contamination. The project is being co-ordinated through the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Community Liaison and Education Officer (CELO).</p> <p>This will also be supported by reducing landfill waste through an incentive system with BDR PFI contractor.</p>	<p>Improved information and data is required to be able to take further action in reducing waste, improving recycling rates and reducing contamination.</p>
Commercial waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant activities have taken place in 2020, but are programmed in for 2021/22. 	<p>Set out and deliver plans to introduce recycling to the Council's commercial waste offer, in order to support schools and businesses to recycle more.</p>	<p>The Council currently holds a small commercial waste team. Capacity in expanding commercial waste collection is therefore limited, which coincides with a knowledge gap on emissions across the waste service.</p>

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THEME: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT			
Summary: The Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy review recognises the continuing challenges of climate change and the need to move towards a net zero carbon approach with climate change a continuous theme throughout the strategy.			
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) relevant to climate change (e.g. Air Quality and Emissions; Equal and Healthy Communities) were introduced in June 2020. 	<p>Partial update to the Local Plan Core Strategy, ensuring relevant climate issues (e.g. flood risk) continue to be considered in determining the amount and broad location of new development.</p> <p>Introduction of further SPDs relevant to climate change – SPDs can elaborate on Local Plan policies, giving developers additional technical guidance, speeding up applications and resulting in better quality development for the community and environment. Five further draft SPDs relating to climate change are programmed for 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural Environment - Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Parking Standards - Green Spaces - Soils - Trees 	<p>Given the wide-ranging effect of planning policy on the built environment, updates to the Local Plan must balance NZ30 and NZ40 commitments against competing targets and commitments. However, more sustainable planning can unlock opportunities in other areas such as economic development and community wellbeing.</p>

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Green spaces and trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Tree Management Policy to describe how the Council will manage its urban trees. • 17 hectares of green spaces land has been identified for woodland creation. 	<p>Appointment of Trees & Woodlands engagement officer to source funding, identify land for planting and engage local communities.</p> <p>Adoption of Tree Management Policy, recognising the importance of retaining existing Council tree stocks and providing guidance to the Council and public.</p> <p>Development of tree planting strategy to guide all tree planting that is carried out on Council-owned land.</p>	<p>The Council currently has little data related to carbon sequestered via trees, limiting our understanding of the planting required to offset emissions.</p>

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<p>THEME: INFLUENCE AND ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Summary: The theme recognises that to have a meaningful impact on emissions, the Council must work alongside other organisations and residents, as well as lobbying regionally and nationally to influence policy developments.</p>			
<p>Regional engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has engaged constructively at city region level, contributing to the Sheffield City Region Energy Strategy, which was published in June 2020. • The Leader of the Council also chairs the city region’s transport and environment board, which oversees implementation of a climate emergency response framework, as well as shaping future policy priorities. • The Council’s chief executive sits on Yorkshire Leaders’ Board’s zero carbon sub-group, with lead responsibility for national lobbying and policy development. 	<p>The Council will continue to play an active role regionally and nationally to promote the climate agenda.</p>	<p>Influencing regional and national strategic approach towards decarbonisation offers benefits for action at a local level.</p>
<p>Procurement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of approach to Social Value, the framework of which provides a basis to further integrate emissions into procurement. 	<p>Develop emission considerations as part of the Council’s social value policy, exploring how the policy can be used to incentivise climate change commitments and CO2 reductions within tender processes.</p>	<p>Integrating emission considerations within procurement processes requires raising the profile of this agenda - services managing their contracts must be aware of the strategic importance of emissions and the implications on procurement.</p>

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<p>Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial engagement with partners to raise awareness of the climate emergency declaration and associated actions and to begin to generate ideas for joint activity. 	<p>Develop climate emergency communications plan to facilitate the participation and involvement of residents, partners and other interested organisations and communities. This will include engagement with young people and collaborating with established groups such as the youth cabinet and the young inspectors to reach out to the community.</p>	<p>The Council is responsible for a small fraction of overall emissions across Rotherham. It is therefore vital to encourage and facilitate action across a wide range of stakeholders to achieve climate goals.</p>