

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet - 17 October 2022

Report Title

Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

Florence Drew, National Management Trainee, Change & Innovation, Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate

Jonathan Marriott, Head of Asset Management, Regeneration and Environment Directorate

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This Report presents the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23 which is attached in Appendix 1. The report notes the progress towards the Council's NZ30 and NZ40 targets and notes the progress against the actions outlined within the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23, which have been devised so that the Council's agreed carbon emissions targets can be met.

The report also summarises the key updates and risks, and outlines the next steps that will be taken, including the development of a longer-term Climate Emergency Action Plan for 2023/24.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve the Climate Emergency Action Plan in Appendix 1.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 - Climate Emergency Action Plan 22/23

Appendix 2 - Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 - Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Rotherham Council (2020). Responding to the Climate Emergency. Cabinet 23 March 2020:

<<http://modgov-p-db/documents/s125066/Responding%20to%20the%20Climate%20Emergency.pdf>>

Rotherham Council (2021). Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 22nd March 2021:

<<http://modgov-p-db/documents/s130298/Report%20-%20Climate%20Change.pdf>>

Rotherham Council (2022). Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 25 April 2022

<<http://modgov-p-db/documents/s135977/Report%20-%20Climate%20Emergency%20Annual%20Report%202022.pdf>>

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

1. Background

- 1.1 On 30th October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Report of 23rd March 2020 contained the Policy Statement and Action Plan entitled '*Responding to the Climate Emergency*'. This outlined a set of actions corresponding to the agreed strategic themes: Energy, Housing, Transport, Waste, Built and Natural Environment, Influence and Engagement. The most recent version of this action plan is the focus of this report. Since the initial action plan was created, an additional theme entitled 'Overarching Activities' has been added.
- 1.3 On 23rd March 2020 the Council agreed to establish the following targets:
 - The Council's carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2030 (NZ30)
 - Borough-wide carbon emissions to be at net zero by 2040 (NZ40)
- 1.4 As part of the Council reporting processes, a Climate Emergency Annual Report is presented to Cabinet each year, with the latest report presented to Cabinet on 25th April 2022. The annual report included an update on the progress of the actions outlined within the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021/22. The annual report also noted the upcoming development of a new Climate Emergency Action Plan for 2023/24.
- 1.5 The Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2022 also contains the commitment to the development of an action plan. This is proposed to be presented in March 2023 as part of the annual Climate Change report to Cabinet.
- 1.6 The Council is also responding to the Climate Emergency through the delivery of targets within the Council Plan 2022-25. 'A Cleaner, Greener Local Environment' which is a key strategic priority that further highlights the Council's commitment to Net Zero.
- 1.7 It is planned to develop the new Climate Emergency Action Plan once the new Climate Change Team is fully established. Two of the three Officers are in post with the Manager position due to start at the beginning of November 2022.
- 1.8 Prior to this update of the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23, the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan was rated the best in South Yorkshire and above the national average by Climate Emergency UK.
- 1.9 On 16 March 2022 Rotherham's Youth Cabinet called a special meeting to question officers on climate change. This was part of the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge and involved a 'takeover' of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The session explored actions taken by the Council and its plans to combat climate change. A report on this meeting is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in October 2022.

2. Key Issues

2.1 This report provides an updated Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23 and summarises the key updates and outlines the next steps.

2.2 The Action Plan Update

2.3 The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23 has been refreshed and updated by officers who attend the Climate Change Project Board. This board is one of the Council's Big Hearts, Big Changes workstreams and is chaired by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment. The group is comprised of Workforce Leads from across the Council and other relevant officers.

2.4 In addition, there is also the Members Climate Change Group, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy. This group have also played a role in developing the Action Plan.

2.5 The Action Plan, set out in Appendix 1, is set out under seven main themes with a number of key activities and actions as follows:

2.6 **Overarching Activity** - There has been strong progress in the Council's overarching activities related to climate change, with the introduction of improved governance arrangements and development of the Council's carbon emissions baseline providing the foundation for future monitoring and reporting. Actions include:-

- Introduction of carbon impact assessments.
- Development of baseline data.
- Recruitment of a new Climate Delivery Team.
- Plans for carbon literacy training for the Council workforce and elected members.

2.7 **Energy** - Carbon emissions from the Council's operational buildings have been decreasing since 2014. Further progress towards Net Zero 2030 will be delivered through the Council's Heat Decarbonisation Plan (Phase 1). Proposals under this strand include:-

- Development of a site decarbonisation plan and plans to implement energy efficiency upgrades to buildings.
- Development of an energy generation project with a solar farm scheme being investigated.
- Development by the private sector of the Templeborough biomass heat network, which presents opportunities for Council buildings as well as for other organisations.

2.8 **Transport** - Significant investment has been secured for the extension of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, through the Council's own capital allocation and through regional partners. This is supported by a new Cycling

Strategy, to facilitate a modal shift from car travel to active transport. Key plans for this strand include:-

- Further expansion of electric vehicle infrastructure and support for uptake.
- Delivery of cycling and public transport infrastructure.
- Roll out telematics across the Council's fleet.
- Continue to develop a timeline for a low carbon fuel fleet conversion.

2.9 **Housing** - Good progress has been made in 2021/22, with successful delivery of a retrofitting project at The Lanes, East Dene. Future progress will depend on the availability of funding, as installing energy efficiency upgrades to existing housing stock is a capital-intensive process. Plans include:-

- Delivery of schemes under Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding.
- Establish energy efficiency specifications for new Council homes.
- Monitoring performance against housing stock emission baselines.

2.10 **Waste** - Emissions from waste are the subject of collaboration, through the South Yorkshire Waste Partnership and the BDR Waste Partnership. Further progress will depend on engagement and education activity, across the Borough. Plans include:-

- Review of the South Yorkshire Waste Strategy (linked to any National changes arising from the Environment Bill.)
- Recycling improvement and contamination reduction.
- Diverting waste from landfill through the BDR waste partnership.
- Set out and deliver plans to introduce recycling to the Council's commercial waste offer.

2.11 **Built and Natural Environment** - Revenue and capital investment in tree planting delivered large scale success in the last planting season, with more than 22,000 new trees planted. Future success will be directed by a new Tree Planting Strategy and supported by updates to the planning process, to offer better protections for the Borough's natural capital. Plans include:-

- Partial update to the Local Plan Core Strategy.
- Introduction of further Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) relevant to climate change.
- Delivery of Tree Planting for 2022/23.

2.12 **Influence and Engagement** - The Council continues to engage and also influence partners nationally, regionally and through its own procured services. The Council is directly responsible for less than 2% of carbon emissions across the Borough, so more engagement will be needed to achieve the Net Zero 2040 goal.

- The Council will continue to play an active role regionally and nationally to promote the climate agenda.
- Develop emissions considerations as part of the procurement process.
- Develop a climate emergency communications and engagement plan.

2.13 Progress Summary

Appendix 1 contains a progress update against each of the key short-term actions. The majority of the action plan consists of long-term actions that have target dates of 2030 or 2040, aligned to the Net Zero targets. Therefore, there are no major changes in terms of the main strands and areas of focus. However, some of the main areas of progress to date are outlined below:

- Successful recruitment of the Climate Change Delivery Team.
- Improved utilisation of climate related data – this will further the understanding of carbon emission reductions and inform future actions taken to reach the NZ30 and NZ40 targets.
- Successful negotiation of a change to the BDR contract that incentivises the contractor to divert more from landfill. As a result, the % of residual waste sent to landfill has decreased to 0.6%, meaning that 99.4% of waste is now diverted from landfill.
- Initial pilot of Carbon Literacy Training complete, with a view to rolling this out to staff and elected members from the end of 2022 and into 2023.
- Additional funding opportunities have been awarded. E.g., £1.5 million from Wave 1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Established the housing stock emission baselines of Council owned homes.

2.14 Next Steps

2.15 Development of a new Climate Emergency Action Plan will be underway by the end of 2022. This will be developed by the Climate Change Team which will be fully established by November 2022, working alongside services across the Council. It is proposed that the new Action Plan forms part of the annual update that comes to Cabinet and is scheduled for March 2023.

2.16 The Climate Change Project Board will continue to meet monthly as per the Project Board Terms of Reference. The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23 will continue to be updated through regular reporting at this Project Board. This means that the action plan will be a live document.

2.17 Ongoing actions within the action plan will continue to progress towards the Council's NZ30 and NZ40 targets.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option 1 – that Cabinet approves the Climate Change Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 and notes the progress made and challenges and opportunities identified and that this is submitted to the next Council meeting, for information. It is further recommended that Cabinet notes next steps, specifically the actions scheduled to begin once the Climate Change Team are in post.

3.2 Option 2 – that Cabinet does not approve the Climate Change Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1. This is not recommended as this would be contrary to the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency on the 30th October 2019.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 This report has not required a public consultation because it represents a progress update of ongoing responses to the climate emergency within the Council. Furthermore, the report does not involve any changes to policies or services. The update demonstrates the collective effort to reach NZ30 and NZ40 targets from workforce leads across the different services within the Council.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The progression of actions within the Climate Emergency Action Plan is monitored and overseen by both the Climate Change Members Working Group and the Climate Change Project Board. Additionally, the Project Board reports progress to the Big Hearts, Big Changes Programme up to the Strategic Board.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. The actions within the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan are funded within the Council's existing revenue and capital budgets. In future, when additional Council funding is required to deliver the NZ30 and NZ40 carbon emissions targets this must be identified through the Council's annual budget setting process.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications in association with the recommendations made within this report. Any procurement activity for Goods, Works or Services arising as a result of future planning and delivery of the Climate Action Plan will be required to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations (as amended).
- 6.3 Procurement documents already highlight carbon emissions as a consideration throughout the procurement process. Further approaches to reducing emissions through procurement processes are to be explored, as outlined in the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan. This may include requesting identified sets of data from suppliers and contractors to develop the Council's Scope 3 emissions baseline.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this Report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 The human resources implications in relation to recruitment and resourcing activity, progress and actions are outlined within the main body of the report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 Whilst there are no direct measurable implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report, future actions that may arise from the recommendations could have an overall positive impact on reducing CO2 emissions and tackling climate change.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 The Climate Change programme is recognised as a truly cross cutting delivery and every directorate will have a role to play in identifying opportunities to contribute to the Council's efforts to meet respective 2030 and 2040 targets. It is envisaged that the additional permanent resource of the Climate Change Team will provide the additional capacity required to drive forward the ambition of the Council working alongside service teams, strategic partners and communities across Rotherham.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The Climate Emergency represents a serious risk to the Council, its partners and the residents of the Borough. These risks are varied and wide ranging and will have both immediate and long-term implications. These implications could impact on how Services will be delivered, the quality of life of our residents and financially on the Business Community.

13.2 The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23, working towards the Council's NZ30 and NZ40 targets is one of the ways the Council can mitigate against these risks.

14. Accountable Officers

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Jonathan Marriott, Head of Asset Management, Regeneration and Environment Directorate

15. Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:

Named Officer		
		Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	03/10/22
Strategic Director, Finance (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	29/09/22
Assistant Director, Legal	Phil Horsfield	29/09/22

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).