

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 13 April 2026

Report Title

Climate Emergency Annual Report 2026

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

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

On 30 October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and set out its action plan covering seven policy themes of Monitoring and Measurement; Energy; Housing; Transport; Waste; Built and Natural Environment; and Influence and Engagement. An Adaptation theme has been included since the 2022 annual report, to recognise work to prepare for the effects of climate change impacts and to mitigate those already being felt throughout the Borough of Rotherham.

At its meeting on 23 March 2020, Cabinet resolved 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)

This report outlines the progress of the 2025/26 Climate Emergency Action Plan to the end of December 2025 and proposes an action plan for the 2026/27 municipal year. Programmes for corporate property decarbonisation and electric vehicle infrastructure (EVI) are presented at Appendix 3a and 3b, respectively. Climate change data and performance measures are also reported (Appendix 5) for the 2024/25 carbon accounting period. A high-level summary of progress to date on Nature Recovery in Rotherham is provided, recognising the links between the Nature Crisis and Climate Emergency.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the key achievements and progress made as detailed in Appendix 1 and section 2 of this report.
2. Approves the 2026/27 Climate Change Action Plan proposed in Appendix 2.
3. Delegates the specification, procurement, contract award and subsequent delivery of (i) the Corporate Property Decarbonisation Programme, Appendix 3a, (ii) the EV Infrastructure Programme, Appendix 3b and (iii) works referenced under the Energy section of the Climate Change Action Plan 2026-2027, Appendix 2, as well as any changes to these programmes and works, to the Service Director of Property and Facilities Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.
4. Delegates allocation of the Council's Capital Decarbonisation Budget and EV Infrastructure Capital Budget and the acceptance of any available funding streams such as from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), Great British Energy or other Government schemes for delivery as per Appendices 3a and 3b to the Service Director of Property and Facilities Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.
5. Approves an amendment to the £1m renewable energy pilot project approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2021, to deliver instead an invest-to-save renewable energy scheme comprising rooftop or car park canopy solar PV, as detailed in Appendix 4 and section 2.20 below; and also delegates authority for site selection, procurement and delivery of the amended scheme to the Service Director of Property and Facilities Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1	Climate Change Progress Report
Appendix 2	Climate Change Action Plan 2026/27
Appendix 3	Corporate Property Decarbonisation Plan
Appendix 4	Solar Project Amendment Proposal
Appendix 5	Climate Data Summary
Appendix 6	Equalities Screening Part A
Appendix 7	Climate Impact Assessment

Background Papers

- [Rotherham Council \(2020\). Responding to the Climate Emergency. Cabinet 23 March 2020:](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2021\). Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 22nd March 2021:](#)

- [Rotherham Council \(2021\) Budget & Council Tax 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update - Appendix 3 Proof of Concept Project](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2022\). Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 25th April 2022:](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2022\) Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022/23. Cabinet 17th October 2022.](#)
- [Flood Alleviation Update. Improving Places Select Commission 25th October 2022.](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2023\) Climate Emergency Annual Report 20th March 2023](#)
- [Flood Alleviation Update. Improving Places Select Commission, Tuesday 19 September 2023, 1.30 p.m. - Rotherham Council](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2023\) Council Building Decarbonisation Programme Cabinet Report - Monday 18 September 2023](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2023\) Rotherham Council Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Expansion. Cabinet 16th October 2023](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2024\) Cabinets Response to the Improving Places Scrutiny Review - Nature Recovery Monday 16 September 2024](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2024\) Section 19 Report for Storm Babet, Improving Places Select Commission, Tuesday 22 October 2024.](#)
- [South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority \(2024\) Net Zero Update. Audit, Standards and Risk Committee. Tuesday 26 November 2024.](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2023\) Transport CO2 emissions in Rotherham](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2024\) Waste Collections Policy. Cabinet 16th December 2024](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2025\) Protecting Our Farmland and countryside by prioritising solar panel installations on roofs and car parks. Council Meeting 15th January 2025.](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2025\) Climate Emergency Annual Report. Cabinet 10th February 2025.](#)
- [Climate Change Committee \(2025\) Progress in Adapting to Climate Change 30 April 2025.](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2025\) Local Development Scheme. Cabinet 15th September 2025.](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2025\) Rotherham \(SYMCA\) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(LEVI\) Fund. Cabinet 15th December 2025.](#)
- [Rotherham Council \(2026\) Flood Alleviation Update. Improving Places Select Commission 27 January 2026.](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
None

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Climate Emergency Annual Report 2026

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2019, at a full Council meeting, a motion was passed declaring a Climate Emergency in Rotherham. In March 2020, a report and policy statement 'Responding to the Climate Emergency' were approved by the Council's Cabinet and the following 'Net Zero' targets adopted:
- 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)
- 1.2 Since then, annual Climate Change Reports and Action Plans have sought to cut greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's own activity and across the Borough of Rotherham, to mitigate climate change. The Council's annual action plans focus on eight key themes including Monitoring, Energy, Transport, Housing, Waste, Built and Natural Environment, Influence and Engagement and Adaptation.
- 1.3 In 2022, Full Council resolved to declare a Nature Crisis, noting that approximately half of UK wildlife is in decline, with 15% of species at risk of extinction. It was also noted that the nature and climate crises are linked. Both nature and humanity are at risk from climate change, yet nature can provide some of the solutions which humanity needs to mitigate climate change: capturing and storing carbon, intercepting storm water flows, cooling and shading urban environments and mitigating air pollution. This report therefore aligns strategically with biodiversity action and provides a short summary of linked action, though an in-depth review is provided as part of the Council's Statutory Biodiversity Duty report, published in March 2026.
- 1.4 In 2024, Cabinet approved the Rotherham Public Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy which details the Council's commitment to secure a comprehensive future network so that all residents are included in the transition to electric vehicles.
- 1.5 This report therefore provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Council throughout 2025/26 (up to the end of quarter 3) and presents an action plan with associated recommendations for the delivery of the next phase of the Council's Decarbonisation Programme.
- 1.6 **National Policy Background**
- 1.7 There have been recent changes to the funding available for public sector building decarbonisation. In June 2025, it was announced that the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) would not continue after its latest iteration, Phase 4. This means that there is no obvious funding route for future schemes which do not provide a short-term return on investment, such as heating decarbonisation.
- 1.8 The Council has been successful in its application through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for the Mayoral Renewables Fund to apply solar

panels to the new Outdoor Covered Market and Library in Rotherham Town Centre. Funding for renewables appears to be the primary available funding source at present, though the Council will continue to review opportunities as they arise to supplement its existing decarbonisation budgets.

- 1.9 At its meeting on 15 January 2025, full Council approved a motion regarding solar farms built on agricultural land. Council noted that an increased use of renewable energy sources is critical in meeting the UK's net zero commitments and tackling climate change but that agricultural land and green belt land provide a valuable natural resource for food security, biodiversity and the rural economy. Council resolved in favour of rooftop, brownfield and car park solar installations which will have implications for future schemes that the Council may bring forward, though will not affect the Council's determination of planning applications which must have due regard to the National Planning Policy Framework which supports the development of renewable energy.

2. Progress Report

- 2.1 The following sections provide an overview of the progress and activities undertaken throughout 2024/25.

2.2 Monitoring and measurement

- 2.3 The Council continues to monitor its emissions annually. The table below represents the Council's performance measures which measure progress against its Net Zero by 2030 targets. It should be noted that the data presented here relates to the 2024/25 period, to 31 March 2025. This is due to the way in which data is made available and subsequently internally validated through energy billing.

2.4

Net Zero by 2030 Performance Measures							
KPI	UoM	Reporting Year					RAG
		20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	
Heating (Natural Gas, Biomass etc.)	tCO ₂ e	1,741	1,818	1,766	1,694	1,758	
Fleet Vehicles, Plant & Tools	tCO ₂ e	2,531	2,522	2,504	2,446	2,521	
On Site Diesel Generation	tCO ₂ e	3	4	0	0	-	
Fugitive Emissions from RACHP Plant	tCO ₂ e	138 [‡]	138 [‡]	138 [‡]	90	54	
Electricity Use in Buildings	tCO ₂ e	2,077	1,930	1,810	1,945	1,904	
Street Lighting	tCO ₂ e	1,530	1,384	1,267	1,356	1,343	
Grey Fleet Mileage & Business Travel	tCO ₂ e	221	273	384	396	413	
Total NZ30 Emissions	tCO₂e	8,242	8,068	7,869	7,927	7,993	
Annual Percentage Change*	%	-	-2.11	-2.47	0.74	0.83	
Cumulative Percentage Change [†]	%	-	-2.11	-4.53	-3.82	-3.02	

* Change in total, annual NZ30 emissions compared with the previous year.

[†] Change in emissions compared with 2020/21. The NZ30 target was adopted in March 2020.

^{*} In the first three reporting years from 2020, fugitive emissions were estimated from an inventory of air conditioning plant. Since 2023/24 inclusive, a material balance method has been applied, using data supplied by the Council's repair and maintenance contractor.

Table 1. NZ30 Emissions Performance measures 2024/25. Blue indicates complete; Green indicates on track; amber indicates progress but delayed; red indicates off-track; and grey indicates that no target has been set.

- 2.5 Annual greenhouse gas emissions within scope of the Council's Net Zero by 2030 climate change target (scope 1 and scope 2 emissions and scope 3 emissions from official business travel) were equivalent to 7,993 tonnes CO₂, in the 2024/25 municipal year: approximately 3% less than emissions in the 2020/21 baseline year, but a marginal increase year on year, from the previous annual reporting period. Compared with 2022/23, when annual greenhouse gas emissions were at their lowest level in five years of emissions accounting, emissions from heating and vehicles, plant and tools were almost unchanged. Emissions from business travel (grey fleet mileage) account for some of the increase, having increased year-on-year, every year, since 2020/21.
- 2.6 The Council's 'NZ30' scope boundary was determined with reference to government departments' minimum sustainability reporting criteria. As of the 2025/26 reporting year, government departments are no longer required to report scope 3 (indirect) emissions from business travel. Removing these emissions from the Council's carbon accounting of the last five years, emissions in 2024/25 would be reported at 120 tCO₂e or 1.27% greater in 2024/25 than at their lowest point, in 2022/23. The decrease observed in 'fugitive emissions from RACHP plant' (leaks from refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pumps) is in fact due to a change in methodology: whereas previously these emissions were estimated by applying standard factors to an inventory of air conditioning plant, they are now calculated by applying a material balance method to data supplied by the Council's repair and maintenance contractor. If these emissions had been excluded from the Council's reporting process an increase in scope 1 and scope 2 emissions from 2022/23 to 2024/25 closer to 180 tCO₂e, or 2.45% would have been reported.
- 2.7 94% of the observed increase is due to increased greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use, in Council buildings and for streetlighting. The Council's electricity use actually decreased over the two years from 2022/23 to 2024/25, by 1.44%; however, the greenhouse gas conversion factor for UK electricity increased by 7.07%, over the same period. Greenhouse gas conversion factors, which reference the carbon intensity of the UK's energy systems and enable the Council to assess the carbon impact of the energy it uses, are determined two years in arrears, such that factors for the 2022/23 and 2024/25 reporting periods are calculated from 2020 and 2022 data years, respectively. A 2025/26 conversion factor 14.5% less than in 2024/25, reflecting the relative carbon intensity of the UK electricity system in 2023, has already been published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and will be reflected in the February 2027 report.

- 2.8 Based on the conversion factor for UK electricity alone, the Council's NZ30 emissions can be expected to fall 5-6% year-on-year in 2025/26, or 8-9% compared with a 2020/21 baseline. This underlines the extent to which progress towards the Council's climate change target has been driven by this factor. By 2030/31, UK electricity system decarbonisation alone cannot be expected to cut the Council's annual emissions to a level much less than 5,650 tCO₂e.
- 2.9 Projects which could have materially decreased the carbon intensity of Council operations in 2024/25 have not yet been implemented, with the consequences reflected in annual carbon accounts. It should be noted that work is underway to progress these but there is a lag between approval, procurement and delivery, especially in the case of building decarbonisation.
- 2.10 Of these key decarbonisation activities, as individual building projects result in generally small carbon reductions on a site by site basis, a significant carbon saving could be achieved by extending the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) biodiesel to more of the Council's fleet. Notwithstanding a successful trial, extending HVO use to vehicles which have not yet been approved for replacement by electric models will be subject to feasibility assessment, especially with respect to financial implications, with a decision on investment expected in the 2026/27 municipal year (see also Appendix 2). Projects are underway which will materially decrease the Council's carbon emissions and these are detailed in paragraphs 2.17 to 2.45.
- 2.11 **Net Zero by 2040 Performance Measures**
- 2.12 The table below presents the 2024/25 performance measures relating to the Net Zero by 2040 target.

2.13

Net Zero by 2040 Performance Measures							
KPI	UoM	Reporting Year*					Status
		20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	
Local Area Emissions	ktCO ₂ e	1630	1534	1440	1364	-	
Annual Percentage Change	%	-8.06	-5.88	-6.16	-5.23	-	
Percentage Change from 2005 Baseline	%	-44.33	-47.6	-50.83	-53.41	-	
Fossil Fuels as a Share of Energy Mix	%	80.41	79.81	79.21	78.88	-	
Renewable Generation Installed Capacity	MW	90.6	92.9	94.4	97.3	99.6	
Residences within 3.0mi of RMBC EVCP	%				90.0	99.7	

Residences within 1.5mi of RMBC EVCP	%				48.9	79.0	
Council Homes Rated at least EPC Band C	%		46.5 [†]	50.9	53.9	55.7	
Household Recycling Rate	%	43.3	45.0	44.5	44.9	-	
Recycling Contamination Rate	%	7.70	6.70	6.40	7.00 [‡]	-	
Residual Waste per Household	kg·yr ⁻¹	506.8	495.0	473.0	480.5	-	

** Local area greenhouse gas emissions and energy statistics are reported by calendar year. Calendar years are aligned with the Council's municipal year reporting periods according to which comprises the greater part of each e.g., **2020** NZ40 emissions appear under **2020/21** in the above table. Local area emissions data is provided by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero two years in arrears. Therefore 2024/25 data will be available in June 2027.*

[†] 46.5% of Council homes rated EPC band C or above as of October 2021.

[‡] Estimated rejects as a proportion of all household waste collected for recycling is no longer published as a standalone statistic since the closure of Oflog (Office for Local Government) and its data explorer. An equivalent metric is calculated from local authority collected waste management data published by Defra. Recycling material recovered from residual waste is factored into this and Oflog's previous metric, such that contamination of kerbside recycling bins may be under-reported.

Table 2. NZ40 Performance Measures to 2024/25. EV data presented is to year end 2025. Blue indicates complete; green indicates on-track; amber indicates progress but delayed; red indicates off-track; and grey indicates that no target has been set.

- 2.14 The Council continues to measure several Key Performance Indicators in relation to the Borough's performance. In general, emissions are declining, however the portion of fossil fuels in the Borough's energy mix remains high. UK-wide action to develop a net zero National Grid by 2030 will only affect approximately 20% of the Borough's energy emissions, which means that local action to transition to low carbon heating types, such as air source heat pumps or heat networks is key to reaching net zero.
- 2.15 It is expected that the above performance measures may evolve as work to develop the Council's Sustainable Rotherham Strategy continues. Work with partners to co-create this Strategy has already commenced with workshops taking place throughout October and November 2025. Actions proposed in the 2026/27 action plan associated with this report will also support the development of these measures.
- 2.16 A more in-depth overview of the Council's emissions is provided in Appendix 5.
- 2.17 **Energy**
- 2.18 In January 2025, the Council was successfully awarded funds as part of the final iteration of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS 4) to deliver

decarbonisation works to three Council buildings - 115 Middle Lane South, Springwell Gardens Community Centre and Swinton Customer Service Centre and Library. The contract for these works has now been awarded, with final designs approved and works scheduled to commence in late March or early April. Decarbonisation works at these sites and at Peacock Lodge Children's Home all have expected completion dates in June 2026. It is expected that this project will reduce emissions by 35.35tCO₂e per annum.

- 2.19 In addition, the Council is also progressing with several solar projects which include solar panels as part of the Town Centre Markets and Library and a solar canopy over the visitor parking bays at Riverside House. The works at Riverside House are expected to commence in April 2026 with completion by early June, while the Markets solar project will be completed by May 2026, according to current contractor estimates. These projects align with the Council Motion to prioritise solar panels on rooftops and are estimated to provide a cumulative saving of 77.8tCO₂ per annum. The projects will also reduce revenue requirements for the lifetime of their use.
- 2.20 In 2021 Cabinet approved a scheme to develop and deliver a 1MW pilot solar farm project within the Borough on Council land. Unfortunately, the planned project site fell through due to legal complications relating to restrictive covenants held by the Coal Authority. Since then, the Council has undertaken a comprehensive site search and basic feasibility assessments Borough wide. There are currently no suitable sites available and given the recent increase in solar developments locally and the recent Council motion to focus on car parks and rooftops, it has been identified that this project will not be possible to deliver in its current form. It is therefore proposed that a similar scheme, focussed on an 'invest to save' rooftop and canopy project, is approved for delivery instead. The project proposes to deliver renewables, i.e., solar panels to a number of different property types across the Council's wider corporate property portfolio, specifically targeting properties that are not included within the Council's existing heat decarbonisation plan. More details relating to the proposed approach and property eligibility is provided in Appendix 4. The Local Area Energy Plan, the commissioning of which is a proposed action for 202/27, may also present further opportunities for renewable energy generation across the Borough and, if so, proposals will subsequently be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.
- 2.21 It is important to manage the acquisition, refurbishment and build of new corporate Council sites to ensure compliance with the Council's net zero ambitions. As such, a Decarbonisation Standard has been produced which will act as a client specification to ensure new build properties conform to the highest available efficiency and monitoring standards.
- 2.22 The Council continues to provide support to residents with energy advice and information relating to grants. As of end February 2026, the Community Energy Team have signed off 1,610 ECO4-Flex grants since the scheme started in 2022, supporting the most vulnerable residents to access home insulation and other energy efficiency measures. 206 were approved between March 2025 and end February 2026. On average these projects have saved residents £6,500 per installation, based on average installation costs.

- 2.23 In the Autumn budget, the Government announced its plans to close the ECO (Energy Company Obligation) scheme at the end of March 2026, without a direct replacement. A recent announcement in January 2026 confirmed an extension of this scheme until December 2026, but applications for this scheme are now tailing off with only two Rotherham FLEX approved installers having funding remaining. However, the government also announced a plan to provide an additional £1.5 billion capital investment to tackle fuel poverty through the Warm Homes Plan, in addition to the £13.2 billion of funding allocated at the Spending Review 2025. It is not clear at present whether the Council will administer this fund, which plans to focus on the delivery of air source heat pumps and solar, but it is hoped that this information will be made available when the detail around the delivery of the Warm Homes Plan is announced in coming months.
- 2.24 The cessation of the ECO scheme will result in a reduction in residents' energy bills as the scheme will no longer be funded as a levy on customers' bills, but it is not yet known what the impact will be on local trade organisations which have previously been mobilised to deliver the works associated with this fund. The scheme itself provided energy efficiency improvements to the most vulnerable residents throughout the Borough, particularly those vulnerable to living in cold homes. As in previous years, from 1 November, the Council also offered an Energy Crisis Support Scheme which can support residents in fuel poverty with a payment of up to £250. Whilst this does not directly contribute to decarbonisation, it is designed to support vulnerable residents to manage during the winter months. Links with the existing home grants schemes can also be made, supporting warmer, more efficient homes in future years.
- 2.25 **Transport**
- 2.26 **Fleet Transport**
- 2.27 The procurement of Electric Vehicles (EV) as part of the Fleet Replacement Programme has been subject to delays. The number of EVs to be included is still being finalised as part of the procurement activity, however as committed to Cabinet previously, the Council is seeking to replace 64 vehicles. Since the original Cabinet decision, at least two of those vehicles are no longer required for service delivery so will not be replaced. There have previously been challenges with electrical reliability at Hellaby Depot, relating to load balancing on site; vehicles which are currently taken home by employees due to their working arrangements must also be considered, while several other depot sites are being assessed for EV charger installation. Although maintenance of EVs is generally required less frequently than their ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) alternatives, the delivery of a training programme for workshop maintenance on EVs will also be considered when the final details are confirmed. These challenges are currently being worked through across Fleet, Climate and Facilities Services and the ambition remains to convert a greater proportion of the fleet to EVs in line with the original Cabinet decision. A further report will be presented to Cabinet in due course to confirm the outcome of this work.

2.28 For vehicles which are not planned to be EVs, or may not be suitable at this stage due to performance, the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) may be a feasible alternative which could reduce operational carbon emissions by up to 90% in the vehicles consuming this alternative fuel. The larger, heavier vehicles that form part of the Council's fleet would be an example of potential users due to low battery performance associated with heavy loads. However, HVO is more expensive than diesel and petrol and therefore requires careful consideration prior to any approval and roll out. A review of the costs of moving to greater reliance on HVO and the options around future EV charging infrastructure needs, will be undertaken early in the 2026/27 financial year. This will provide options for the roll out of further EVs in line with previous plans.

2.29 **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure**

2.30 In June 2023, Cabinet approved the delivery of a solar PV canopy and electric vehicle hub to be installed at Drummond Street Car Park and funded by the Department for Transport's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund. As part of this, the Council was awarded £1.29 million for the canopy and electrical infrastructure, requiring £300,000 minimum investment from a contractor to deliver the EV infrastructure and manage and maintain the hub as a concession.

2.31 This project experienced significant delays and, due to the complex nature of the scheme and the type of procurement, required additional external legal support to ensure a robust contract and procurement process. This has now completed and the company Wenea Ltd were awarded the project in December 2025. The project is now in the design and planning phase and is expected to be completed by September 2027. In order to ensure continued access and availability of the Drummond Street Car Park during this time, a phased approach to construction will be undertaken which may lengthen delivery timeframes.

2.32 The Council is also involved with a further regional LEVI scheme, designed to improve the South Yorkshire region's EV infrastructure, particularly for those without access to off street parking. In December 2025, Cabinet approved the Council's involvement in this scheme and work continues with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) to deliver this procurement. This contract takes a similar, concessionary approach, where a contractor will be appointed across the region to utilise grant funding administered by SYMCA, supported by the Council's EVI Officer to approve site selections and design within the borough, but self-managed by the awarded contractor.

2.33 The following EV chargepoints have also been delivered during 2025/26 utilising the Council's allocated capital budget: Constable Lane, Dinnington; Mowbray Gardens, Greasbrough and Kiveton Park Libraries; Greenlands Park, North Anston; Laburnum Parade, Maltby. In addition, 6 twin fast and 1 twin rapid charger have been installed at Rother Valley; as of end February 2026 Rother Valley's 12 Fast chargers are now live and the Rapids are installed but currently awaiting commissioning. At Maltby, 2 Rapids (4 sockets) are now live and the remaining 22kW Fast chargers are pending final commissioning.

Groundworks are complete at Clifton Park which has experienced delays due to issues with the planned cable route and the charge points are now awaiting final electrical supply to install and commission.

- 2.34 This programme places 99.7% of Rotherham households within 3 miles of a Council operated EV Charger and 38,152 households (32%) within 0.5 miles - approximately a 10-minute walk from a charger. The target for delivery of 95% of residents to be within 3 miles of a Council operated EV Charger by 2025 has now been met. Further metrics are available in Appendix 5 and in section 2.12 above.

2.35 **Mode Shift**

- 2.36 Schemes to improve residents' ability to walk, wheel and cycle continue to be considered and will be brought forward as feasibility studies are completed.

- 2.37 The Council also commissions several cycling schemes to encourage users across all age groups to become more confident to cycle and switch to cycling as a more frequent mode of travel.

- 2.38 This includes the Bikeability scheme which works with Rotherham's schools to improve access to cycling proficiency and the Journey Matters Hub which provides a number of services including adult cycle training, Dr Bike sessions and cycle trials and loans.

- 2.39 A bid has also been submitted by Sheffield Cycling 4 All to Active Travel England's Active Travel Innovation Fund following their successful trial of six Inclusive Cycling Sessions in Herringthorpe Playing Fields between April and July 2025. These sessions provided opportunities for disabled people and those with long term health conditions to access cycling in a safe, supportive and social environment. 99 cyclists engaged with this scheme, plus 44 supporters, 32% of whom attended more than one session. Participants reported joy, pride and increased confidence in their ability to cycle. The sessions provided not only physical activity, but vital social connection and a sense of freedom for those who face barriers to sport and mobility. If the bid is successful, further sessions may be available for Rotherham residents to access Inclusive Cycling in the future.

2.40 **Housing**

- 2.41 The Council's commitment to achieve EPC Band C by 2030 has been recently supported by a successful bid to the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund. The Council was awarded £8.8 million from the Department for Energy and Net Zero, to be used alongside Council match funding to deliver energy efficiency measures to 996 homes.

- 2.42 However, in June 2025 changes to the method for assessing EPC bands, known as RdSAP 9 (Reduced data Standard Assessment Procedure) were announced by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The transition from RdSAP 9 to RdSAP 10 represents a fundamental shift in the methodology used to calculate Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings. This updated

approach incorporates more stringent criteria and revised assumptions about property characteristics and energy use. As a result, as the Council has re-evaluated its housing stock using the new RdSAP 10 framework, 1,941 homes were downgraded from an EPC Band C or above to EPC Band D or below. This widespread reclassification lowers the Council's baseline for energy performance and significantly increases the scale of intervention required to achieve the 2030 Band C target. Consequently, more homes will require comprehensive retrofitting and energy efficiency improvements, increasing both the scope and cost of the decarbonisation program. Accurate data and adaptive planning are required to ensure the best retrofitting strategy is adopted per property and as such this change is being addressed as part of the wider housing stock retrofitting plan. This information and its impact on the Council's target, will be presented in future Climate Emergency Annual Reports as the data affected is after June 2025.

- 2.43 The Rotherham Housing Strategy 2025 -2030 was published in December 2025. Priority 2 of the strategy is "Improving the safety, quality and energy efficiency of our homes". The Strategy re-iterates the Council's target of all Council properties achieving Band C by 2030 to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty. The Strategy states the Council's continued support to address fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency across the Borough's housing stock, develop the council housing decarbonisation plan and hold landlords accountable for the condition of their properties, including energy efficiency.

2.44 **Waste**

- 2.45 The implementation of Simpler Recycling in the Business Waste Service is currently underway. Contracts are currently being procured to cover dry mixed recycling and food waste. At present Simpler Recycling only applies to businesses with 10 or more employees. However, from 1 April 2027 this will be extended to all businesses. Rotherham Business Waste, the Council's waste service which provides waste disposal to commercial organisations, will support existing and prospective customers to comply with the new regulations, while learning from the deployment of separate collections to its larger customers. To ensure compliance with Simpler Recycling and its own Finance and Procurement Procedure Rules, the Council will review its corporate building portfolio with a view to ensuring all sites use the in-house service, in the first instance.

2.46 **Built & Natural Environment**

- 2.47 The Council is now progressing with the making of a new Local Plan and as such the action to update the Core Strategy with a view to improving climate change policy cannot be completed. A Local Development Strategy for preparation of a complete new Local Plan was approved at Cabinet on 15 September 2025. The new Local Plan presents opportunities for climate change mitigation: an action to this effect is proposed in the 2026/27 Climate Change Action Plan.
- 2.48 The Council continues to progress its Tree Planting Programme, with a cumulative total of 53,119 trees planted since 2021. The tree planting season

falls between November and April and as such work was still in progress at the time of preparing this report. As of February 2026, 10,120 trees and hedgerows had been planted this season, of which 672 were in urban areas.

2.49 Biodiversity

2.50 A South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is currently being devised by SYMCA, supported by the four South Yorkshire local authorities. Council officers continue their contributions to this work, providing evidence and insight into the process including information relating to the Borough's habitats and proposed species of interest. Consultation on the LNRS can be expected in Spring 2026: publication is not expected before March 2027.

2.51 In 2024, the Improving Places Select Committee undertook a review of Nature Recovery In Rotherham and proposed 13 actions for delivery between 2024 and March 2027, 10 of which were subsequently approved by Cabinet, with the remaining 3 deferred subject to further trials. These actions cover a breadth of different topics and services and include actions such as member support, prioritising local wildlife sites and continuing work already underway such as community engagement, tree planting and verge management. The below provides a brief overview of some of the nature recovery progress to date, however the Council will publish a more in-depth report in March 2026 as part of its Statutory Biodiversity Duty reporting requirement.

2.52 An online training course on the Council's Virtual College is now available for all staff and Members which details information relating to the climate and nature emergencies and how staff can take their own action to reduce carbon emissions and encourage a nature recovery.

2.53 One deferred action proposed was to cease all use of glyphosate pesticides. Instead, the Council proposed to trial the use of glyphosate-free alternatives to reduce non-essential use of pesticides as part of the Council's maintenance programme prior to further consideration. The trial had been expected to be undertaken during 25/26 but as alternate methods of weed management require an increased resource requirement and a small seasonal window this was not possible and as such has been deferred to 2026/27. Alternatives have been researched by the Climate Team to be used as part of the trial when possible.

2.54 The Council's Green Spaces service has also worked closely with several partners including Butterfly Conservation, Water Life Recovery Trust, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Rotherham & Sheffield Wildlife Trust, Froglife and internal services, to undertake surveys, develop biodiversity schemes and Local Wildlife Site designations.

2.55 Influence And Engagement: Children's Capital of Culture

2.56 Children's Capital of Culture, Rotherham's year-long festival engaging, including and inspiring young people has led to many opportunities for Rotherham's young people to explore the climate and nature agendas, to become more active and to celebrate Rotherham's natural heritage through its

theme 'A World Beneath our Feet'. Encouraging the uptake of active travel for health, the environment and more importantly for fun, has formed a key element of this festival.

- 2.57 Children's Capital of Culture has led on play-based activities, creating opportunities for learning and interaction using the medium of play such as through street games and play streets. A primary school project utilised a dance company called Speedwell to create a show called 'The Mountain Witch'. This show gently introduces themes around climate change in an engaging and creative way. As part of wider activity, Rotherham Symphony Orchestra delivered a 'World Beneath Our Feet' concert, taking inspiration from the natural world including writing and illustrations from young people to support. Rotherham also hosted The Royal Horticultural Show at Wentworth Woodhouse in July 2025, with young children producing two flagship gardens which have since been replanted into the primary school responsible afterwards. Care experienced young people supported by Affinity planted a 'Young Designers' Garden. The young people involved in this have since achieved horticultural roles showing the value of their experience gained through the Children's Capital of Culture festival.
- 2.58 The project has also enabled community activity, through the provision of micro-grants to VCSE groups related to the natural world. Schemes funded include the Friends of Brampton Graveyard Community Day which included a general site clear up and the creation of bug hotels and other nature-based crafts. Youth drama work continues at the Civic Theatre, with a redramatising of 'The Snowflake' and large visual artworks have also been commissioned. Artist James Brunt has also been commissioned to create artwork with schools and community groups, utilising natural materials to be used in the Children's Capital of Culture closing ceremony in March.
- 2.59 The Remade in Rotherham field at Rotherham Show 6-7 September 2025 showcased different ways in which residents and young people can get involved in environmental action. The Show featured a range of craft activities, re-use opportunities and environmentally-themed workshops including Junk Jodie, a storyteller and artist using recycled materials for artwork and the Made in Rotherham Horticultural Show. The Trees Service and Climate Change Team also attended, sharing information about the borough's woodlands, low carbon home improvements and grant schemes alongside EV information, an EV Showcase by the Yorkshire EV Club and a multitude of performances such as Bamboo by NoFit State. There was also a focus on physical activity including Moving Rotherham and Journey Matters Dr Bike service.
- 2.60 Supported by Neighbourhoods Officers and Members, nature and climate themed engagement activity continues in Rotherham's communities. Examples include tree planting and green space improvements, working with schools and using recycled rubbish or natural materials to create art, green themed library sessions such as at Mowbray Gardens Library and energy efficiency advice at events to support people living in cold homes.
- 2.61 Finally, three workshops have been undertaken with members of the Rotherham Together Partnership gathering insight from across a variety of

sectors and anchor institutions to begin the co-creation of the Sustainable Rotherham Strategy. This work aims to develop the Council's approach and priorities for achieving its Net Zero by 2040 target. Future actions to shape this Strategy further include technical analysis to identify routes to Net Zero in the transport and energy sectors throughout 2026/27.

2.62 Adaptation

- 2.63 Climate Change Adaptation refers to the ability of an organisation to respond to the expected impact of climate change by reducing vulnerability or risk by effective planning, but also by putting physical measures in place to manage buildings and infrastructure in the face of increasing risk of storms, flooding and excessive heat. A report by the Climate Change Committee to Parliament in April 2025 shared its concerns regarding the country's preparedness for future climate impacts. The effects of flooding and excessive heat on homes and livelihoods due to unchecked climate change could impact the UK economic output by up to 7% of GDP by 2050 impacting long term growth ambitions. It is therefore of greater importance that the Council continues to include adaptation and climate risk assessments as part of its climate change programme moving forward.
- 2.64 The Council's adaptation work builds on the regional pilot programme steered by the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission and aims to develop an understanding of the likely future impacts of a warming climate on the Council's services. A programme of training and risk assessment has been developed and is progressing to plan. In April 2025, the Council's earlier carbon impact assessment template was revised, to include consideration of adaptation and resilience to climate change in all Cabinet and Officer Decisions.
- 2.65 Furthermore, since the publication of the second National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA2) in January 2025 (after the last Climate Emergency Annual Report was compiled) risk of flooding from rivers and risk of flooding from surface water datasets published on the Rotherham Data Hub website have been updated to account for the effects of climate change, by mid-century. By 2040-60, the number of residential properties in Rotherham at high risk of flooding from rivers (defined as having at least a 1 in 30 annual probability of flooding) is predicted to increase by 11.36%.
- 2.66 An update on the Council's flood alleviation schemes is also provided in Appendix 1, to provide a holistic account of the Council's action on climate change and to recognise the increasing likelihood of flood risk as a result of climate change. This was reported separately and in more detail in a report to Improving Places Select Commission in January 2026.
- ## **2.67 2026/27 Climate Change Action Plan**
- 2.68 A proposed climate change action plan for the 2026/27 period is presented in Appendix 2. The below section outlines some of the key activities proposed and their impacts.

- 2.69 A critical piece of work will be the commissioning and delivery of the Local Area Energy Plan. This work will span the Rotherham Borough, provide proposed pipeline projects for the delivery of the Net Zero by 2040 target and directly feed into the Council's Sustainable Rotherham Strategy. It will also provide an opportunity for the development of investment proposals for renewables as part of the Council's wider estate.
- 2.70 A proposal for the delivery of actions to decarbonise the Council's estate over the next five-year period is also presented. 53 buildings are included, of which 17 smaller properties are proposed for delivery in 2026/27, with a forward plan for 36 remaining properties up to 2030. It is recommended that the plan as presented at Appendix 3a, associated procurement and delivery should be approved, alongside a recommendation to utilise funding from various sources such as SYMCA and DESNZ, should it become available. It is proposed that the 2026/27 works utilise approximately £2.5 million of the Council's allocated decarbonisation budget.
- 2.71 The original £6.4 million allocated capital decarbonisation budget was designed as a match funding contribution and is not sufficient to cover the remaining property works required to achieve net zero. As such a need to access alternative external funding sources has been identified now that the PSDS is closed. Based on the programme provided in Appendix 3a, it is expected that the Council's budget will be fully utilised part way through the 2027 proposed plan if further funding is not identified. The recommendation to pre-approve the full programme and its procurement subject to funding will enable a faster approval process to expedite delivery of individual building decarbonisation schemes given the short 4-year period remaining to deliver this programme.
- 2.72 It should also be noted that there is a risk that these works may result in an initial increased revenue requirement, based on current electricity prices. This is due to current market conditions, where electricity remains more expensive than gas. This presents a financial risk, though the carbon emissions of the sites will be reduced and the energy security of the sites where solar is feasible will be improved. Sites will also be subject to energy efficiency improvements such as building energy management systems and increased insulation, which will further mitigate the financial risk, alongside ongoing solar feasibility assessments across the Council's portfolio. Sites will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- 2.73 Works included within this plan include design work, insulation, LED lighting, solar panels, energy management system installation and heating system replacements - which for the most part is recommended to be air source heat pumps, though final designs will recommend the most appropriate and cost-effective measures available.
- 2.74 Three sites have been selected for the installation of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure; these are identified in Appendix 2. However, a number of other sites have also been put forward as potential sites should feasibility and internal demand allow. Due to the Council's successful installation programme to date, most Council-owned public car parks either meet current demand for

EV charging or pose challenges for delivery. These remaining sites are generally more complicated and may have shared occupancy or tenancy agreements. Assessments will be undertaken at each site to confirm the appropriate specification of charger delivered at each site based on expected dwell time at each location and likely use. Risk of anti-social behaviour and vandalism will also be assessed to determine most appropriate charger type installed. The Council is currently trialling cable protectors (known as Cable Guards) at its existing Rapid charge points to understand whether this prevents or deters against theft of Rapid charger cables. These devices are cut resistant and contain pressurised Smart Water dispersion if the Cable Guard is breached. If successful, this will enable further Rapids to be installed as part of the programme. It is also expected that the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme approved by Cabinet in December 2025 will further increase the Rapid provision throughout the Borough. The aim across both projects is to ensure a varied network of charge point types at suitable locations to complement the approximately 300 device private sector provision already in the Borough.

2.75 A full forward plan of proposed actions for 2026/27 is available in Appendix 2.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option 1. Do Nothing.

3.1.1 This option proposes that Cabinet notes the progress made so far but does not take any further action.

3.1.2 This option is not recommended as it is inconsistent with the Council's 2019 motion and committed policy statement on responding to the Climate Emergency.

3.2 Option 2. Approve the Climate Change Action Plan and associated recommendations.

3.2.1 This action proposes the following, that Cabinet:

1. Notes the key achievements and progress made as detailed in Appendix 1 and section 2 of this report.
2. Approves the Climate Change Action Delivery Plan proposed in Appendix 2.
3. Delegates the specification, procurement, contract award and subsequent delivery of (i) the Corporate Property Decarbonisation Programme, Appendix 3a, (ii) the EV Infrastructure Programme, Appendix 3b and (iii) works referenced under the Energy section of the Climate Change Action Plan 2026-2027, Appendix 2, as well as any changes to these programmes and works, to the Service Director of Property and Facilities Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.

4. Delegates allocation of the Council's capital Decarbonisation Budget and EV Infrastructure Capital Budget and the acceptance of any available funding streams such as from SYMCA, Great British Energy or other Government schemes for delivery as per Appendices 3a and 3b to the Service Director of Property and Facilities Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.
 5. Approves an amendment to the £1m renewable energy pilot project approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2021, to deliver instead an invest-to-save renewable energy scheme comprising rooftop or car park canopy solar PV, as detailed in Appendix 4 and section 2.20 below; and also delegates authority for site selection, procurement and delivery of the amended scheme to the Service Director of Property and Facilities Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.
- 3.2.2 This is the recommended option, enabling the Council to continue to make progress towards its net zero targets and providing improved authority to utilise funding for approved schemes.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Internal stakeholders have been consulted on the Council buildings which form part of the proposed corporate decarbonisation plan and the actions associated with the forward climate change action plan 2026/27 available in Appendix 2.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 This report provides an update on past actions and presents an action plan for the 2026/27 financial year in Appendix 2. It is anticipated that the majority of actions will be completed in year but where this differs the 'Target Date' presented in Appendix 2 will indicate expected completion date.
- 5.2 The Climate Change Action plan collates action from across Council services and as such individual services are responsible for the delivery of the actions assigned to them. This information is also presented in Appendix 2 for accountability purposes.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 This report and its appendices outline numerous different workstreams which are working towards achieving the Council's net zero targets. These will have to be funded through existing and approved revenue and capital budgets. Where additional financial resource is required, this will have to be identified as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.
- 6.2 As Services prepare for the procurement of contracts, it will be imperative that appropriate consideration is given to climate change in the design and development of the specification. In relation to the procurement activity detailed in this report, this must be undertaken in compliance with relevant

procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023) dependent on the route to market selected as well as the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules. Services must ensure early engagement and preparation of all procurement related activity.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 set a legally binding target on the UK to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, compared to 1990 levels, by 2050. The 80% target was increased to a 100% target in 2019 (the net zero target) by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019. Although there are currently no net zero statutory targets for local authorities, many (including the Council as set out in this report), have adopted commitments to reduce Carbon emissions in line with the 2050 net zero target.
- 7.2 The Council's commitment to net zero and the actions towards this as set out in the report are consistent with the Government's Net Zero Strategy and are indicative of the important role local authorities play in achieving net zero.
- 7.3 There will be legal implications for each of the projects referred to within the Climate Change Action Plan, which will include compliant procurement, appropriate contractual arrangements and adherence to funding requirements. These matters will be addressed within the governance and decision-making processes for each project.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct human resource implications as a result of this report. It is expected that the proposed plan can be undertaken using the current resource.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Children, young people and vulnerable adults may be adversely affected by the impacts of climate change. As such, the services directly interacting with vulnerable groups are prioritised in the Council's adaptation plan for earlier review.
- 9.2 The Council will continue to seek the viewpoints of young people through the various groups it has access to via representatives within Children and Young People's services.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 As this report is largely administrative in nature, there are minimal direct impacts on equalities and human rights.
- 10.2 Equality impacts may arise as the programme of works develops and as such consideration of equalities and human rights at the project level should continue throughout development, consultation and engagement to understand the potential impacts. Equality Screening and if required an assessment will be

undertaken before implementation of change or significant programmes of work particularly when planning adaptive measures for Council services or buildings in relation to climate change impacts. Programmes will therefore be managed to reduce service user impact.

- 10.3 Equalities implications might arise as part of future EV Infrastructure installations and are likely to be site specific. As per the Council's Public EV Strategy, the Council will continue to install EV charge points with PAS1899:2022 standard in mind to reduce impacts and ensure equitable access for all, where reasonably practicable.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The corporate property decarbonisation actions proposed for 2026/27 will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 183.12 tCO₂e, with a total expected reduction of 1,042 tCO₂e by 2030. The works to decarbonise the Council's estate and assess the Council's readiness for climate impacts will also improve resilience and knowledge surrounding the likely impacts of climate change on the Borough and Council services.
- 11.2 A Climate Change Impact Assessment is available in Appendix 7 and a summary of the Council's carbon emissions reporting is available within Appendix 5.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 To date, partners from across the Rotherham Together Partnership have been involved in several workshops to identify priorities, challenges and opportunities for the delivery of a Sustainable Rotherham Strategy. There will be further opportunities for the Council's partners to continue involvement in the co-creation of the Council's Sustainability Strategy as well as input into engagement relating to the Local Area Energy Plan.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The changing political and financial landscape poses a risk to the delivery of the Programme, in particular with regards to the availability of public sector funding for delivery of schemes where return on investment is not as favourable. The purpose of recommendation 4 is to mitigate this risk, enabling the council to utilise available funding sources as they arise.
- 13.2 The scale of change and costs associated with delivery may impact on the deliverability of the Council's net zero targets, in particular the target for Council operations to be Net Zero by 2030. This risk cannot be fully mitigated at this time.
- 13.3 The action plan proposed in Appendix 2 does not contain the full scope of actions required by the Council to achieve its net zero targets. As feasible emissions are reduced and as the 2030 target date draws nearer, consideration may also need to be given to budgets related to offsetting and funding for projects which may not have short returns on investment.

- 13.4 Similarly, the full scope of interventions to achieve the Borough's 'Net Zero by 2040' target is not currently identified. Actions to develop a Local Area Energy Plan and transport decarbonisation research will improve this and will focus future action within the Council's control. At this stage, the full investment requirement for this target is not yet identified and therefore remains a risk.

14. Accountable Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	20/03/26
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	16/03/26
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	13/03/26

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