Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Public Report
Cabinet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting
Cabinet – 20 March 2023

Report Title
Climate Emergency Annual Report

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)
Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager, louise.preston@rotherham.gov.uk
Callum Innes, Principal Climate Change Officer, Callum.innes@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected
Borough-Wide

Report Summary
On 30th October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and set out its action plan covering the following seven policy themes of Energy, Housing; Transport; Waste; Built & Natural Environment; Influence and Engagement.

At its meeting on 23rd March 2020, Cabinet resolved to establish the targets of:

- 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)

A Climate Emergency Action Plan was established, and this report outlines progress towards the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan reported for the 2022/2023 period and includes an emissions report for both Council operations 2019 – 2022 and borough wide for 2019 – 2020. Borough-wide data is 2 years behind due to lags in published data availability.

On 25th May 2022, the Council declared a Nature Crisis. Climate change, alongside deforestation and habitat destruction, is a key driver of biodiversity loss and in many cases, nature can provide solutions to the impacts of climate change on people, property, and infrastructure.

This report therefore identifies opportunities for joint action on the climate and nature crises in 2023 and expands this programme's remit to include climate change adaptation and cohesion with a nature restoration programme.

Recommendations
It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2 including nature crisis and adaptation actions, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and sections 2 and 5 of this report.
2. Approve the Single Use Plastic Action Plan in Appendix 4.

List of Appendices Included
Appendix 1 Climate Change Progress Report
Appendix 2 Climate Change Action Plan 2023/2024
Appendix 3 Baseline Carbon Emissions Data
Appendix 4 Single Use Plastic Action Plan
Appendix 5 Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 6 Carbon 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 (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.

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

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

1. Background

1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 30th October 2019 and since then has committed to driving down carbon emissions with a view to achieving 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)

1.2 The Council also declared a Nature Crisis for Rotherham on 25th May 2022. It is also recognised that the decline in nature is intrinsically linked with the climate emergency, and this is reflected within the action plan detailed in Appendix 2.

1.3 This report details the progress and an indicative forward plan for 2023.

1.4 An update on the Council's use and reduction of Single Use Plastics (SUP) is also included within this report. Single Use Plastics are of public interest and contribute to the Council's carbon emissions (Scope 3). It is therefore important that the Council continue to reduce their use where feasible within its operations and to encourage good practice locally.

2. The Climate Change Action Plan Update

2.1 A full progress report and indicative action plan for 2023/2024 is detailed within Appendix 1. Key progress is highlighted below with respect to the specific themes of:

- Monitoring and measurement
- Energy decarbonisation
- Transport
- Housing
- Waste
- Built & Natural Environment
- Influence & Engagement
- Adaptation

2.2 Programme Highlights 2021/2022

2.2.1 The establishment of the new Climate Change Team was successfully implemented in October 2022, including the addition of three new employees alongside existing staff within the Energy, Environment and Data Team. A Climate Change Manager, Principal Climate Change Officer and a Climate Change Officer are now in post. This increased resource will also allow further progress to be made on other aspects of climate change mitigation such as adaptation and engagement. An informal gap analysis has also been undertaken to the new climate change guidance (ISO standard IWA 42:2022) launched at COP27, highlighting potential areas of work for the future and opportunities for engaging the wider public.

2.2.2 The Climate Change Team are also delivering Carbon Literacy Training to critical staff, with a pilot cohort that commenced in January 2023. This course is designed specifically for public sector employees and will be particularly relevant to those staff responsible for key operational decisions, the Climate Change Leads and those responsible for procurement.

2.2.3 The inclusion of carbon impact assessments within the cabinet reporting process has also been implemented to inform decision making. These assessments are designed to qualitatively identify changes in carbon emissions, either positive or negative, so that decision makers can consider the implications of a prospective policy or operational change.

2.3 Energy Decarbonisation

2.3.1 Substantial work has been undertaken to survey and prepare for decarbonisation activities within Council buildings. This work is important to both inform Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding bids but also to assess feasibility of measures on a per property basis. A bid covering five Council buildings has since been submitted and is awaiting the results.

2.3.2 A significant highlight of this year's work is the completion of a proof-of-concept design for a solar photo-voltaic farm (solar panels) within the Borough. This project aims to increase local renewable energy, reduce the Council's carbon footprint, and improve energy resilience. A separate Cabinet report will be submitted for approval of the next phase of this project.

2.3.3 The Community Energy Support Scheme was launched on 1st March 2021. The Scheme is intended to provide support for Rotherham residents to reduce energy costs, improve energy efficiency and access future Government grants. This scheme has supported over 580 appointments with residents and improved the energy efficiency of homes through the retrofitting of over 275 properties within the Borough via the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 Scheme.

2.4 Transport

2.4.1 The Rotherham Borough baseline for transport has been established and reported via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This will allow for appropriate targets to be drawn up in the future.

2.4.2 a) Active Travel

Active Travel infrastructure measures have been progressed to full business case level. Projects at Moor Road Manvers and Broom Road were approved for delivery in late 2022; the project for Sheffield Road will be submitted with a funding decision anticipated in March 2023.

2.4.3 b) Fleet

A telematics system has been trialled with results available for use and driver training roles are now in position to roll out delivery of the "Safe Fuel-efficient Driver" scheme which aims to reduce carbon emissions through improved driving technique.

A fleet plan covering the vehicle replacement program is being developed considering the available technology and financial implications. A separate report will be submitted to Cabinet in relation to this.

c) Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

2.4.4 The UK Climate Change Commission suggests that the transition to electric passenger vehicles from the current fossil fuel driven alternative will be a key driver in the UK's transition to net zero.

2.4.4.1 As such, the demand for local charging points will increase. A number of schemes are currently ongoing with a view to increasing electric vehicle charging infrastructure around the Borough.

2.4.4.2 The Council is currently collaborating with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and Arup to deliver joint projects for the implementation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. At present a scheme is in progress for the delivery of up to six sites offering an increase of six fast and twelve rapid charging bays.

2.4.4.3 Further analysis has been done internally to select appropriate sites with a view to the delivery of two residential charging hubs plus further installations are planned in collaboration with the Towns & Villages projects.

2.4.4.4 However, it is expected the demand for charging units is unlikely to be fully serviced by Council initiatives so places of work will also need to consider their own provision to support staff access to work alongside homeowner personal charging installations. Relevant planning policies are already adopted to support these changes.

2.5 **Housing**

2.5.1 Council owned social housing currently has a target to reach EPC Band C by 2030. The average EPC of Council housing stock has now increased from a Band D to a C and a high-level housing focussed assessment of the requirements of reaching zero carbon for Council housing has also been undertaken which considers prospective short, medium and long term actions.

2.5.2 Funding has been secured for the delivery of energy efficiency measures including external, cavity or loft insulation and window improvements for 142 properties in Maltby. Retrofitting assessments have been undertaken to date and cavity wall insulation has commenced.

2.5.3 Improvements to 217 properties in The Lanes, East Herringthorpe have been delivered successfully through the Green Homes Grant - LAD1B funding which has also contributed to the improvement in average EPC observed. These improvements in The Lanes and the impacts on tenants were reported as part of the 2022 Climate Emergency Report.

2.6 **Waste**

2.6.1 The Rotherham Bin app was launched in November 2022 and whilst its function is primarily for supporting residents to put out the correct bin, the app also links to

website information about what is allowed in each bin and as such may have some positive benefit from a contamination perspective. Engagement activities have also been undertaken to improve recycling rates and drive down waste contamination.

2.6.2 The Council has also taken part in consultations with central Government relating to the Waste and Resource Strategy for England and the impacts of the Environment Act 2021. The response to this will inform future operational plans at both the local and regional level.

2.7 Built & Natural Environment

Planning Policy

2.7.1 Throughout 2022 Supplementary Planning Documents have been adopted or proposed including additional measures in support of this workstream, relating to the need for travel plans, transport assessments, natural environment, and parking standards.

2.7.2 From November 2023, planning applications will need to consider the provision of at least 10% biodiversity net gain under the Environment Act 2021. This is a key action that will begin to interlink the biodiversity and climate crises into the Rotherham Climate Change Action Plan.

2.8 Trees and Green Spaces

2.8.1 Trees provide a variety of ecosystem services or benefits to local communities, including increasing pride of place and wellbeing, increasing air quality and biodiversity but also act as a carbon sink within the natural environment. The Green Spaces Team have made good progress with tree planting, having planted 21,000 woodland trees and 390 urban trees in the 2021/2022 planting season and 7,166 woodland and 257 urban trees for the 2022/2023 season.

2.8.2 Funding has now been awarded by the Woodland Accelerator Fund for the undertaking of an i-tree ECO survey which will support the documentation of Rotherham's natural assets specifically trees, but also significant hedgerows and other assets which may be of natural value to the Borough. This funding will also allow for a tree planting strategy to be written in 2023.

2.9 Climate and Nature

2.9.1 Alongside its existing climate emergency, Rotherham Council has declared a nature crisis which recognises the separate, though complimentary crisis affecting the natural world resulting in biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation and the degradation of natural habitats or 'natural assets' upon which humanity depends.

2.9.2 It is recommended that the nature crisis be given the same credence as the climate emergency but be managed in an integrated and complimentary way. This can be achieved by initial integration into the climate change programme of works with a focus on a neighbourhood, place-based approach which puts nature-based solutions at its heart. A substantial case already exists for an integrated approach, where nature recovery schemes that engage communities realise greater benefits where

wellbeing and local ownership of places are concerned. Several Wards also list the environment as a priority within their 2023 plans and an integrated management plan may support local needs by providing both actions to mitigate climate change, increase biodiversity and increase the number of positively managed wildlife sites for safe public use increasing local wellbeing and pride of place.

2.9.3 The recent landmark agreements at COP15 in Canada to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 will likely have implications for policy and action. It is not yet clear what these commitments mean at the local level, but it is expected that in the months following this conference, the UK will consider the package of targets and policy needed to support this commitment which will need to be managed appropriately.

2.10 **Influence and Engagement**

2.10.1 It is recognised that the Council cannot work alone to meet its net zero targets, nor should it, as the public interest in the climate and nature emergencies increases on the back of national and localised awareness campaigns. The influence and engagement section of the action plan has been enhanced to consider the increased resource and to widen the scope for partnership working. 2022/23 saw a continued engagement through the Rotherham Youth Cabinet as is set to continue into 2023/24 as Climate Change is a priority for the Youth Cabinet.

2.11 **Adaptation**

2.11.1 A changing climate brings with it associated risks for people, places, and infrastructure. For the UK, these are largely associated with increased temperatures and high rainfall events though global effects will have significant impacts on supply chains of food and goods. There is the potential for significant public health risks, especially when faced with increasing fuel poverty.

2.11.2 To date, work has focussed on the flood risk associated with the river network surrounding the borough, after significant floods in June 2007 and November 2019, and a number of other “near miss” flood events over the last two decades. The most recent update from this workstream is available within the background papers section of this report.

2.11.3 Notably, a wider view of potential adaptation workstreams and its effects on individual services will be considered by the new Climate Change Team, including how this links with UK Government Strategy and the wider Yorkshire and Humber catchment.

2.11.4 The Rotherham Renaissance Flood Alleviation Scheme has identified 6 key projects which will reduce the risk of flooding and work is on-going for delivery. This work is reported separately via the Improving Places Select Committee.

3. Council Operations – Net Zero by 2030

3.1 Rotherham Council’s baseline has been recalculated following further analysis of its Scope 3 (indirect) emissions. This calculation now includes emissions from Council staff commuting, working from home, EV charging, fuel used in on-site electricity generation and water supply emissions for Council buildings. This has refined the

original baseline model to more accurately reflect carbon emissions arising from Council emissions in 2019 and subsequent years.

3.2 Annual reporting procedures have been introduced and comprehensive annual emissions reports have now been produced for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

3.3 An initial “business as usual” forecasting model and carbon budget have also been introduced. As more data becomes available, this model will act as the framework upon which future short and long-term emissions projections will be built, measuring progress and creating a clear and quantifiable “roadmap to net zero.” This model is detailed within Figure 1 below.

3.4 Between 2019 and 2022, carbon emissions arising from Council operations fell by over a quarter (26%). This was largely due to a reduction in electricity consumption from Council owned buildings (1,272 tCO_2 reduction) and streetlighting (1,033 tCO_2 reduction). However, the biggest reduction in emissions came from staff commuting (2,296 tCO_2 reduction) as more staff have moved to hybrid working arrangements.

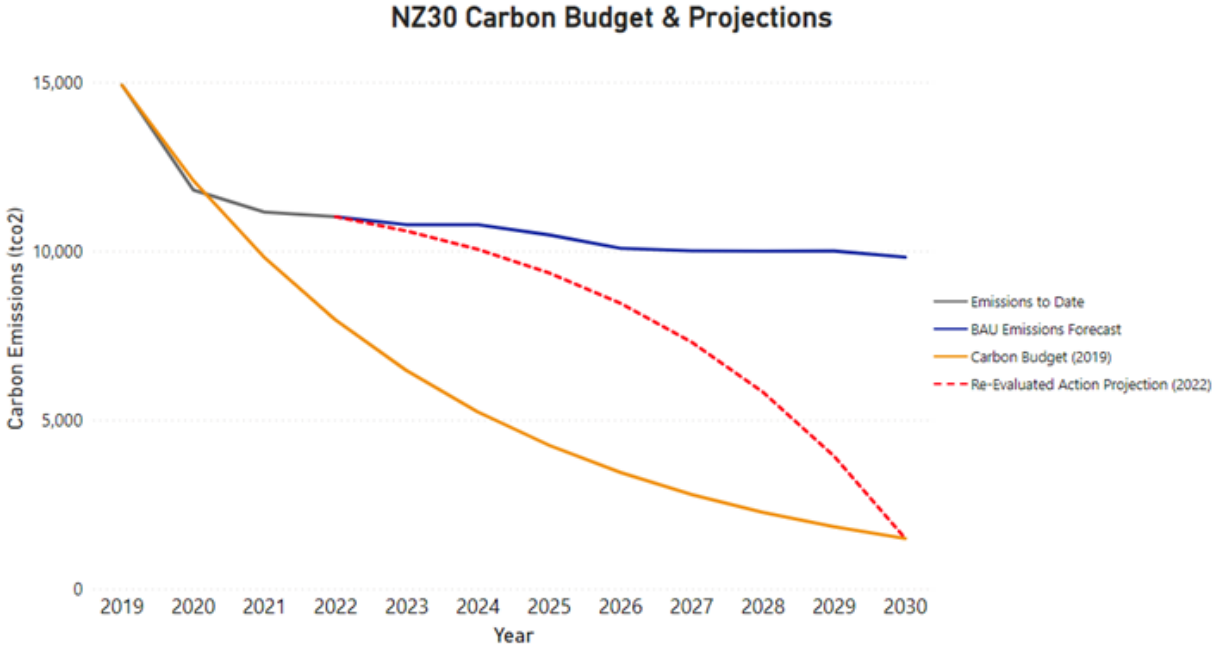

Figure 1: Emissions to date and forecasted to 2030 following re-evaluation.

3.5 Modelling indicates that a reduction of 22% annually would be required to reach net zero by 2030. However, this has been re-evaluated to include the fact that carbon savings as a result of decarbonisation activity under way will be shown retrospectively following implementation. In addition, activities towards electrification where in-house green generation of power is not appropriate (e.g., solar panels) will produce carbon emissions until the national grid becomes decarbonised thereby creating a lag before positive impact. In these cases, the localised air quality benefits of removing gas combusting appliances will be observed before an impact on the carbon footprint is realised. This scenario has therefore been included within the above modelling which shows a smaller initial decrease in carbon emissions (3.84% in year 1) followed by a greater decrease as project benefits are realised.

4. Borough-wide emissions: Net Zero by 2040

4.1 Calculation of borough-wide emissions utilises the Department for Business & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) estimates of territorial carbon emissions. There is a two-year lag on the release of data, meaning the latest publication relates to emissions from 2020.

4.2 2021's BEIS data publication was used to inform the 2018/19 baseline for the Council's NZ40 target. Each annual release will be used to create an annual report to measure Rotherham's progress towards NZ40.

4.3 Waste Management and Agriculture sectors have been added to the latest BEIS data release in 2021, as well as being retrospectively added to the data from previous years. This has allowed us to both include it within our most recent annual report and to retrospectively modify our 2018/19 baseline model.

4.4 To support the Council's efforts to drive down local emissions, the Housing Team has also established the Council's housing stock emission baselines by utilising Parity software with existing data on Council owned housing stock. (As of April 2022 - 57,000 tonnes of carbon across 20,040 residential assets). Understanding this baseline is important as it provides a starting point for action in the areas of most need, where increased energy efficiency will most benefit Rotherham's residents.

4.5 Overall CO_2 emissions between 2019 and 2020 decreased by 173 $KtCO_2e$ – a 10.14% decrease. This is over three times the average annual reduction in emissions, which is largely due to the effects of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures put in place across the UK.

4.6 As would be expected, considering the lockdown rules which were introduced in February 2020, the sectors which saw the largest decline between 2019 and 2020 were those of transport (17% decrease) and commercial (12%). However, domestic Gas and transport remain the largest carbon emitting sub-sectors within the borough. This reflects national data.

4.7 With the existence of a two-year time lag on the data, there is much speculation as to how these figures may have changed as lockdown measures have eased. It is expected that there could be a substantial rise in emissions arising from transport as activity returns to pre-pandemic levels.

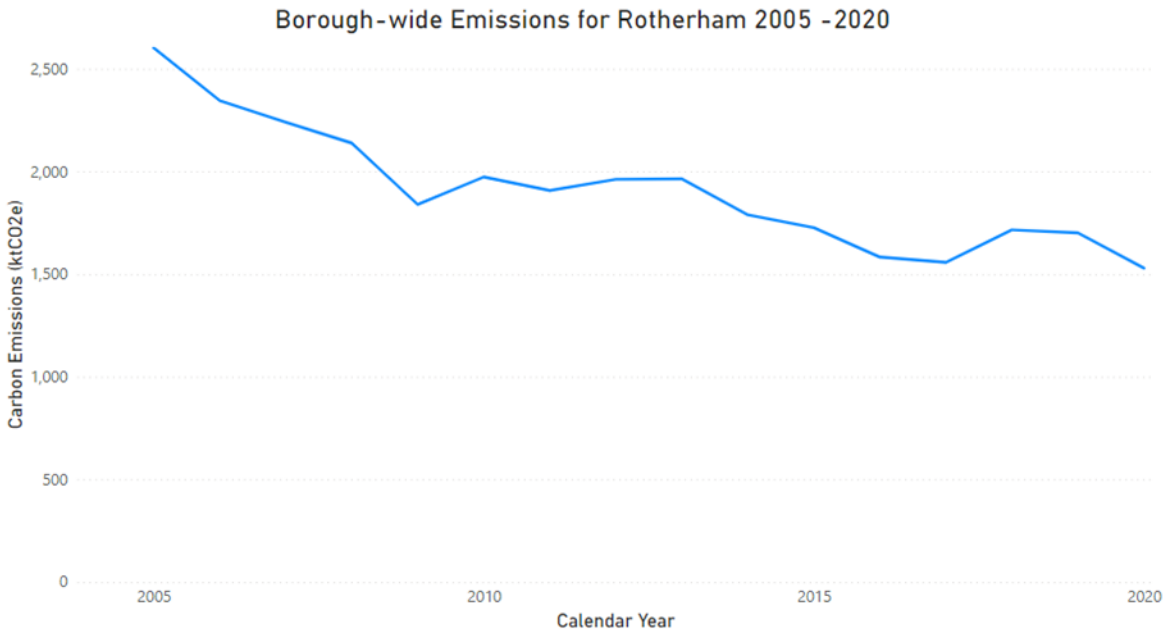

Figure 2: Borough-wide emissions have reduced by 41% between 2005 and 2020, with an average annual reduction of 3%.

4.8 Further information on the make-up of Rotherham Borough's carbon emissions is presented in Appendix 3.

5. Opportunities and key objectives for 2023/2024

5.1 The increase in resource within the Climate Change Team widens the breadth of actions that can be undertaken and will allow for greater progress towards Rotherham's Net Zero targets. It also provides an opportunity to support community level projects, though Council wide decarbonisation plans should remain a focus initially.

5.2 The following cross-Council objectives are recommended for the 2023- 2024 work programme:

1. Creation of an asset-level roadmap to net zero alongside asset management, and other parts of the Council to establish a framework for climate change action within Rotherham Council ensuring that the Council records CO_2 reductions from projects that are delivered.

2. Continued delivery of buildings and fleet decarbonisation where funding is available.

3. Identification of additional and future funding opportunities to support decarbonisation, offsetting, and engagement activities.

4. Roll out carbon literacy training to all key officers and interested internal stakeholders (as identified by the training plan) by November 2023.

5. Creation of a short, medium and long-term integrated climate and nature action plan for Rotherham by April 2024 based on scenario-based projection modelling to achieve Rotherham's net zero targets.

6. Involvement in the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission adaptation pathway work to develop plans to tackle potential climate changes impacts within the borough by April 2024.

7. Undertake a review of procurement policy against best practice sustainability guidelines to identify changes to support both reductions in single use plastics and achieving net zero targets. This should include embodied carbon reductions as well as operational carbon. Plan to be in place by end of 2023.

8. If approved, deliver proof of concept solar PV farm by the end of 2024.

9. Continue to support the private sector led Templeborough heat network if funding bids are successful.

10. Production of a net zero standard for decarbonisation of new and refurbished Council owned buildings with a demonstration model utilising current and emerging technologies by end 2023.

11. Continued delivery of Council housing net zero plan via leveraging funding opportunities and reporting on progress towards delivery of EPC C for all Council houses by 2030.

12. Develop commercial waste recycling offer.

13. Plant 10,000 new woodland trees and 500 new urban trees throughout the 2023/24 planting season.

14. Commission i-tree ECO survey of the whole borough to document the value of Rotherham's natural resources, including carbon sequestration potential by August 2024.

15. Roll out communication and engagement plan throughout 2023 and 2024 to develop internal and external awareness of climate change.

16. Implement planning policy to ensure Biodiversity Net Gain compliance.

5.3 Progress will continue to be reported annually to Cabinet and monthly as part of the Climate Change Project Board, with the Big Hearts Big Changes: One Council Project governance structure providing strategic and operational oversight.

6. Single Use Plastics

6.1 This is the first year that single use plastics monitoring has been incorporated into the wider climate change reporting structure following its handover in November 2022.

6.2 A full property audit has been undertaken by Asset Management Building Managers to scope out the baseline for this work and to identify opportunities for improvement.

6.3 Work has already been undertaken to reduce single use plastics within cleaning supplies and other Council services including through the provision of paper (or re-useable) rather than plastic cups where necessary. Covid-19 has served to increase the use of single use plastics, particularly from a cleaning perspective and therefore consideration may need to be given to the impact of removal versus hygiene.

6.4 The audit has highlighted the following areas for focus during 2023; disposable catering supplies and condiment sachets, cling film, hand soap, disposable protective equipment such as gloves and aprons. Some of these pieces may be required by service users and as such a direct and immediate removal would not be appropriate, especially when considering personal protective equipment where replacing with launderable alternatives would have financial and logistical costs. The program of works for 2023 will therefore involve consultations with individual services, supply chain and where appropriate the union to identify appropriate solutions.

6.5 The building audit indicates that plastic bottles and cups are less prevalent within Council operated sites, and where present are largely for visitor use. This is positive as it shows an overall awareness of the need to reduce single use plastics across the Council.

6.6 The action plan sets out that the Council will therefore work towards:

- Ending the provision of unnecessary single use plastics across council buildings and events
- Providing a supportive internal policy environment to allow appropriate purchasing with reducing single use plastics in mind
- Using recycled or re-usable plastics where plastics use is currently unfeasible
- Developing internal and external awareness campaigns to reduce the use of single use plastics across the Borough
- Supporting our residents to take action
- Working in partnership with our supply chain and partners to develop innovative solutions to reduce single use plastic use.

6.7 See Appendix 4 for planned action for 2023.

7. Options considered and recommended proposal

7.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2 including nature crises and adaptation actions, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and sections 2 and 5 of this report.
2. Approve the Single Use Plastic Action Plan in Appendix 4.

7.2 No alternative options are recommended, as it has been agreed that an Annual Report will be produced to ensure effective monitoring of actions, in response to the Climate Emergency. Larger projects and procurements will be submitted for separate consideration.

8. Consultation on proposal

8.1 The creation of the action plans contained in Appendix 2 and 4 continue to be collaborative and have been developed by Climate Change Leads from the relevant departments across the Council. The Climate Change Project Board is still operational and forms part of the wider Big Hearts, Big Changes programme of work

8.2 The Rotherham Youth Cabinet have also demonstrated their interest in becoming more involved with Rotherham's climate change agenda, particularly from an education and awareness perspective. The Youth Cabinet have set out some key recommendations which have been incorporated within this plan.

9. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

9.1 Actions contained within this report will be monitored monthly by the Climate Change Board and reported upon annually to Cabinet.

10. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this update report. The work to be undertaken as outlined within the report will be funded within the Council's existing revenue and capital budgets. Where additional Council funding is required to deliver the objectives of the Climate Change workstream, this will need to be identified as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

10.2 As projects are developed with an intention to engage third party organisations, it is imperative that Services give appropriate consideration in the development of the specification to climate change and the Council will need to ensure all procurement activity is undertaken in compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

11. Legal Advice and Implications

11.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

12. Human Resources Advice and Implications

12.1 Human resource implications are detailed within section 2.2 of this report. A Human Resources representative is included within the Climate Change Project Board to ensure any human resources implications are captured early.

13. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

13.1 There are no specific impacts of this report on Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults, though climate change in general can have a disproportionate impact on these groups.

13.2 In addition, 'Climate Anxiety' is on the rise, with a recent global study by the University of Bath indicating that approximately 45% of the children and young people studied felt their feelings about climate change negatively impacted their daily life and 75% felt the future was frightening. 83% thought that previous generations had failed

to take care of the planet. The key findings of this study identify an urgent need for further research and climate action but also for continued engagement with these groups to offset the impact of negative media. The need for educational psychologists to understand this area may increase in the future. Therefore, Children's and Young People's Services and the Rotherham Youth Cabinet are considered important stakeholders for children and young people within the borough and will continue to be involved where they wish to be so with the climate programme.

13.3 From late 2023, the Care Quality Commission will require the Council to evaluate and seek to reduce its environmental impact in relation to Adult Care. The Climate Change Team will engage with Adult Care to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled.

14. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

14.1 As per the Equalities Impact Assessment in Appendix 5 there are no direct implications for equalities and human rights as part of this report due to its administrative nature. However, climate change impacts have the potential to adversely affect certain groups to a greater degree than others. For example, those benefitting from higher incomes will be able to recover from flooding events and increasing food and energy prices through the procurement of 'solutions' whereas those on low incomes will not be able to.

14.2 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 Impact Assessments will be undertaken before implementation of change or significant programmes of work particularly when planning adaptative measures for Council services or buildings in relation to climate change impacts.

15. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

15.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on local, national, and international scales. In recognition of this the Council has aimed to be net zero as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham as a whole to achieve the same position by 2040.The intention of this document is to report upon progress towards these commitments and to provide a high-level plan for activities within 2024.

15.2 The report itself will have no impact on carbon emissions but the identified actions either have already or will result in a reduction of Rotherham Council's and the Rotherham Borough's carbon emissions. This includes actions designed to raise awareness of climate change and the personal actions that can be taken to reduce carbon emissions.

15.3 The associated Carbon Impact Assessment is available within Appendix 6.

16. Implications for Partners

16.1 Stakeholder interest in climate change is increasing generally. RMBC already has partner organisations focussed on developing relationships and regional programmes

of work within the climate change arena. Connections with these networks including several formal partnerships including the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, Rotherham Together Partnership, the Regional Sustainability Partnership and the Rotherham Food Network.

16.2 However, as plans develop it is expected that further partners, local businesses, supply chain and community groups may be identified with a keen interest that will further the climate agenda and increase impact Borough wide. Partnership working should be encouraged to increase knowledge, sharing of best practice, potential for successful application for grant funding and increases in the availability of local green jobs.

16.3 Stakeholder mapping will form a portion of the work programme for each workstream to ensure appropriate partners are selected.

17. Risks and Mitigation

17.1 Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, which is reflected in the Council's declaration of climate and nature emergencies and its subsequent ambitious net zero commitments.

17.2 Decarbonisation will have immediate financial implications, though with long term gains regarding pollution reduction, energy stability and regional resilience. To mitigate this, part of the early activity for 2023 will include research into funding options covering both Council decarbonisation, ecological regeneration and community grant funding which will support a more holistic approach to climate change management Borough wide.

17.3 There are also several areas where there may not yet be widely available technologies or financially feasible options for retrofit or replacement. These risks include housing retrofit, HGV and large fleet vehicles, and decarbonisation of the national power grid. It is important for the climate change team to manage these risks by continued regional engagement with academics and other local authorities so that timely implementation can be undertaken when needed.

17.4 The impacts of climate change will increase in severity as the earth warms. Changes in the prevalence of flooding, extreme heat events and storms may pose a risk to infrastructure and public health throughout the UK and globally. Mitigation for this risk will be in the form of application of learning taken from research and planning for extreme events. The Climate Change Manager will take part in the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission's Adaptation Programme to learn best practice that can be applied to Rotherham in the future.

18. Accountable Officers

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment
Jonathan Marriott, Head of Asset Management
Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	**Date**
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	06/03/23
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	02/03/23
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	02/03/23

Report Author(s):

Louise Preston, Climate Change Manager, louise.preston@rotherham.gov.uk
Callum Innes, Principal Climate Change Officer, Strategic Asset Management, Regeneration & Environment, callum.innes@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's website.