

**ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL**



Council Offices,  
Urban Road,  
Kirkby in Ashfield  
Nottingham  
NG17 8DA

## **Agenda**

### **Scrutiny Panel B**

Date: **Thursday, 14th April, 2022**

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Time: **7.00 pm**

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Venue: **Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road,  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

For any further information please contact:

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# Scrutiny Panel B

## Membership

**Chairman:** Councillor Christian Chapman

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor Trevor Locke

**Councillors:**

Jim Blagden

Dale Grounds

Caroline Wilkinson

Melanie Darrington

David Walters

## FILMING/AUDIO RECORDING NOTICE

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## SUMMONS

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel B to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.



**Theresa Hodgkinson**  
**Chief Executive**

## **AGENDA**

## **Page**

1. To receive apologies for absence, if any.
2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests.
3. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 28 October 2022. 5 - 10
4. Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation. 11 - 30

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## **SCRUTINY PANEL B**

**Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,**

**on Thursday, 28th October, 2021 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Christian Chapman in the Chair;

Councillors Dale Grounds, Trevor Locke and David Walters.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Jim Blagden, Melanie Darrington and Caroline Wilkinson.

**Officers Present:** Ian Bailey, Lynn Cain, Mike Joy, Darren Wardale and Shane Wright.

### **SB.4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **SB.5 Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 22 July 2021, be received and approved as a correct record.

### **SB.6 Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation**

The Chairman welcomed everyone present to the meeting and introduced the Council's Assistant Director for Assets & Investments, Ian Bailey and the Strategic Asset Manager, Darren Wardale, who were in attendance at the meeting to offer advice and assistance to Members as part of any ensuing discussions.

The Scrutiny Research Officer summarised the current position in relation to the Climate Change Mitigation review including the outcomes from the recent Informal Working Group meeting held on 5 October 2021. The report also presented the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy document and the emerging Net Zero Strategy as set out by the Government.

To enable the review to progress to a successful conclusion, it was suggested to the Panel that it would be prudent for Members to start formulating some draft responses and recommendations to Cabinet following receipt of the above documents and the evidence gathered and considered to date by Members.

### Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

Published by Government on the 19 October 2021, the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener policy paper set out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet a net zero target by 2050. Members' attention was drawn to the section regarding 'Local Climate Action' which outlined in more detail how the Government would be supporting decarbonisation and regeneration in local areas and communities.

The following key commitments were outlined:

- setting clearer expectations on how central and local government will interact in the delivery of net zero
- building on existing engagement by establishing a Local Net Zero Forum to bring together national and local government senior officials on a regular basis to discuss policy and delivery options on net zero
- continuing the Local Net Zero Programme to support all local areas with their capability and capacity to meet net zero including provisions to continue with Local Net Zero Hubs, promoting best practice and support for local authorities to develop net zero projects (to attract commercial investment) and increase knowledge sharing to demonstrate and share successful net zero system solutions.

It was envisaged that the Government would be working with local authorities to support and aid the transition to net zero by financing strategic infrastructure projects (as led by local authorities) whilst providing advice and expertise in order to strengthen the pipeline of investable projects.

It was also hoped that an array of funding streams would become available to enable local authorities to build capacity and capability locally whilst managing expectations for the local economy during the transitional phase.

In relation to the Council, local priorities would be in relation to the following:

- energy provision and heating/maintenance of Council assets and buildings
- greener solutions to upgrade and maintain Council housing stock
- transport and fleet provision
- District-wide green infrastructure
- environmental improvements.

### Climate Change Committee: 2021 Progress Report to Parliament

Members were also asked to note the Government's response to the Climate Change Committee's 2021 progress report to Parliament regarding progress being made nationally in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Following the update from the Scrutiny Research Officer, Members discussed the following:

- the Chairman's disappointment at the content of the Government's Net Zero Strategy and its route towards shifting responsibility for tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions onto local authorities;

- recognition that the Council had been committed to tackling climate change and introducing greener alternatives wherever possible, for the past 10 years;
- the importance of ensuring the Council's housing stock is consistently upgraded to greener alternatives as required and to continue to maintain the decent homes standard as a priority
- the data surrounding total carbon emissions within Ashfield (around 36,000 tonnes per year) and the realisation that the Council can only effectively control and actively reduce around 5% of those emissions
- the recent increase in provision of electric charging points around the District
- the Council's track record in prioritising and upgrading its Council housing stock and its commitment to the provision of greener alternatives wherever possible
- the reasons why Ashfield District Council chose a carbon neutral date of 2030; 5 years earlier than the Government's aspirational target of 2035
- the benefits of continuing to promote agile working within the Council and how it could assist with enabling the Council to reduce its need for unnecessary office space and as a result, its carbon load
- the possibility of making the Council's green bins bigger to encourage additional recycling at an individual level
- the merits, or otherwise, of additional tree planting and its contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions overall
- acknowledgement that the Council's portfolio of investment properties have, in themselves, a carbon load with a requirement that the levels are added to the Council's overall total receipt for carbon emissions
- the possibility of the Council investing and recruiting in a full time Climate Change Mitigation officer to oversee the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and action plan going forward.

#### Ashfield District Council: Draft Climate Change Strategy

Following the discussion, the Assistant Director for Assets & Investments expanded on some of the points raised and spoke about the recent housing decarbonisation initiatives that the Council had bid and received funding for. It was noted that the Government was not making it particularly easy for local authorities to gain access to the funding and officers were spending increasing amounts of time putting together bids for funding with no guarantee of success.

It was also acknowledged that the timescales for accessing the funding were extremely tight and delivery of the projects were being hampered by a shortage in specialist contractors to undertake the works (i.e. wall insulations).

This shortage was becoming an issue nationally and was showing no signs of abating at the present time.

To further hinder progress particularly in relation to wall insulations, new recognised standards of work had now been introduced that had resulted in a cost of over £5,000 more per property which inevitably reduced the amount of properties being treated and upgraded.

The target for all homes was to achieve an 'A' energy efficiency rating but this rating was hard to attain and most properties within Ashfield were currently being upgraded to a 'C' rating which was still to be welcomed in the current climate.

Members were also asked to note that the draft Climate Change Strategy document attached to the agenda, whilst outlining the Council's main objectives for climate change mitigation, did not yet contain the detailed action plan which was currently being worked on by officers. This action plan was a 54-page technical document, compiled in conjunction with specialists from Nottinghamshire City Council, which would outline the Council's specific emissions, its Scope 1, 2 and 3 categories and all the supporting data and evidence used in conducting the study.

Ashfield District Council had set a target of being carbon neutral by 2030 in relation to the carbon emissions that the Council were responsible for and it was intended that a consultant would be engaged to assist with the development of the action plan as required. A realisation for all local authorities was the fact that becoming carbon neutral was expensive and many Councils would be having frank conversation about finances to make difficult decisions regarding investment in such mitigation requirements.

It was again noted that the Council did not have any control over the carbon footprint of the goods and services that it purchased, but it was possible to restrict the use of contractors/organisations to those evidencing a certain level of green credentials at the tendering stage. It had also been mooted in an effort to overcome the shortage of specialist contractors undertaking carbon reductions works, that the Council could invest and train an in-house team, possibly taking advantage of any 'back to work' or rehabilitation projects available in the area.

Once the action plan had been finalised, allocations and responsibilities would be passed onto service areas to commence work on achieving the carbon neutral target by 2030.

The Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services thanked Ian and Darren, on behalf of the Panel, for their valuable contributions to the review and advised that he hoped the Panel could see the document at its earliest opportunity to enable Members' views to be considered and incorporated into the action plan prior to its submission to Cabinet.

To conclude, Panel Members were asked to give thought to any possible recommendations that could be presented to Cabinet alongside the Council's Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and were assisted with suggestions as to the following themes:



- an increase in the provision of electric charging points around the District
- a commitment towards the expansion of a greener Council transport fleet
- continued investment in renewable technologies, i.e. solar panels for all Council owned buildings
- ensuring all contractors commissioned by the Council have proven green credentials
- a requirement to replace any felled trees within the District as a result of planning re-development (through S106 agreements)
- commit to planting wildlife verges in appropriate places and to consider bee sanctuaries through partnership initiatives
- to continue to support and promote energy saving initiatives to the residents of Ashfield
- to consider a possible group/individual reward scheme for successful climate reduction projects within the District
- continuing to work with schools to educate children and students on climate change and reduction initiatives
- a commitment towards involving local businesses in the Council's climate reduction strategy and action plan to gain support and buy in to collectively commit to the 2030 target
- consider 'community garden' projects for older residents to involve communities in increasing, maintaining and taking pride in green spaces across Ashfield.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Assistant Director for Assets & Investments be requested to release the draft Climate Change Strategy Action Plan to Panel Members for consideration as soon as practicably possible;
- b) as a result of a) above and upon release of the draft Strategy Action Plan, the Scrutiny Research Officer convene an Informal Working Group meeting to enable Members to consider its content and formulate a draft set of recommendations for presentation to Cabinet alongside the Climate Change Strategy report in early 2022.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY PANEL B</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>14 APRIL 2022</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY REVIEW: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>NO</b>

## **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to present Members of Scrutiny Panel B with a draft final report on the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation. This draft report is being presented to Members for discussion and approval for presentation to the next meeting of Cabinet. This report sets out the information considered by Members throughout the review, the methodology used to conduct the review, and some key themes identified for potential recommendations.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members of Scrutiny Panel B are recommended to:

- a. Approve a final report for the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation to be submitted to the next meeting of Cabinet.
- b. Formulate and approve a set of recommendations to be included in the final report for submission to the next meeting of Cabinet.

## **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

Climate Change Mitigation was added to the scrutiny work programme by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2020, having originally been set up as a separate scrutiny commission at Council.

## **Alternative Options Considered**

No alternative options have been considered at this stage of the review. Any alternative options considered will be outlined alongside the final report of the review to be presented to Cabinet.

## **Detailed Information**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Climate Change Mitigation was added to the scrutiny work programme by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2020, having originally being set up as a separate scrutiny commission at Council.

Scrutiny Panel B has held four formal Panel meetings, as well as three informal working group meetings while undertaking the review. Members have considered a wide range of evidence and information, including guidance from the Local Government Association and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, case study examples, emerging legislation and guidance, and developing documents within the Council.

Members have worked closely with the Council's Assistant Director – Assets and Investments and Strategic Asset Manager to gain a fuller understanding of the subject and actively take part in policy development.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny: The Role of Scrutiny in Climate Change Programmes**

The CfGS have released a guide on how to go about scrutiny and inquiry on climate change at a local level, with a focus on the implications for councils declaring climate emergencies. The guidance was produced with support from the LGA.

Please see below some details of the guidance document.

Initial key points the CfGS raise in the guidance:

- The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report stated that at the current rate the world is on track to reach a global temperature rise of 3 degrees Celsius by the end of the century
- The general consensus is that significant impacts on humans and the biosphere will be apparent with 1.5 degrees of warming
- Limiting warming to this level may still be possible if concerted action is taken
- The Climate Change Act 2008 mandates some of this action – in particular reduction in emissions by at least 80 percent on 1990 levels by 2050, alongside legally binding carbon budgets and regular reporting of climate risks

Climate change is a critical global problem that will impact environments everywhere and individuals across all levels of society. Tackling climate change is a shared responsibility. It is deeply connected to other policy issues, there are no clearly defined solutions - certainly not at a local level - and new consequences are emerging. Currently, there is a great deal of uncertainty over who should respond to climate change and how this can be achieved. An effective response to climate change is not simply an issue that can be dealt with at the global scale; some form of local action is necessary for lasting environmental, social, and institutional change.

Councils across the UK have recognised a duty to act. Some are already acting on climate change – often by using their convening power to agree solutions across a whole area, rather than just focusing on the council as an institution. Now, with many having declared a ‘climate emergency’, there is a growing understanding that response to the challenge needs to be holistic; but even here, there is some uncertainty about what such declarations commit councils to in practice. Councils that have made this bold statement now need to show how they will prioritise and embed climate action in all policy areas.

The challenge has been thrown into sharper relief by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. At first glance it may seem that the impact of the pandemic will be positive for climate change. Globally, lockdown measures substantially reduced emissions, and in the UK measures by highways authorities have seen roadways reprioritised to focus on the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. But in the medium and long term, the position is more uncertain:

- Lessened use of public transport might make service levels unsustainable, leading to more people using cars and putting further public transport investment in danger – compounding the impact of pollution from private vehicles
- Councils’ overall plans on climate change – written in the pre-COVID world and underpinned by assumptions about economic growth and personal behaviour – could now become undeliverable unless they are substantially redrafted
- Councils’ financial situation focuses attention on immediate, in-year life and limb issues. Even before COVID, money to take action on long term issues was tight – the situation is now critical.

Both COVID-19 and the continuing threat of climate change demonstrate the needs for places and communities to become more resilient. Central to this is effective partnership working. Councils have a uniquely important role in using their buying power and resources to push forward action on climate change. They also have convening power in the local area – the ability to bring together a range of individuals and organisations and to work with them to develop a coherent and consistent approach to the issue. An approach to climate change which limits councils to thinking and acting only on their conventional duties and responsibilities will not take advantage of these opportunities – and is likely to be ineffective

The guidance explains that scrutiny has a critical role to play in the cross-cutting issues presented by climate change. Scrutiny functions can:

- Play an active role in stress-testing and querying assumptions in the development of climate action plans, particularly in light of the pandemic
- Secure wider political buy-in for long-term action, in the context of significant financial pressures which make such buy-in critical
- Play a formal accountability role as councils come to make public commitments on climate action – in particular, the declaration of climate emergencies
- Support local people to engage with the council on these complex and long-term issues
- Support the council to engage with partners and others in the locality, to better understand and align priorities

The guidance sets out 10 questions that can be posed as part of the review process. The questions are as follows:

- How well does the council understand the need to take action locally?
- How does the council's leadership champion and direct action on climate change?
- How is the council adopting a clear and detailed strategic plan, and how is it mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation?
- Has the council reviewed its investment strategy, supply chains, and procurement models to give due consideration to climate change impacts?
- How is the council integrating sustainability and resilience into its transport and energy plans?
- How is the council planning to understand and act on the need to adapt existing properties and estates to address the impacts of climate change – and to plan for new housing stock which is resilient to these impacts?
- How is the council promoting climate change education, diversifying the labour market, and focusing on sectors that are sustainable?
- What measures are being taken to ensure that health and social care systems will be resilient with the extra pressures they will come under due to climate change?
- How does the council identify those who are most at risk from the impacts of climate change, and what is being done to assist the most vulnerable?
- How is the council supporting and working with all relevant private and civic actors in the area towards climate change mitigation and adaptation?

The questions put forward by the CfGS are exploratory in nature, designed to invite further supplementary questions depending on local circumstances. The above questions will be useful for:

- Scoping reviews to ensure focus in the context of a subject of significant potential breadth and depth. These questions could enable scrutiny to identify which areas the function could add most value.
- Planning local community involvement, giving a clearer sense of how best to engage the public and understand aspirations.
- Planning local business involvement to understand local context
- Developing realistic, meaningful recommendations that engage both with the global challenge and the need for local action. The 10 questions can provide a basis on which to construct evidence-based recommendations that accurately reflect current plans, best practice, and activity.

## CORPORATE PLAN

As discussed at the previous meeting, the objectives set out within the Council's Corporate Plan relating to the commitment towards climate change mitigation will be a useful reference point throughout the review.

'Cleaner and Greener' is one of the five key priorities identified by the Council set out in the Corporate Plan. Within the Corporate Plan, the Council's vision for the 'Cleaner and Greener' priority is established:

*By 2023, we will create a cleaner and greener Ashfield, enabling communities and businesses to thrive in a clean and tidy district, minimising waste, and recycling more.*

*Ashfield is pro-active in encouraging more recycling, tackling environmental crime, and finding innovative ways of delivering services that are responsive to the needs of our residents, visitors and businesses.*

*By working with our communities and businesses, the Council is better able to understand what matters and to shape services to help people enjoy living, visiting, and working in Ashfield.* The Corporate Plan further outlines numerous key projects, programmes, and initiatives to be implemented within the next four years. Please see some of the initiatives that may be of interest to this review:

### Environment

- Deliver against our Environmental Charter
- Refresh the Green Business Scheme to engage businesses and promote environmentally sustainable behaviours
- Work with community volunteers and local business volunteers to encourage an increase in ownership of community open spaces
- Contribute to a reduction of CO2 emissions by increasing tree coverage in Ashfield
- Develop a Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

## EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2019 – CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

As part of the Employee Survey 2019, respondents were asked to suggest ideas and actions that the Council could or should implement to support climate change mitigation.

As part of this survey, over 100 suggestions were made, with all suggestions fed into the Council's project to develop its policy and strategy approach to climate change.

Panel Members may find it useful to see the most submitted suggestions:

### Fleet and Personal Vehicles

- Implement electric vehicle fleet by phasing out petrol and diesel vehicles
- Promote car share schemes
- Encourage use of personal electric vehicles through changes to car user designations

- Provide solar powered electric charging points

#### Paperless Meetings/Offices & Reduced Paper Use

- Phase out use of paper agendas
- Have paper free offices
- Reduce printing
- Reduce leaflet drops

#### Recycling

- Make household recycling easier/increase what can be recycled
- Introduce food waste collections

#### Smarter Working

- Expand agile working/working from home
- Improve options to reduce customer visits

#### Energy & Resources

- Maximise provision of solar panels and use of solar technology
- Reduce use of single use plastics

#### Policy

- Ensure planning policies include carbon neutral and energy efficient homes
- Use Future High Streets/Town Funds to invest in and support green technologies
- Ensure procurement exercises include climate considerations
- Phase out single use plastic
- Provide subsidised use of public transport

#### Awareness Raising

- Raise awareness of actions that the Council is taking
- Host climate change conversation sessions for employees
- Provide a climate change suggestion box on the intranet
- Undertake awareness campaigns

### **ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL – CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION**

In 2019, Ashfield District Council commissioned Nottingham City Council (one of the UK's leading green Councils) to produce a draft Carbon Management Plan for Ashfield. This work included creating an all-important carbon baseline from 2015/16. This baseline is used to measure the Council's progress on carbon reduction thereafter.

Using Ashfield data, Nottingham City Council have analysed the Council's progress, examined the current carbon make up and given suggestions as to how the Council can improve.

The analysis is broken down in to 3 key emission areas which require different courses of action.

- Scope 1 - Direct (Ashfield District Council offices and fleet to provide services)



- Scope 2 – Indirect utilities (purchasing utilities for offices and communal courts)
- Scope 3 – Indirect other (Ashfield District Council investment properties, housing stock, staff commuting, purchased goods/materials)

In parallel with the work undertaken by the Nottingham City Council, Ashfield District Council has an internal working group to discuss actions and initiatives across departments that have the most direct impact on climate change. This includes officers from: Assets & Investments, Place & Well Being, Waste & Environment, Planning, Procurement and Finance.

Work achieved by the internal working group so far includes:

- Staff Commuting Survey
- Waste Management Plan
- Energy Review
- Public Sector Decarbonising Bid
- Flood Protection Measures

Other key initiatives include the move to green electricity across the Council's assets, expanded use of photo voltaic (PV) power generation, biomass boilers, and external wall and general insulation on Council properties.

Of the Council's Scope 1 and 2 emissions (emissions that the Council directly control) the largest emissions are as follows:

- Fleet – 41%
- Gas usage – 39%
- Electric usage – 20%

Of the Council's Scope 3 emissions, whilst there are positives, the fact that the Council has acquired properties through the commercial investment agenda has had a net negative effect.

Overall, Ashfield District Council as an operator has reduced 26% of its scope 3 emissions since 2015/16 (mainly investment in housing stock) but increased emissions by 77% overall due to the purchase of investment/commercial properties.

At this stage (subject to wider consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members) the Council's overarching ambition is as follows:

- Ashfield District Council intends to reach net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030, and Scope 3 emissions will be continually reviewed with the target of reducing net emissions for 2050.*
- Ashfield District Council will work towards reducing net emissions by 14% year on year with a view of achieving net zero by 2050.*
- Ashfield District Council will use its influence and look to work with the wider community to reduce scope 3 emissions, whilst continuing to carry out direct actions to reduce the Council's own Scope 1 & 2 emissions.*

Proposed Strategic Actions Moving Forward:

The following strategic actions are being currently being considered as part of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

- Apply for future funding for all Scope emissions - £2m funding already secured.
- Improve the efficiency of current fleet use and consider share of electric vehicles.
- Increase the availability of electric pool cars.
- Promote more sustainable methods of employee commuting, such as cycle to work schemes, car sharing and electric vehicle charging points.
- Invest in walking and cycling infrastructure and pedestrianising the high street where possible.
- Reduce the total volume of waste generated where possible through greater reuse, and behavioural change campaigns.
- Investigate the potential to increase water reuse, for example through grey water recovery systems to reduce wastewater.
- Flood management and biodiversity.
- Tree planting.
- Support local businesses and promote good sustainable behaviours with a Green Business Scheme.
- Work with and influence community volunteers and local businesses to help with climate change mitigation to encourage an increase in ownership of community open spaces.
- Asset rationalisation and enhancement.
- Internal reviews such as procurement, waste/recycling etc.

## **CASE STUDIES**

As part of a councillor workbook focussing on acting on climate change, the Local Government Association (LGA) have compiled a series of case studies highlighting the work of local authorities across the country towards climate change mitigation.

### Kirklees Council

Kirklees Council is working to ensure all residents can afford to heat their homes. More than 50,000 homes have been improved to-date. Total benefits by 2050 are estimated to be £250 million from an initial investment of £11 million from the council plus £10 million from energy suppliers.

### Devon County Council

Devon County Council have worked in partnership with local authorities to implement a package of measures to improve local resilience in 24 communities, including establishing training volunteer 'Flood Warden' groups.

### Stroud District Council

Stroud District Council is working with local community flood groups, landowners, farmers, and partner organisations to implement a range of measures that will reduce flood risk but also improve water quality and enhance the biodiversity of the streams and brooks in the area.

### Bristol City Council

Bristol is seeking to make trips by bike the natural choice for their increasing number of commuters to tackle congestion and reduce emissions. As part of this initiative, Bristol City Council has committed to:

- Consulting on shared use routes
- Improving legibility in shared use areas to make it clearer to those on bike and foot
- Delivering improved on-street cycle parking
- Ensuring promotion of new infrastructure to employees, schools, and the wider community through new residential developments and a developed network of community groups
- Providing loan bikes, cycle training, and route planning
- Ensuring new cycling infrastructure is included in developments

### Mansfield District Council

'Bee Kind' is campaign that aims to inform residents about the importance of bees on our environment to improve biodiversity in our neighbourhoods. Mansfield District Council have placed 39 planters with wildflowers around the town centre and wider district to help attract wildlife and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

### 'Bee-Friendly' Bus Stops

Plant-topped bus shelters nicknamed 'bee-stops' are to be introduced in the city of Leicester. The living roofs will feature a mixture of pollinator friendly wildflowers and succulent plants, designed to help support Britain's declining bee population. Plans are also in place to fit bus shelters with solar panels and smart lighting to help manage energy use and lower the city's carbon footprint.

## **NET ZERO STRATEGY: BUILD BACK GREENER**

On the 19 October 2021, the *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener* policy paper was published by Government. The strategy sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet a net zero target by 2050.

The Net Zero Strategy includes:

- The Government's decarbonisation pathways to net zero by 2050, including illustrative scenarios
- Policies and proposals to reduce emissions for each sector
- Cross-cutting action to support the transition

A section within the strategy that may be of particular interest to the Panel is the 'Supporting the Transition with Cross-cutting Action'.

Key policies outlined within this section are:

- Deliver at least £1.5 billion of funding to support net zero innovation projects.
- Use the UK Infrastructure Bank to crowd in private finance, support more than £40 billion of investment, and pull through low carbon technologies and sectors to maturity and scale.
- Introduce a new Sustainability Disclosures Regime, including mandatory climate related financial disclosures and a UK green taxonomy.
- Reform the skills system so that training providers, employers, and learners are incentivised and equipped to play their part in delivering the transition to net zero.

- Publish an annual progress update against a set of key indicators for achieving climate goals.

It continues with:

*“We will also take a place-based approach to net zero, working with local government to ensure that all local areas have the capability and capacity for net zero delivery as we level up the country”.<sup>1</sup>*

The Strategy sets out that the Government will be embedding climate considerations into policy and spending decisions, increasing the transparency of progress against climate goals, and providing funding to ambitious emissions reductions in schools and hospitals. Furthermore, it is stated that the Government will play a pivotal role in catalysing the role of local government in the transition, by financing strategic infrastructure projects led by local authorities, and providing advice and expertise in order to strengthen the pipeline of investable projects.

Perhaps the section the Panel will have the most interest in is titled *Local Climate Action*. This section goes into more detail on how the Government will be supporting decarbonisation and regeneration in local areas and communities. The following key commitments have been outlined in this section:

- Set clearer expectations on how central and local government interact in the delivery of net zero.
- Build on existing engagement with local actors by establishing a Local Net Zero Forum to bring together national and local government senior officials on a regular basis to discuss policy and delivery options on net zero.
- Continue the Local Net Zero Programme to support all local areas with their capability and capacity to meet net zero. This includes provisions to:
  - Continue with Local Net Zero Hubs to support all areas of England to reach net zero, including those lacking capacity and capability, or those facing unique challenges.
  - Promote best practice and support local authorities to develop net zero projects that can attract commercial investment.
  - Increase knowledge sharing to demonstrate and share successful net zero system solutions.

Along with the Strategy, the Government has also published a response to the 2021 Committee on Climate Change progress report.

The full 368-page *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener* can be viewed through the following link: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1026655/net-zero-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1026655/net-zero-strategy.pdf).

### Climate Change Committee: 2021 Progress Report to Parliament

The Climate Change Committee is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. The purpose of the Committee is to advise the UK and devolved governments on

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*, October 2021.

emissions targets and to report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.<sup>2</sup>

As part of the 2021 Progress Report, the Climate Change Committee published some key messages, stating that:

*“The Government has made historic climate promises in the past year, for which it deserves credit. However, it has been too slow to follow these with delivery. This defining year for the UK’s climate credentials have been marred by uncertainty and delay to a host of new climate strategies. Those that have emerged have too often missed the mark. With every month of inaction, it is harder for the UK to get on track.”<sup>3</sup>*

Progress on Net Zero:

- Lockdown measures led to a record decrease in UK emissions in 2020 of 13% from the previous year. Sustained reductions in emissions require sustained Government leadership, underpinned by a strong Net Zero Strategy.
  - A Net Zero Test would ensure that all Government policy, including planning decisions, is compatible with UK climate targets.
  - An ambitious Heat and Buildings Strategy, that works for consumers, is urgently needed.
  - Delayed plans on surface transport, aviation, hydrogen, biomass, and food must be delivered.
  - Plans for the power sector, industrial decarbonisation, the North Sea, peat, and energy from waste must be strengthened.
  - The big cross-cutting challenges of public engagement, fair funding, and local delivery must be tackled.

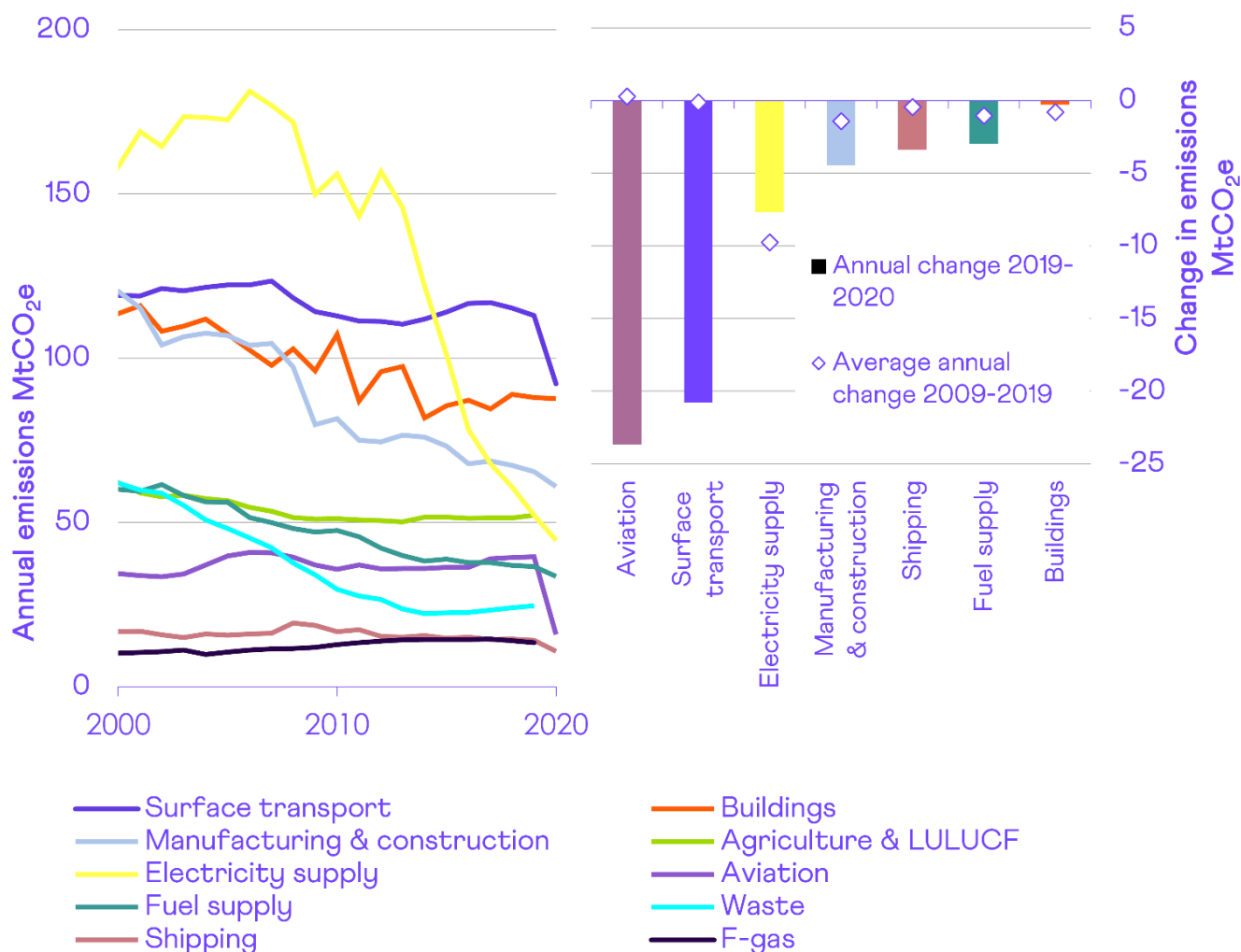
The Climate Change Committee also published the below figure detailing changes in UK emissions by sector:

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<sup>2</sup> Climate Change Committee, *About the Climate Change Committee*, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Climate Change Committee, *2021 Progress Report to Parliament*, 2021.

# Figure 1 Changes in UK emissions by sector



Source: BEIS (2021) 2020 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Provisional Figures.

Notes: LULUCF = Land use, land-use change and forestry. Estimates of emissions for sectors with large proportions of non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are not shown on the right-hand chart. Final estimates of 2020 emissions in these sectors will be published in early 2022. The sectoral emissions for aviation and shipping include the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions, and are CCC estimates.

## Progress on Adaptation in England:

- Only five of 34 sectors assessed have shown notable progress in the past two years, and no sector is yet scoring highly in lowering its level of risk. The Climate Change Committee have provided 50 recommendations, including:
  - Restore 100% of upland peat by 2045, including through a ban on rotational burning
  - Bring forward proposed plans to address overheating risk in homes through Building Regulations.

- Make the Government's next round of Adaptation Reporting mandatory for all infrastructure sectors.
- Build a strong emergency resilience capability for the UK against climate shocks, learning from the COVID-19 response.
- Implement a public engagement programme on climate change adaptation.

Full details of the recommendations made by the Climate Change Committee can be viewed through the following link: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCC-Joint-Recommendations-2021-Report-to-Parliament.pdf>.

In response to the report and recommendations made by the Climate Change Committee, *Government Response to Climate Change Committee* was published on 19 October 2021 along with the Net Zero Strategy. The response can be viewed through the following link: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1026734/government-response-ccc-progress-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1026734/government-response-ccc-progress-report.pdf).

## **DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

### Climate Change Strategy

As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to climate change mitigation, a Climate Change Strategy has been developed.

As stated within the draft:

*"The Climate Change Strategy sets out a roadmap for reducing carbon emissions across Ashfield District Council's operations and services. The Council provides a wide range of services to its local residents across the District and is one of the largest employers in the area. These services include Housing, Parks and Green Spaces, Waste and Environmental Services, Environmental Health, and Planning and Economic Regeneration. Therefore, the Council is well placed to have a positive impact on climate change in the area, which can be achieved through:*

- *Establishing and understanding current emissions (carbon baseline)*
- *Setting carbon reduction targets*
- *Setting out key actions to reduce carbon emissions (Carbon Management Plan)*
- *Gathering and maintaining high quality emissions data and monitoring improvements over time*
- *Supporting decarbonisation of the District*

*The Strategy will be reviewed annually and/or when significant change occurs in order to take consideration of emerging renewable technologies, changes to Government targets, legislation, and funding opportunities, along with taking advantage of existing and emerging opportunities and developments in the energy market."*

The draft Strategy goes on to detail policy context, Ashfield District Council's Emissions and Carbon Footprint, as well as a roadmap for reducing carbon emissions. Furthermore, the draft Strategy sets out key delivery themes as follows:

- Transport
- Housing

- Energy
- Waste
- Procured Goods and Services
- Investments
- Climate Resilience and Biodiversity
- Partnership and Collaboration

Scrutiny Panel B Members have had the opportunity to examine the Strategy in draft stage and provide feedback on the contents within the document.

### Climate Change Action Plan

Alongside development of the Climate Change Strategy, a Climate Change Action Plan has been established. The Action Plan itemises individual actions under priority themes identified by the Council, which are:

- Delivery
- Fleet Use
- Gas and Electricity Consumption
- Fugitive Emissions
- Procurement of Goods, Services, and Capital Goods
- Waste Generated in Operations
- Business Travel
- Employee Commuting
- Sustainable Transport in the District
- Investments
- Engagement
- Raising Awareness
- Area Wide Actions
- Funding and Reporting Procedures
- Additional Actions

Each action within the Plan is tagged as high, medium, or low priority with a timeframe of short, medium, or long term. The draft Climate Change Action Plan is intended to be implemented as a working document with detailed actions, priorities, and timeframes being reviewed regularly.

All service areas within the Council need to contribute towards the delivery of the Plan, and also need to take responsibility for actions listed and lead on implementation. Actions set out within the Plan need to be SMART: simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound.

### **INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS**

Throughout this review, Scrutiny Panel B Members have utilised informal working groups to enable more efficient and effective evidence gathering.

#### January 2021

The first informal working group of the review was held on 20 January with attendance from Members and both the Assistant Director of Assets and Investment and Strategic Asset Manager.

The Assistant Director - Assets and Investment provided Members with a comprehensive update regarding the ongoing work of the Council and the commitment to mitigate climate change.



Members were informed that effective collaborative work is imperative and a key priority in climate change mitigation. A Climate Change Officers Working Group has been established, with representation from all sections of the Council, to enable Officers to effectively disseminate ideas and work in the same direction. The Council has also been working in partnership with the Lead Officers Energy Group, the Midlands Energy Hub, and the Local Enterprise partnership.

Work has been undertaken, in collaboration with partners, to have a fuller understanding of the Council's climate position. This includes:

- Energy audits
- Energy data analysis
- Carbon baseline
- Employee commuting survey
- Carbon footprint exercise

Work is being undertaken to establish the Council's carbon baseline, which includes electricity, gas, water, and fuel usage, as well as the carbon cost of purchasing. This carbon baseline will allow the Council to plot future reductions more decisively in emissions.

The Council is also working to explore all available funding streams; however, Members were informed that often potential funding streams have difficult deadlines and hard to deliver projects. Nevertheless, opportunities will continue to be explored and pursued where appropriate.

Members also discussed the difficulty in achieving the right balance in procurement exercises. Often, superior green credentials will come at a higher cost – is that something the Council can afford to do?

Further discussions were held on:

- Awareness campaigns
- Grant application processes
- Resourcing
- Housing stock conditions/developing housing strategy
- Training requirements
- Towns Fund
- Leisure centre impact on emissions

Overall, the working group proved extremely useful at this exploratory stage of the review, and the insight provided by the Assistant Director of Assets and Investment and Strategic Asset Manager will enable the Panel to focus on the key issues where scrutiny can have the most positive impact.

#### October 2021

A further informal working group was held on 5 October 2021 with attendance from the Assistant Director – Assets and Investments and the Strategic Asset Manager. Members of the working group took the opportunity to discuss the following:

- Climate change priorities for the Council
- Leading by example
- Financial challenges of change
- Climate change priorities for the District
- Small steps/long term results

- Environmental impacts

Members agreed to consider the principles of the draft Climate Change Strategy at the next formal meeting of the Panel. In addition, consideration should also be given to how the Council can utilise its position as a Community Leader to continue to discuss climate change issues, carbon footprint reductions and long-term solutions.

### February 2022

A final informal working group took place on 4 February 2022 with attendance from the Strategic Asset Manager. Members had the opportunity to examine the developing Climate Change Action Plan, with the Strategic Asset Manager taking the time to explain the actions detailed within.

Members were made aware that the Climate Change Action Plan would be a working document subject to change over time, and that it was not intended for the Action Plan to be made available for the public, it will be an internal document to guide Officers. Furthermore, the draft Plan was yet to be fully costed.

The Strategic Asset Manager drew Members' attention to some key actions within the developing plan for discussion. These included:

- Fleet review
- Business Travel
- Employee Commuting
- Cost effective use of buildings
- Investments
- Engagement
- Raising awareness
- Area wide actions
- Funding Streams
- Recruitment

Following lengthy discussions, Members agreed that a draft final report should be prepared for Members to consider at the next formal meeting of Scrutiny Panel B. The final report would include details of all information considered over the course of the review, along with a set of formulated recommendations for Cabinet to consider for approval and implementation.

## **RECOMMENDATION THEMES**

As part of the final report to be submitted to Cabinet, Panel Members need to formulate and agree a set of recommendations.

Please see below some of the key themes discussed by Members that could assist the Panel with formulating final recommendations:

- support the approval and implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- an increase in the provision of electric charging points around the District
- a commitment towards the expansion of a greener transport fleet
- continued investment in renewable technologies

- ensuring all contractors commissioned by the Council have proven green credentials
- a requirement to replace any felled trees within the District as a result of planning re-development
- commit to planting wildlife verges in appropriate places and to consider bee sanctuaries through partnerships/initiatives
- to continue to support and promote energy saving initiatives to the residents of Ashfield
- to consider a possible group/individual reward scheme for successful climate change mitigation projects within the District
- continuing to work with schools to educate children and students on climate change and reduction initiatives
- a commitment towards involving local businesses in the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to gain support and buy in to collectively commit to the 2030 target
- consider 'community garden' projects for older residents to involve communities in increasing, maintaining, and taking pride in green spaces across Ashfield

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan:**

'Cleaner and Greener' is one of the five key priorities set out within Ashfield District Council's Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023. The vision for 'Cleaner and Greener' is set out:

*"By 2023, we will create a cleaner and greener Ashfield, enabling communities and businesses to thrive in a clean and tidy district, minimising waste, and recycling more."*

*Ashfield is pro-active in encouraging more recycling, tackling environmental crime, and finding innovative ways of delivering services that are responsive to the needs of our residents, visitors, and businesses.*

*By working with our communities and businesses, the Council is better able to understand what matters and to shape services to help people enjoy living, visiting, and working in Ashfield."*

### **Legal:**

There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

### **Finance:**

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	

General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

### **Risk:**

Any risks and mitigation considered over the course of this review will be presented in a final report to Cabinet along with the Panel's recommendations.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
None at this stage.	None at this stage.

### **Human Resources:**

There are no direct HR implications resulting from the recommendations within this report.

### **Environmental/Sustainability**

Environmental and sustainability implications are central to the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation. Members will be examining Council policies and action plans relating to climate change and the 'Cleaner and Greener' agenda.

### **Equalities:**

There are no equalities implications resulting from this report.

### **Other Implications:**

There are no other implications resulting from this report.

### **Reason(s) for Urgency**

None.

### **Reason(s) for Exemption**

None.

### **Background Papers**

None.

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