

Report To:	SCRUTINY PANEL B	Date:	22 JULY 2021
Heading:	SCRUTINY REVIEW: CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION		
Portfolio Holder:	NOT APPLICABLE		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Scrutiny Panel B with further information to progress the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation. Specifically, this report includes brief case study examples of mitigation efforts undertaken by other local authorities, further guidance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Local Government Association for Councillors scrutinising climate change mitigation, and an update on efforts Ashfield District Council are making.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to;

- Note and comment on the strategic update regarding Ashfield District Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- Discuss the examples of best practice identified in the case studies provided
- Consider work undertaken thus far and options available to further assist in climate mitigation
- Identify next steps including officers or external witnesses required, further information and any site visits.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Climate Change Mitigation was added as a topic for review to the scrutiny work programme 2020/2021 by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2020. Following the annual refresh of the scrutiny work programme in June 2021, Members approved the topic for further inclusion on the 2021/2022 scrutiny work programme.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered. Any alternative options considered will be included within the final report presented to Cabinet at the conclusion of the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation.

Detailed Information

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:

- a. 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.*
- b. Ashfield District Council will work towards reducing net emissions by 14% year on year with a view of achieving net zero by 2050.*
- c. 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.

NEXT STEPS

At the 29 June 2021 meeting of Cabinet, the Executive were presented with a *Corporate Plan Refresh and Year End Position* report. The following was included within the report:

“The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is nearing completion. The Council set up an Officer Working Group in relation to Climate Change, which is now well established, bringing together key officers from different departments to work collaboratively to reduce carbon emissions across its activities and the wider community through policy and promotion. This includes considering investment in ‘green’ projects as part of the commercial investment strategy. The Council is also working with Nottingham City Council in the development of the strategy and action plan, including options to reduce energy usage and carbon emissions across its built assets, due to be completed in early 2021/2022.”

As stated, the Council’s developing Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is nearing completion. As a next step, Scrutiny Panel B should have sight of the documents to greater understand the Council’s tangible actions planned for climate change mitigation.

An additional next step Members may wish to undertake is to more closely examine the proposed climate mitigation actions set out by the Council, as detailed above. This could lead to questions such as:

- How is the efficiency of the Council’s fleet planned to be improved?
- What progress has been made regarding the use of electric vehicles?
- How does the Council plan to invest in walking and cycling infrastructure, and pedestrianising high street?
- What is the progress of internal reviews?
- How is the Council working with and influencing community volunteers and local businesses regarding climate change mitigation?
- What funding opportunities are available to the Council?

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 at this stage of the review. Any legal implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

Finance:

There are no financial implications at this stage of the review. Any financial implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None at this stage of the review.
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.

Risk	Mitigation
Climate change is not only a global risk but also a major local issue. Ashfield District Council recognised this in its Motion to Council on the 25 July 2019.	Development of a working Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, identifying initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Human Resources:

There are no HR implications at this stage of the review. Any HR implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final 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 at this stage of the review. Any equalities implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications at this stage of the review. Any other implications identified involving any recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the end of the review will be appropriately addressed in the final report.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

- Local Government Association, *A councillor's workbook on acting on climate change*, October 2017.

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