

Report To:	SCRUTINY PANEL B
Date:	28 OCTOBER 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 Members with further information to progress the Scrutiny Review: Climate Change Mitigation. This includes details of the working group held in October, the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy/Action Plan and the emerging Net Zero Strategy set out by the Government.

Recommendation(s)

Scrutiny Panel B Members are recommended to:

- Consider the implications of the recently published *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener* policy paper on Ashfield District Council's commitment to climate change mitigation.
- Examine the draft Climate Change Strategy and consider any comments and/or recommendations to be made regarding it.
- Discuss any potential recommendations with a view of presenting a final report to Cabinet in the New Year.

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

INFORMAL WORKING GROUP

The Panel held an informal working group 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 with officers:

- 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.

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”.¹

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.

The *Local Climate Action* section is appended to this report as Appendix A for Panel Member consideration.

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.

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

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

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 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.²

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.”³

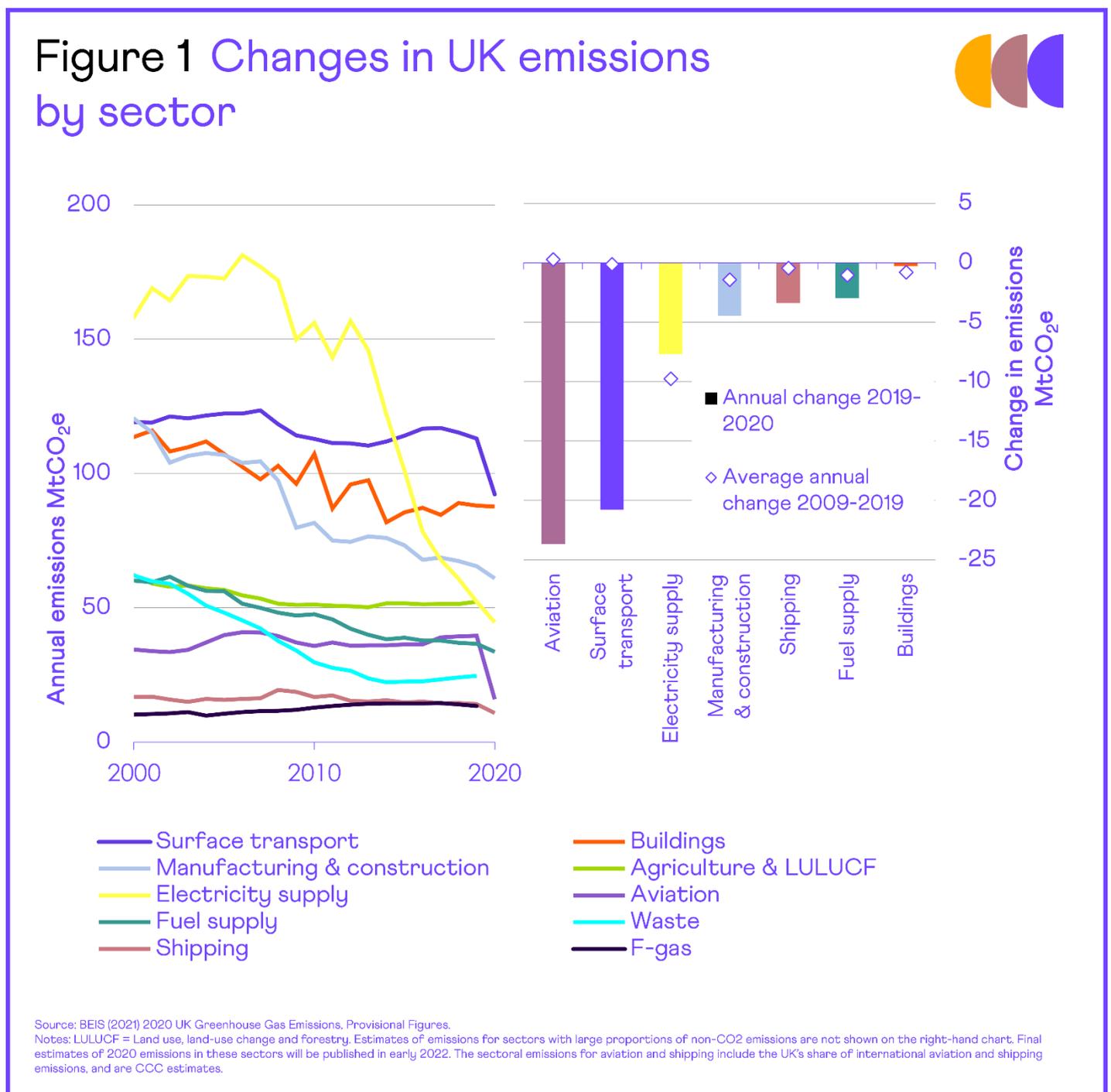
Progress on Net Zero:

- 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.

² Climate Change Committee, *About the Climate Change Committee*, 2021.

³ Climate Change Committee, *2021 Progress Report to Parliament*, 2021.

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



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.

DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

As has been discussed throughout this review, the Council has been working to develop a Climate Change Strategy, designed to underpin the Council's work towards climate change mitigation and set out how it will work with key stakeholders to achieve this.

Panel Members are asked to read the draft strategy and discuss the key priorities set out within.

The draft Climate Change Strategy is attached to this report as Appendix B.

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	
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 just a global issue, it is a major local issue for the Council to contend with.	Development of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, identifying initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change and working strategically with key partners.

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 resulting from this report.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None.

Report Author and Contact Officer

Shane Wright
Scrutiny Research Officer
shane.wright@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457318