



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Council

26 September 2019

Report of: Cllr Dr Peter Moseley
Cabinet Member for Commercial & Operations



Climate Emergency

Public understanding and awareness of the causes and effects of climate change has increased significantly over the last few years. In response, in May 2019 the UK parliament was the first in the world to declare a 'climate and environment emergency'. This followed growing pressure after the Committee on Climate Change's report on net-zero carbon emissions, weeks of protests about perceived government inaction and political meetings with climate figurehead Greta Thunberg. Television documentaries, particularly David Attenborough's 'Blue Planet' and 'Planet Earth' on the BBC, and 'Our Planet' on Netflix have also helped to highlight climate change and increase public interest.

This report sets out South Kesteven District Council's (SKDC) declaration of a 'climate emergency' and ambition to reduce its carbon footprint between now and 2030 and become net-zero carbon by 2050.

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
Administrative	Administrative	All Wards

Reviewed by:	Lee Sirdifield, Strategic Director – Transformation & Change	29 August 2019
Approved by:	Gary Smith, Strategic Director – Commercial & Operations	30 August 2019
Signed off by:	Cllr Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial & Operations	30 August 2019

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

Cabinet recommends to Council that:

1. South Kesteven District Council declares a 'climate emergency'.
2. In response to this, that Council:
 - a. Confirms the political ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by 2030 and to become net-zero carbon by 2050. This encompasses the Council's wholly owned companies.
 - b. Recognises the importance of the much more far-reaching impact of the Council's community leadership role to reduce South Kesteven's carbon footprint (eg residents, businesses, other public sector organisations, visitors/commuters, etc).
 - c. Requests the Interim Chief Executive to establish a 'Climate Change Action' task and finish group to:
 - i. identify how the Council's activities can work towards being net-zero carbon;
 - ii. consider the latest climate science and expert advice on solutions;
 - iii. consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities;
 - iv. establish any budgetary implications; and
 - v. liaise with the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and report initial findings to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in spring 2020.
 - d. Allocate up to £50,000 to enable external advice and the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer with the agreement of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to drive forward the Council's ambition to be net-zero carbon, as supported by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's positive, proactive and ambitious goals to contribute to the global efforts to tackle climate change. The 'climate emergency' declaration and commitments represent a major milestone which have far-reaching implications across the breadth of services and activities.
- 1.2 Council is asked to approve the recommendations which pledge to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by 2030 and to become net-zero carbon by 2050. Whilst significant carbon emission reductions will be necessary, carbon off-setting will be a critical element of achieving net-zero carbon.
- 1.3 This paper provides both the climate change international context and the impact of climate change on Council services. It also sets out the proposed response to climate change and reaching net-zero carbon for the organisation. The report goes on to cover the likely service impact and key implications of delivering net-zero carbon across the Council's activities.
- 1.4 It is recognised that there will be significant challenges to achieve the ambitious net-zero carbon commitment but there are, similarly, risks of not doing so. This report seeks to confirm the Council aspirations and sets out an approach to develop a specific climate change action plan and to build a wider community movement for change.

2 Climate Change Context

- 2.1 There is no precise or accepted international definition of a 'climate emergency' but it is generally taken to mean immediate action and developing policy to mitigate climate change beyond current government targets and international agreements.
- 2.2 **Paris Climate Change Agreement** – On the 12 December 2015, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. The Paris Agreement for the first time brought all nations into collective agreement on the science and commitment to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. It came into force on 4 November 2016 after ratification by 55 countries that account for at least 55% of global emissions. The UK signed it on 18 December 2016. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to keep the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degree Celsius.
- 2.3 **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report** – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body comprising of thousands of international scientists who provide governments with regular reports on the best available science to support the development of climate policies. Its Special Report 'Global Warming of 1.5 degree Celsius' published in October 2018 (see Appendix One) was the first in a series of reports in response to the Paris Climate Agreement. It outlined that to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a rapid and unprecedented decarbonisation of our entire economy and society would be required before 2030. It stated that:

“Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to 2 degrees Celsius would reduce challenging impacts on ecosystems, human health and well-being” ... “Avoiding overshoot and reliance on future large scale deployment of carbon dioxide removal can only be achieved if global CO2 emissions start to decline well before 2030”.

2.4 **Committee on Climate Change Report** – The government asked its advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to reassess the UK’s long-term emissions targets. Its report reviewed the work of the IPCC and others, and was published in May 2019. It suggested a national net-zero emissions target by 2050 and stated:

“A net-zero target for 2050 will deliver on the commitment that the UK made by signing the Paris Agreement. It is achievable with known technologies, alongside improvements in people’s lives, and within the expected economic cost that Parliament accepted when it legislated the existing 2050 target for an 80% reduction from 1990. However, this is only possible if clear, stable and well-designed policies to reduce emissions further are introduced across the economy without delay. Current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets”.

2.5 The report stated that if other countries followed the UK there was a 50/50 chance of staying below the recommended 1.5 degree Celsius temperature rise by 2100 which was considered a dangerous tipping point for changes to the world’s climate.

2.6 **Government response to CCC Report** – On the 27 June 2019 the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. The target will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels.

2.7 **Councils’ responses** – Across the East Midlands local authorities have taken an interest, with a number declaring a climate emergency (including the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District Council, Leicestershire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Melton Borough Council, Peterborough City Council, Newark & Sherwood District Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Kettering Borough Council). Lincolnshire County Council has increased its emissions reduction target but has stopped short of declaring an emergency. Nationally over 100 Councils have declared a climate emergency.

3 **Impacts of Climate Change on Council Services**

3.1 Climate change is expected to increase the frequency of extreme weather events and mean higher overall temperatures which will affect the health, wellbeing and safety of residents. This will also – and is already beginning to – have a direct impact across the range of Council services:

- **Heat waves:** Extended periods of hotter than average temperatures in the summer means that normal hours of operation will need to be revisited. For instance, shift patterns being changed for staff who operate outside to avoid working during the middle of the day when the high surface temperature and the ultraviolet radiation peaks.
- **Flooding:** Increased instances of flooding will mean some areas will not be accessible for all types of service and the wider impact on flooded households will require significant additional support/services from the Council and other partners.

- **Snow:** Extreme isolated events with the snow and ice being heavier and longer lasting than the last few decades will mean that some services will need to be suspended for safety reasons. This may create a service pressure if a backlog accrues which needs to be dealt with when the snow and ice recedes.

4 South Kesteven District Council Response

- 4.1 This report proposes that the Council declares a 'climate emergency' and sets out the political ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by 2030 and to become net-zero carbon by 2050 (this encompasses the Council's wholly owned companies).
- 4.2 Net-zero carbon means balancing carbon dioxide emissions with the removal/sequestering of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, to make up for carbon dioxide emissions elsewhere. Reaching net-zero carbon relies on a combination of reducing carbon emissions and carbon off-setting.
- 4.3 Reducing the organisation's carbon footprint by 2030 and becoming net-zero carbon by 2050 is a substantial undertaking which will have profound implications for the Council and its services. It will involve a radical service redesign in many instances. Achieving net-zero carbon will require a step-change in carbon efficiency, closed-loop supply chains and environmental sustainability. It will affect all aspects of the Council's operation, fuel/energy use, buildings, supply chain and contractors. It is likely that the Council would need to commit to embracing all relevant technologies and consider the impact on existing strategies and plans.
- 4.4 Achieving net-zero carbon will require dedicated focus to identify options for how this could best be delivered to both radically reduce the Council's carbon footprint and engage in carbon off-setting initiatives. Carbon off-setting schemes enable organisations and individuals to invest in environmental initiatives around the world to balance their own carbon footprint. These initiatives are often based in developing countries and usually are designed to reduce future emissions. Carbon off-setting initiatives can also be developed locally. Carbon off-setting projects can involve renewable energy, methane collection/combustion, energy efficiency, reforestation and fuel switching. The Council will seek to work with a network of partners to develop or buy-in to the most appropriate mix of carbon off-setting initiatives.
- 4.5 There will be significant financial implications to deliver net-zero carbon that will need to be properly assessed and understood, although there will also be cost to save investments which will provide longer-term savings. At this stage, there is no way to accurately calculate the full financial cost. For this reason, it is proposed that a 'Climate Change Action' task and finish group is established to identify how the Council's activities can work towards being net-zero carbon; consider the latest climate science and expert advice on solutions; consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities; and establish any budgetary implications.
- 4.6 In the meantime, it is proposed that up to £50,000 is allocated to enable external advice and the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer straight away to drive forward the Council's ambition to be net-zero carbon. Recurring funds for this post will be built in to the 2020/21 budget preparation and any additional budgetary requirements would be assessed by the 'Climate Change Action' task and finish group.

- 4.7 Alongside taking action to contribute to the reduction in the trajectory and pace of climate change, the Council will also increasingly need to consider climate change adaptations to mitigate the negative impacts or service disruption related to climate change.
- 4.8 Whilst the Council has an important role to play to reduce its carbon footprint, it is important to recognise the vast majority of carbon emissions from South Kesteven are generated by residents, businesses, other public sector organisations and visitors/commuters. The Council has both a responsibility and opportunity to provide community leadership to sign others up to take action to reduce their carbon footprint and to create a real movement for change.

5 Carbon Reduction – Council Service Impact & Key Implications

5.1 Growth – Service Impact & Key Implications

- 5.2 In instances where the Council is undertaking growth and development schemes it will embed sustainability and particularly the commitment to reduce the carbon footprint of the organisation at the heart of its required outcomes and will ensure that the design, procurement and build maximises the opportunity to deliver a positive impact. This will include both encouraging the use of modern, carbon reducing technologies within developments and also ensuring that buildings are future proofed by ensuring that design enables retrofitting of new technologies over the life time of buildings.
- 5.3 The Council will undertake robust business cases that fully consider the environmental impact of all new developments and major refurbishment projects, which will include leisure centres, new housing development (both council houses and other houses), works to the Council’s own buildings and any other development or regeneration that the Council is involved in.
- 5.4 As part of this, consideration will be given to further investment in existing buildings and offices to make them more environmentally smart, efficient and sustainable (eg automatic LED lighting, insulation, fuel sources, water use).
- 5.5 **Housing/HRA table of planned improvements:**

Existing Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loft insulation programme has been ongoing for the last 3 years and will be completed in 2019/20 • As needed old boilers have been replaced by more energy efficient gas boilers (programme has been running for the last 5 years). • From 2025- shift to Electric Boilers • Replace solid fuel heating with Electric heating powered by Solar Panels. By 2030. • Retrofit Solar Panels to all roofs where applicable. • Renew old UPVC windows.
New Housing: HRA/ Gravitas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New build, they are built to lifetime homes standards. • All new builds to at least sustainable code 3 from 2020 • Include ground Source Heating from 2020 where possible. • Include air source heating from 2020 where possible. • Include Solar Panels where possible • Install electric car charging point to all properties with side parking from 2021.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include passive housing into design for new housing from 2030. • Fabric First approach from 2025. • Maximise MMC opportunities for new construction from 2020. |
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5.6 Assessments will be undertaken on costs of housing improvements works. In regard to new build housing, an increase in construction costs will be assumed at 15-20% above current per unit costs which will be factored in to capital budgets for 2021/22 onwards.

5.7 **Commercial & Operations – Service Impact & Key Implications**

5.8 The main carbon usage within Street Scene is in fuel for the fleet, particularly the waste collection vehicles. There are emerging technical innovations which significantly reduce carbon emissions but these are currently expensive and have service limitations.

5.9 With the introduction of food waste collections and the subsequent increase in the number of anaerobic digester (AD) plants, it is possible that the biogas produced from these plants can be used in the future to fuel the waste collection, and other, vehicles. This has the potential to be a locally sourced, carbon friendly and 100% renewable energy source. The supply chain of the fuel would also be neutral as the vehicles would refuel when they went to the AD plant to tip food waste. This would involve the purchase of new vehicles that could run on the biogas.

5.10 Corporate Operations covers a wide range of functions which are high users of energy. This includes buildings such as the four leisure centres in the District and also Grantham’s crematorium. Both services are currently managed by external providers.

5.11 Leisure centres are high users of both water and electricity/oil and whilst there are energy saving measures on the sites (Combined Heat and Power Pumps and photovoltaic/solar panels) there is far more to be done to reduce the carbon footprint. The current leisure management contract expires in January 2021 and this brings the opportunity for negotiating with new providers to agree monitoring arrangements for water and energy use and set reduction targets, as well as stipulating requirements for recycling and sustainable building management. In addition, the Council’s current commitment to building/refurbishment of the leisure centres will bring the opportunity for schemes to incorporate energy efficiency into the design.

5.12 Other areas where progress is already being made to reduce the carbon footprint is the programme to deploy energy efficient LED lanterns across the Council’s street lights, the introduction of two SKDC electric pool cars and the work to install electric vehicle charging points in Council car parks in each of the four towns.

5.13 **Transformation & Change – Service Impact & Key Implications**

5.14 The focus of the transformation and change initiatives will need to consider the requirements to become carbon neutral. This covers the way services are designed to enable more environmentally friendly customer access channels and delivery mechanisms as well as the way the organisation utilises and deploys corporate resources.

5.15 There will need to be a continued drive towards flexibility in working practices, reducing the need for officers and customers to come into Council buildings, as well as reducing the requirement to travel to external meetings.

- 5.16 Further investment in future technologies will be needed, along with training and development to enable the organisation to adopt the skills and operate in a more carbon friendly manner.
- 5.17 The design of services will need to continue to consider carbon impacts. Opportunities to reduce the use of materials (e.g. paper, fuel etc) will need to be considered as well as where they are sourced from to reduce our overall carbon impact. There will be some challenges faced by the authority if national legislation does not permit services to be remodelled to a degree where they are carbon neutral.
- 5.18 **Procurement & Supply Chain – Impact & Key Implications**
- 5.19 The Council will seek to influence the providers of external services and the Council's wider supply chain of goods and services to, as far as practicable, reduce their carbon footprint. Achieving net-zero carbon through the wider provider and supply chain helps to multiply the beneficial effect of the Council's commitment and efforts.
- 5.20 Local Authorities are legally bound by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 for procurement over specified thresholds. This requirement is incorporated into the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Procurement activity below the stated thresholds would be reviewed in the context of the ambition outlined in the report.
- 5.21 Going forward, any specifications above the stated thresholds will need to factor in carbon neutrality where relevant to ensure any suppliers incorporate this into their response. The Council must have regard to its Value for Money statutory responsibilities when undertaking its procurement activities so full market engagement would still need to be undertaken to ensure this responsibility is met.

6 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview & Scrutiny

- 6.1 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee have taken an early lead on climate change within the Council and agreed on the 18 June 2019 to undertake some targeted work on climate change with the expected focus on:
- 1. Carbon reduction**
 - 2. Carbon off-setting**
 - 3. Use of technology**
- 6.2 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to hold a series of informal workshops to enable information gathering; Members to begin to explore how the Council might approach climate change in terms of taking action and implementing policies; and Members to consider priorities and proposed next steps. The first of these workshops was held on the 30 July 2019.
- 6.3 On the 17 September 2019 the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the proposal to allocate up to £50,000 to enable external advice and the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer straight away to drive forward the Council's ambition to be net-zero carbon.
- 6.4 Should the recommendation in this report to set up a task and finish group be approved they would liaise with and report back to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7 Available Options Considered

- 7.1 The Council could decide to take no action but it is proposed that a tipping point has been reached where inaction is no longer tenable. Alternatively, the organisation could take more aggressive action – in line with some councils – and declare that the Authority will be net-zero carbon by 2030, however, without significantly more work it is not possible to accurately gauge the practicalities, implications and costs of this commitment.

8 Preferred Option

- 8.1 It is proposed that South Kesteven District Council declares a ‘climate emergency’ and confirm the Political ambition to reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint by 2030 and to become net-zero carbon by 2050 (encompasses SKDC’s wholly owned companies). This report also sets out the proposed next steps to develop the Council’s approach to climate change and to assess the financial and other implications.

9 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)

- 9.1 The recommendations seek to strike the right balance to recognise the climate emergency and setting out practical steps to develop the Council’s approach to climate change and to ensure Members understand the implications.

10 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision

- 10.1 Subject to approval, a ‘Climate Change Action’ task and finish group will be established. The group will be tasked to identify how the Council’s activities can work towards being net-zero carbon, consider appropriate climate change adaptations and establish any immediate budgetary implications. The task and finish group will liaise with the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and report on initial findings to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Spring 2020.
- 10.2 This will provide a strong platform for the Council’s wider community leadership role to promote carbon reduction by residents, businesses, other public sector organisations and visitors/commuters.

11 Financial Implications

- 11.1 The report is recommending an allocation of up to £50,000 to be made available to begin the necessary activities. As this is not currently budgeted, a one-off allocation from the Local Priorities Reserve will need to be made. This will be subject to Council approval. As budget preparatory work for 2020/21 and the two years thereafter is underway, the ambition set out in this report will need to be incorporated into budgetary plans from both a capital and revenue perspective, where relevant.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Director of Finance

12 Legal and Governance Implications

- 12.1 There are no specific legal or governance implications at this stage. However, this may change if, as a consequence of declaring a climate emergency, the Council seeks to implement policies or other such documents. There could be matters arising which must be assessed further and in more detail at that time.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Shelley Hardy, Legal Services

13 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 13.1 There are no specific equality or safeguarding implications at this stage but this will be kept under review and, as the programme develops, analysis of impact will be carried out and used to inform individual projects as relevant.

14 Risk and Mitigation

- 14.1 There are significant risks over the next couple of decades if SKDC does not take appropriate action to reduce and mitigate the impact of climate change. In addition, it is conceivable that central Government may impose carbon tariffs or carbon reduction targets on local authorities as part of the United Kingdom’s carbon commitments; early action will position the Council well if this were to happen.
- 14.2 On the contrary, there are also risks of committing to reaching net-zero carbon within a tighter timeframe before the nature or the implications of the required action is understood or getting too out of kilter with central Government’s plans.

15 Community Safety Implications

- 15.1 There are no specific community safety implications at this stage but this will be kept under review and used to inform the programme of work as it develops.

16 Appendices

- 16.1 **Appendix One:** ‘Half a Degree of Warming Makes A Big Difference: Explaining IPCC’s 1.5°C Special Report’ World Resources Institute’s Infographic.

17 Acknowledgements

- 17.1 This report builds on and borrows from a number of international, national and local council reports and materials.

Report Timeline:	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	Not applicable
	Previously Considered by:	Not applicable
	Final Decision date	26 September 2019

Appendix One: 'Half a Degree of Warming Makes A Big Difference: Explaining IPCC's 1.5°C Special Report' World Resources Institute's Infographic

