



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

## Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 December 2020

**Report of:** Councillor Dr Peter Moseley

Cabinet Member for Commercial  
and Operations



## Emerging Carbon Reduction Plan

This report outlines projects currently being explored to reduce South Kesteven District Council's operational carbon emissions.

### Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
<b>Agility</b>	<b>Non-Key</b>	<b>All Wards</b>

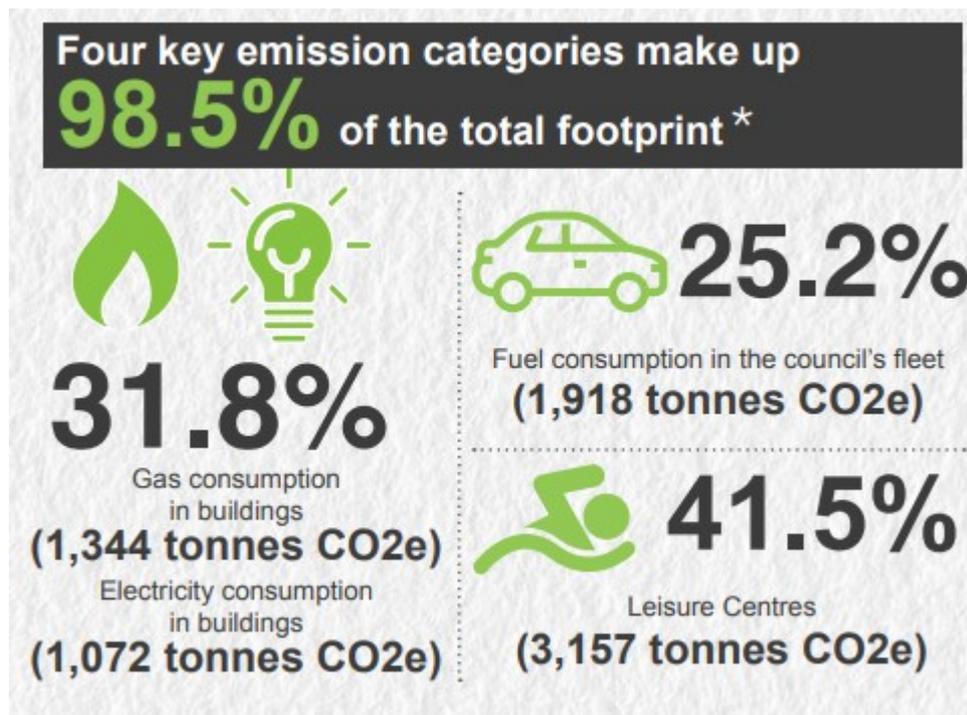
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Zena West, Scrutiny Officer	1 December 2020
<b>Approved by:</b>	Gary Smith, Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations	1 December 2020
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations	4 December 2020

### Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

1. Note the work completed to date to identify opportunities to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.
2. Note the outlined approach listed in paragraph 2.1. for a carbon reduction plan targeting the Council's key carbon emission categories.
3. Provide feedback on any specific areas or carbon reduction initiatives the Committee would like to see prioritised.

# 1 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 South Kesteven District Council made a formal declaration of climate emergency on [26 September 2019](#) with cross party support. Alongside this, the Council confirmed the political ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint to at least 30% by 2030, and to endeavour to become net-zero as soon as viable before 2050.
- 1.2 A report was presented to Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on [21 July 2020](#) (item 61), which verified the carbon emissions generated through Council operations. This was found to be 7,600 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (which accounts for other greenhouse gases converted to their carbon dioxide equivalent), based on the 2018/19 financial year. This total is the carbon baseline against which future emissions reductions will be measured. As a result of considering the report, members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee also recommended that a carbon reduction plan including feasibility assessments for priority carbon reduction projects be developed.
- 1.3 Four key emission categories represent the vast majority of the Council's carbon emissions, as detailed below. It is recommended that these four categories are the focus of a targeted carbon emissions plan. In order to meet its target of reducing carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030, the Council will need to see reductions of 190 tonnes of carbon every year until that date to remain on track.



## 2 Carbon reduction projects in development

- 2.1 Several carbon reduction projects are being pursued, which have the potential to reduce the Council's operational carbon footprint and help to reach the target carbon reduction of at least 30% by 2030:
- Carbon emissions reporting
  - Use of the climate change reserve fund
  - Implementation of the upgrade of streetlights
  - The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

- Review of vehicle fleet efficiency
- 2.2 Ongoing monitoring of the Council's carbon emissions will improve through the development of a quarterly monitoring dashboard. This amalgamates sources of data across Council operations, to regularly track any increase or decrease of emissions against the baseline year. This will enable the Council to identify the impact of any carbon reduction projects which are implemented swiftly, as well as flagging areas in which there may be an increase in carbon emissions. A draft carbon emissions tracker was presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Members on [6 October 2020](#) (item 10).
- 2.3 On [6 October 2020](#) (item 8), Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the £20,000 climate change reserve which had been established in 2020/21 for "climate change action quick wins, small works and carbon efficiencies" be directed to an upgrade of light fittings at the Guildhall Arts Centre, with the remaining fund to be directed towards an acceleration of the streetlighting programme. The project to upgrade lighting in the Guildhall to energy efficient LEDs is progressing this financial year and is expected to deliver an estimated annual carbon saving of 9 tonnes. The Committee also recommended to Cabinet that another climate change reserve fund of at least £20,000 be established in the 2021/22 budget.
- 2.4 The project to upgrade South Kesteven District Council's 3953 streetlights to efficient LEDs, including 303 which are the responsibility of the Housing Revenue Account is progressing with the delivery expected to commence in early 2021 (subject to any ongoing restrictions resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic). It is anticipated that the project will complete within the 12-year delivery plan, and the falling cost of LED components may allow swifter completion. Once all 3896 units are upgraded, it is estimated this will deliver an annual reduction of 181.2 tonnes of carbon.
- 2.5 Gas and electricity used in Council buildings together account for 31.8% of total carbon emissions. In late September 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy launched a £1bn Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme as part of the Chancellor's 'Plan for Jobs' commitment to support the UK's economic recovery from COVID-19. This aims to support skilled jobs in the low carbon and energy efficiency sectors. The scheme provides grant funding for energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation (moving away from gas heating) measures across the public sector, targeted at non-domestic buildings.
- 2.6 Alongside this fund, the Government also launched a Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund, which allocates funding for feasibility works for buildings in order to formulate a full technical business case for energy efficiency works to buildings as the basis of an application to the main Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme fund. The Council submitted a successful application to the Skills fund, allowing it to appoint technical expertise needed to assess four of the Council's own buildings.
- 2.7 The output of this technical assessment and the collation of energy data covering the buildings allowed the Council to submit an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in late November 2020. This covers proposed projects in four of its buildings. The scope of this proposal includes upgrades to heating systems in three of the buildings, provision of solar panels, upgrades to efficient LED lighting, building fabric upgrades and other energy efficiency initiatives. The proposed projects have the potential to deliver a significant reduction to the Council's carbon footprint, estimated as an annual 241 tonne of carbon saving. The Council is awaiting the outcome of the bid application.

- 2.8 Should part or all of the bid to this competitive grant not prove successful, the output of the technical business cases for each of the buildings gives the Council a strong understanding of the necessary measures to reduce the carbon footprint of these buildings, alongside expected financial investment needed and cost as well as carbon savings from implementing the projects. This puts the Council in a good position to take advantage of future grant rounds and other schemes.
- 2.9 Carbon emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet represent around a quarter of total emissions. The Council is pursuing the opportunity to undertake a review of fleet vehicles, as part of a fully funded offer being provided to local authorities. This review will outline opportunities to make efficiency savings in the existing fleet to reduce fuel use, consider opportunities to implement electric vehicles, and make recommendations for the Council's largest vehicles which remain the hardest to decarbonise. It is expected that, by completing this review, the Council will be in a strong position to consider the strategic investment needed to continue service provision whilst reducing carbon emissions from the vehicle fleet.
- 2.10 The four leisure centres in the district represent the largest proportion of the Council's carbon footprint. The establishment of the wholly owned Council company Leisure SK to take up the Leisure Management contract as of 3 January 2021 may offer additional oversight and control of utilities expenditure.
- 2.11 Given current financial pressures facing local government, further opportunities to utilise grant schemes and make use of funded support are being explored, to help deliver projects to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.
- 2.12 Several schemes, which are expected to reduce carbon emissions from the wider district of South Kesteven, are ongoing:
- 2.13 The Emergency Active Travel Fund provides strategic investment for walking and cycling infrastructure across England, to further encourage the increase in active travel seen during the pandemic. Transport has the largest share of total carbon emissions arising from the whole district of South Kesteven at 40%. Given that this fund focuses on day-to-day journeys completed on foot or by bicycle, it is hoped that once implemented, changes will result in a tangible reduction in carbon emissions from vehicles. The Council is in discussion with Lincolnshire County Council around the development of specific infrastructure schemes in the district.
- 2.14 The Green Homes Grant for homeowners and landlords launched in September 2020 and offers match funding for homeowners looking to make energy efficiency improvements to their home. Buildings remain a difficult sector to decarbonise at scale, and district wide domestic energy use represents 26% of total carbon emissions from South Kesteven. It is expected this grant will encourage wider uptake of domestic energy efficiency works throughout England.
- 2.15 At a Lincolnshire local authority level, each of the district councils and the county council are co-ordinating efforts through the Lincolnshire Sustainability Officers group, established this year. The function of the group is to co-ordinate action, share best practice around carbon reduction initiatives, find ways to work in collaboration and reduce duplication of activity across the districts.

### **3 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny**

- 3.1 Since the publication of South Kesteven District Council's carbon footprint, as discussed on [21 July 2020](#) (item 61) the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee have considered both the allocation of the climate change reserve fund and the ongoing work to monitor the Council's carbon emissions on [6 October 2020](#).

### **4 Available Options Considered**

- 4.1 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to recommend widening the remit of carbon reduction projects in the short term to include other elements which contribute to the Council's carbon footprint, for example waste, water or business travel. It is expected that any reductions seen in these areas would contribute a smaller reduction to the Council's total carbon footprint.
- 4.2 Members may wish to recommend pausing proposed projects to reduce carbon footprint. It is expected that this would make carbon reductions necessary to reach the target of at least 30% by 2030 more difficult and urgent in future years.
- 4.3 Members may wish to propose additional or alternative carbon reduction projects to be pursued, instead of or alongside the projects discussed above.

### **5 Preferred Option**

- 5.1 To pursue the outlined carbon reduction projects discussed above, and to seek views from members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any specific areas or carbon reduction initiatives the Committee would like to see prioritised.

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

- 6.1 In order to maintain a path to meet the carbon reduction target of at least 30% by 2030, it is projected that the Council will need to see a reduction in carbon emissions from its operations of at least 190 tonnes each year. The discussed building-based projects have the potential, if funded, to exceed that figure. The proposal to further explore opportunities to reduce emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet will better identify the necessary changes to improve fuel efficiency and to understand the role of electric and other vehicles.

### **7 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision**

- 7.1 The outlined carbon reduction plan is due to be discussed at Cabinet on 12 January 2021.

### **8 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 At this stage, there are no specific financial implications of the outlined projects. Should a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme be approved, there will be financial considerations for the Council in project delivery. Should the bid not be successful, the Council will need to consider the business case for funding projects in the buildings identified, in order to unlock a reduction in carbon emissions.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Interim Director of Finance**

### **9 Legal and Governance Implications**

- 9.1 The Council should make efforts to realise projects which deliver a reduction in carbon emissions, in order to meet its political ambition to reduce carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030.

- 9.2 While the Council is not under any direct legal obligation to reduce carbon emissions, any reductions that are achieved will help to meet the UK Government's statutory obligation under section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: David Coleman, Chief Legal Officer, Legal Services Lincolnshire**

## **10 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

- 10.1 There are no expected issues relating to equality and diversity or safeguarding resulting from this report. Any issues that do arise relating to individual items will be addressed as required.

## **11 Risk and Mitigation**

- 11.1 The work completed to submit an application for four buildings into the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme presents the risk that the proposed project will not be approved and funded; given the high competition expected for the grant scheme. The Council has been able to complete detailed feasibility work to buildings, which provide the basis of a business case for alternative grant schemes or internal investment needed to unlock carbon reductions in four buildings.
- 11.2 There is a risk that any reduction in carbon emissions seen from Council operations could not be captured and reported accurately. Ongoing monitoring of the Council's carbon emissions will improve through the development of a quarterly monitoring dashboard.

## **12 Community Safety Implications**

- 12.1 None expected.

## **13 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?**

- 13.1 This report sets out the work being undertaken to reduce carbon emissions from Council operations and consider opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from the wider district. If successful, projects have the potential to significantly reduce carbon emissions from the Council's own operations.

## **14 Background Papers**

- 14.1 26 September 2019 (item 51) -  
<http://moderngovsvr:8080/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=261&MID=3770#A123422>
- 14.2 21 July 2020 (item 61)-  
<http://moderngovsvr:8080/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=630&MId=3910&Ver=4>
- 14.3 6 October 2020 (items 8 and 10)-  
<http://moderngovsvr:8080/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=630&MId=4029&Ver=4>

<b>Report Timeline:</b>	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	3 October 2020
	Previously Considered by: Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21 July 2020
	Final Decision date	12 January 2021