

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
23 SEPTEMBER 2021

CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

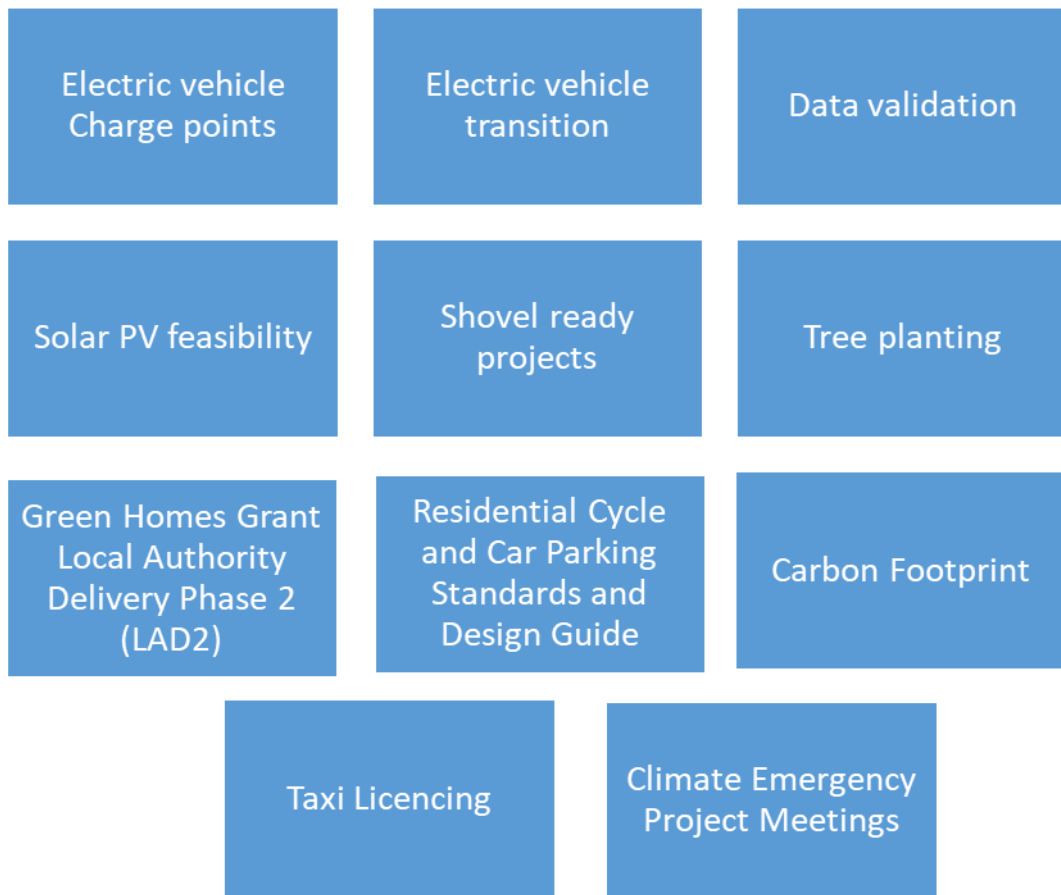
- 1.1 To provide an update to Members on the progress of the Climate Emergency Strategy and associated Action Plan.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Newark and Sherwood District Council declared a Climate Emergency at the Full Council meeting of 16 July 2019. The declaration did not include a date for net zero for the Council but recognised the UK Government had, the preceding month, agreed a target date of 2050.
- 2.2 The Carbon Trust were appointed to work alongside officers and members to develop a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. The Climate Emergency Working Group (CEWG) met on several occasions to review the data and findings from The Carbon Trust, as well as to seek out views from partners, businesses and local groups. The CEWG comprised of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokespersons of the Policy & Finance, Leisure & Environment, Economic Development, and Homes & Communities Committees. Members of the working group recommended the carbon net neutral target date of 2035 and the emissions reduction target which were recommended to Policy and Finance Committee in September 2020 and approved by Full Council in December of the same year.
- 2.3 The Council's agreed target for reduction is 2,165 tCO₂e (gas and fuel consumption from scope 1, purchased electricity from scope 2, and waste and water from scope 3).
- 2.4 The Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan is now being progressed and an annual report will be presented to Policy and Finance Committee in September 2021 (as agreed at Full Council in December 2020). This report will be a project update and a full report on the Council's progress towards its 2035 carbon neutrality target will be provided in 2022 to allow a years' worth of data to be collected. This data will be caveated as the Council's energy usage has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.0 Proposals

Work has been underway to progress a number of the activities relating to this agenda. This report will provide updates on the following:



3.1 Electric Vehicle Charge Points

3.1.1 The Council is committed to exploring the expansion of the Electric Vehicle Charge points network in public carparks within the district. In recent months the Car Park on London Road, has been identified as a potential location for a further 4 Electric Vehicle Charge points, as this is Newark town centre's busiest Car Park. Also, 4 Electric Vehicle Charge points at Southwell Town Council's Bramley Centre / Library car park have also been identified. This will bring the Districts total to 15 once all installations are complete, these are expected to be operational to the public in Autumn 2021.

3.2 Electric Vehicle Transition

3.2.1 As part of the Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan the Council have made the commitment to explore the implementation of electric vehicles within the Council owned fleet of vehicles. It was agreed at Leisure and Environment Committee on 16 March 2021 to adopt a phased approach towards electrification, this will begin with small scale pilots, before considering two possible phases of transition – 2023-2026 for small vans and fleet, subject to an approved business case, and post 2026 for larger vehicles, subject to vehicle type specific business cases submitted to Committee for approval.

3.2.2 Approval has been given to replace two vehicles which have reached the end of their useful life, the procurement process has begun and the Council will begin using these in autumn 2021. A project group has been set up to consider the future of Brunel Drive Depot and the sites ability to meet the requirements of the Council going forwards. It is expected that as part of the National Waste and Resources Strategy, Newark and Sherwood District Council will be mandated to collect more waste streams than is currently collected. In

order to meet these potential requirements, Brunel Drive Depot may need to store more waste vehicles on site. Also, if the pilot study of the two electric vehicles is successful further electric vehicles will need to be purchased and potentially stored and charged at the location overnight. The project group is currently considering various options to meet the requirements and develop a master plan for the future of the site.

3.3 Data Validation

3.3.1 The Council are currently seeking to streamline our carbon footprint calculation to gain further insight and more detailed picture of the Council's carbon footprint. As part of the Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan, we are committed to improving the data collection processes currently in place. An internal audit of the Council's current method of energy data collection and how data is validated has taken place. How this is carried out in the future is essential for carbon management and an accurate calculation of the Council's carbon footprint. The process has highlighted the importance of improving data collection and collation for the Council's ongoing response to the climate emergency.

3.3.2 There is currently an ongoing project to implement a defined process for energy management and utility data collection, the new process involves the enhancement of current methods and the introduction of new stages involving the development of a spreadsheet considering seasonal variations in energy and water consumption. It is proposed that energy databases will also be utilised to ensure accurate energy billing. This new proposed process is currently under review, this will be approved by relevant Business Managers.

3.4 Solar PV Feasibility

3.4.1 The Council have produced a tender document and are in the process of appointing external support in looking at the rollout of photovoltaics on Council buildings. One of the principal sources of the Council's carbon footprint comes from its estate and this work will help the Council to understand the capital costs, payback and carbon reduction impact from generating energy through sustainable sources.

3.4.2 Our Leisure Centres in particular, are the principle emitters in the Council's estate given their high energy needs. However, the feasibility will go beyond just the leisure centres and look at a range of buildings, including the Brunel Drive Depot, National Civil War Centre and Palace Theatre, the Newark Beacon and The Buttermarket amongst others. An assessment of the intricacies involved in expanding the current solar PV installation on Castle House will also be carried out by the appointed contractors. This will enable us to make an informed decision on which sites to proceed with and prioritise for solar PV installation on our corporate and leisure buildings.

3.4.3 The first phase of the project involves the desktop study and modelling of the selected sites, individual site visits and the development of a detailed study providing clear advice on viable solar PV array options, installation considerations and to produce a package of works and comprehensive installation details including prospective installation costs and a site by site business case. This will enable Newark and Sherwood District Council to make an informed decision regarding which sites to progress with based upon recommendations provided by the appointed consultants who are experts in the field.

3.4.4 The consultant will provide indicative estimated installation costs and payback periods to the Council, this will then be brought back to Policy and Finance Committee for approval for funding for the installation of solar PV on a range of our corporate and leisure buildings. Should the Council wish to progress with the installation then procurement support in the development of a specification document based on design elements from the first phase and project management of the successful installer will be provided by the contractor, ensuring the forecasted benefits from phase one are realised.

3.4.5 By investing in feasibility studies it enables Newark and Sherwood District Council to create workable and 'shovel ready' projects should funding opportunities become available.

3.5 Shovel Ready Projects

3.5.1 In order to be more prepared for national government grant funding applications, the Council have committed to exploring a range of carbon reduction and energy efficiency projects across a range of our corporate and leisure buildings. By obtaining a range of good quality quotes for works the Council will be more equipped for rounds of national Government funding than we are currently. This will also enable forward-thinking with regards to future budget allocations and future proofing the Council in the development of a more sustainable and carbon conscious environment. To achieve this the Asset Management team are currently obtaining quotes for the replacement of the biomass boilers and gas boiler at the Newark Beacon with a low carbon alternative as the current heating system is due for replacement. LED lighting upgrades across all of our corporate and leisure sites are also being considered and costed as part of this.

3.6 Tree Planting

3.6.1 As part of the Community Plan and Climate Emergency Strategy the Council have committed to planting 10,000 trees by 2023. During the 2020/2021 planting season 5,997 trees were planted in total, over 2,500 of these trees were given away to residents or parish/community groups. A further 3,355 trees have been planted in five locations in Newark, 8 trees were planted at Chuter Ede School as part of the Christmas tree recycling scheme and Chatham Court as part of the Safer Streets campaign. Newark and Sherwood District Council are committed to ensuring that the right tree is planted in the right place, in order to achieve this, the Environmental Services team utilise The Woodlands Trust's checklist, this is also helping to develop, plan and inform our Emergency Tree Plan which is currently in the process of being developed. The England Tree Strategy which is due for release will also inform our plan and will set out policy priorities to deliver our ambitious tree planting programme. It will focus on expanding, protecting and improving our woodlands, and how trees and woodlands can connect people to nature, support the economy, combat climate change and recover biodiversity.

3.7 Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2)

3.7.1 A total of £59.95 million grant funding for The Midland Energy HUB has received been received of this the Council have been allocated £724,850 of funding to deliver a project which enables cost saving for householders, carbon reduction, creates green jobs via use of Regional Energy Hubs and ultimately improves the quality of homes by increasing the EPC ratings of the properties.

3.7.2 Through the implementation of this project the Council have been able to identify those residents in the district who are most likely in fuel poverty and will benefit most from energy efficiency updates. This also incorporates residents living in the worst quality off-gas grid homes contributing towards the phasing out of carbon intensive fossil fuel heating

3.7.3 The Council have developed a partnership with Eon to deliver the LAD 2 programme of works due for completion 31st December 2021 comprising of 53 properties from the private market and 20 properties from the Council’s housing stock. The latter will be focused on the installation of solar PV to improve EPC ratings of properties from a Band D to a Band C rating, this project will provide low income households with up to £10,000of environmentally friendly home improvements. Given the large geographical area of Newark and Sherwood District Council and relatively small number we are doing; we have had to focus on two areas. The two areas chosen have the highest percentages of residents living in fuel poverty and multiple deprivation indicators strongly suggesting that most of the households to be targeted have low incomes and will meet the schemes application requirements.

3.8 Residential Cycle and Car Parking Standards and Design Guide

3.8.1 The new Residential Cycle and Car Parking Standards and Design Guide was adopted at Economic Development Committee on 16th June 2021; all residential developments are encouraged to provide secure and undercover cycle parking provision in accordance with the recommended standards below.

Recommended Cycle Parking Standard	
	Cycle Parking
1 bedroom dwellings	Min. 1 space per dwelling
2 & 3 bedroom dwellings	Min. 2 space per dwelling
4 + bedroom dwellings	Min. 3 space per dwelling

3.8.2 Provision of cycle parking in Town Centre locations will be encouraged to be in line with the table above. If cycle parking is not to be provided in town centre locations (for example due to site-specific constraints relating to the reuse of historic buildings or change of use proposals), it is recommended that an explanation as to why is included in the supporting Design and Access Statement or other supporting application documents.

3.8.3 The use of garages for cycle parking will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated both cycles and cars can be stored simultaneously. In the case of flats and other multi-occupancy buildings, it is expected that each residential unit to have its own secure cycle storage area to offer maximum security for residents’ bicycles and their cycling equipment. It is however recognised that this might not always be possible (for example the reuse of historic buildings or change of use proposals).

3.8.4 In relation to Electrical Vehicle Charging Infrastructure, it is recommended that each dwelling with a garage or dedicated parking space within its curtilage shall be provided with an electric vehicle charging point. Where this is not possible to achieve, it is recommended that a dummy charger is installed to enable convenient installation of a charging point on plot at a later date, each installed charge point is required to be in an easily accessible location.

3.8.5 The intention of this guide is to encourage people to cycle more for short distance trips to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, improve air quality, and reduce fuel emissions and release road capacity for those using cars for longer journeys. The District Council will expect new development proposals to demonstrate a high standard of sustainable design that both protects and enhances the natural environment and contributes to and sustains the rich local distinctiveness of the District, whilst meeting our objectives within the Community Plan and Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan.

3.9 Carbon Footprint

3.9.1 The Council are committed to recording our carbon footprint on an annual basis, our carbon footprint will be reported in September 2022 to. Data will be collected on an annual basis from various departments within the Council from May – June. This will then be calculated to determine our annual carbon footprint.

3.10 Taxi Licencing

3.10.1 Within the Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan, the Council commits to considering a reduction in Taxi Licencing fees for low carbon vehicles. This was due to take place in 2020, however, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic there has been a substantial reduction in members of the public utilising taxi services. The intention is for Public Protection colleagues to take a report to the General Purposes Committee (responsible for taxi licencing) in March 2022 on this issue. Although in its early stages the officers are looking at the policy for the specification of taxi vehicles including hybrid or electric vehicles and specifying emission limits for the taxi fleet. There will also be consideration of offering lower fees for lower emission vehicles.

3.11 Climate Emergency Project Meetings

3.11.1 A working group of internal members of staff has been set up to encourage the sharing of environmental related actions and activities taking place in various directorates. This meeting currently happens on a quarterly basis. This gives members of staff a forum for sharing good news stories, current workload and carbon reduction and environmentally focused activities, this meeting is also attended by our Communications Team to ensure that the information shared in the project meeting is communicated out through our social media channels.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 There are no equalities implications envisaged within the projects discussed in this report.

5.0 Digital Implications

5.1 Whilst there has been no digital implications identified there may be associated software requirements once feasibility studies have been completed and have been further explored by Newark and Sherwood District Council. The implications shall be considered as deemed appropriate. Furthermore, the ICT & Digital Services team will work to with the Environmental Policy and Projects Officer to reduce the technology carbon footprint for Newark and Sherwood District Council.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN21-22/5770

6.1 Current funding agreed for Climate change is set out below:

Climate Change	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	Totals
Current Budget within Capital Programme	105,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	330,000
Funded by:					
Capital Receipts	0	0	75,000	75,000	150,000
Borrowing	75,000	75,000	0	0	150,000
Capital Reserves	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
Total Funding	105,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	330,000
Allocated to Specific Projects					
Solar Panels	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
Balance Unallocated	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	300,000
Expenditure to date					0

So far only Phase one of the solar feasibility study has been allocated specific funding, a budget of £30,000 has already been allocated to this.

A further report will be provided should the Council decide to progress with Phase 2 of the Solar feasibility study which will involve the development of a site specific installation specification document and the project management of the prospective installation of solar PV on our corporate and leisure buildings.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 These projects align with the Council’s Community Plan objective to “Enhance and protect the district’s natural environment”. There is a specific activity under this objective to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by implementing an environmental strategy and carbon reduction action plan to achieve carbon neutrality. However, the Greening Newark and Sherwood Action Plan can also be considered to touch upon all objectives.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- a) **Project update to be noted;**
- b) **Further reports providing additional progress updates on Newark and Sherwood District Council’s carbon reduction journey will be provided as required;**

Reason for Recommendations

To provide an update to Committee on project progress.

To ensure there is engagement at committee level with the climate emergency progress

Background Papers

26 September 2020 – Policy and Finance Committee

15 December 2020 – Full Council

For further information please contact:

Briony Ashton, Environmental Policy and Projects Officer, Ext. 5357

Matthew Finch

Director - Communities & Environment