



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 10 June 2025

Portfolio Holder(s): Councillor Simon Forde, Climate & the Environment
Councillor Paul Peacock, Strategy, Performance & Finance
Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing

Director Lead: Matt Finch - Communities and Environment

Lead Officer: Carl Burns, Transformation & Service Improvement Manager, Ext. 5293

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Key Decision
Report Title	Review of the Council's Carbon Net Neutral Target
Purpose of Report	This report introduces the latest review of the Council's carbon footprint and provides recommendations for next steps in our climate strategy action plan.
Recommendations	<p>Following a review requested by Members through the Community Plan, it is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the 2035 carbon net neutral target within the current scope is retained; and b) Members note the potential to set a 2050 target for housing, but that this is not progressed pending a review by the new local authority entity covering Newark & Sherwood following Local Government Reorganisation in 2028.
Alternative Options Considered	To maintain the 2035 target but include housing; and to advance the Council's net zero target to 2030 (corporate emissions only).
Reason for Recommendations	<p>This work aligns with the Council's Community Plan ambition to "reduce the impact of climate change and protect and enhance green spaces".</p> <p>There is a specific activity under this ambition to 'Further develop and deliver a Council-wide decarbonisation plan for our built assets/deliver a programme of prioritised decarbonisation actions, in response to the Carbon Trust report 2025, following engagement with stakeholders.'</p>

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 Newark & Sherwood District Council (NSDC) declared a Climate Emergency at the Full Council meeting of 16 July 2019. At this stage, the declaration did not include a target for net zero for the Council but recognised that the UK Government had, the preceding month, agreed a target of 2050.
- 1.2 NSDC worked with the 'Carbon Trust' in 2020 to establish a climate emergency action plan which included the development of an emissions baseline, a 2035 carbon neutrality target and a pipeline of carbon reduction interventions. The work also included an assessment of the emissions associated with Housing, and a high-level review of the potential retrofit strategies/costs that would be required to achieve carbon neutrality of housing emissions under various pathways (e.g., 2030, 2035, 2040). The decision was taken not to include Housing in the target given the relative scale of emissions (>80% of total measured emissions) and associated costs and challenges involved.
- 1.3 After being appointed in May 2023, the incoming Climate Change Portfolio Holder expressed a desire to reassess the Council's carbon neutrality target. In the interests of consistency and best practice the 'Carbon Trust' were again commissioned to calculate the Council's existing baseline and to develop an options analysis for both **a.** the feasibility of bringing the 2035 target forward to 2030 (with the existing boundary of emissions: gas, electricity, water, waste, fleet). Or **b.** the feasibility of integrating the Council's housing stock into the existing 2035 target. (Following discussions with the housing team, a target date of 2050 was also explored).
- 1.4 £56,325 was committed from the Capital Project Feasibility Reserve to complete the work and a project team made up of key officers from across the Council in addition to the elected members listed below. The group met three times throughout the review process.
 - a. Cllr K. Melton – Climate Change Portfolio Holder (May 2023 – Sept 2024)
 - b. Cllr P. Peacock – Leader of the Council
 - c. Cllr L. Brazier – Housing Portfolio Holder
 - d. Cllr R. Holloway – Leader of the Conservative Group (May 2023 – Dec 2024)
 - e. Cllr M. Pringle – Chair of Policy & Performance Improvement Committee
 - f. Cllr E Oldham – Climate & Environment Portfolio holder (Sept – Dec 2024)
 - g. Cllr S. Forde – Climate & Environment Portfolio Holder (Dec 2024 -)
 - h. Cllr R. Jackson – Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group (Dec 2024 -)
- 1.5 The Carbon Trust have now completed their work which can be found at **Appendix A** and is being presented for consideration and approval, after endorsement by the working group in March 2025.

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

2.1 **Current footprint of NSDC and how it compares with 2019**

The review used baseline data for the year 2023/24 to calculate the Council's carbon footprint which is made up of two main parts. 'Corporate emissions' (Council operations) and 'housing emissions' (emissions from the Council's housing stock). In terms of the Council's operations its total emissions for this period were 9,267 tCO₂e. However, this includes scope 3 emissions which total 6,393 tCO₂e and comprises of emissions from the treatment of waste and wastewater, water usage, business travel, commuting and purchased goods & services (PG&S) which are largely outside of the Council's control at this time. Therefore, the proposed targeted baseline for reduction is set at 3,779 tCO₂e. This baseline figure includes the following:

Scope 1 emissions, which arise from natural gas and diesel combustion in NSDC's buildings and fleet, total 2,287 tCO₂e.

Scope 2 emissions, arising from electricity usage almost entirely from buildings, totalling 587 tCO₂e, and

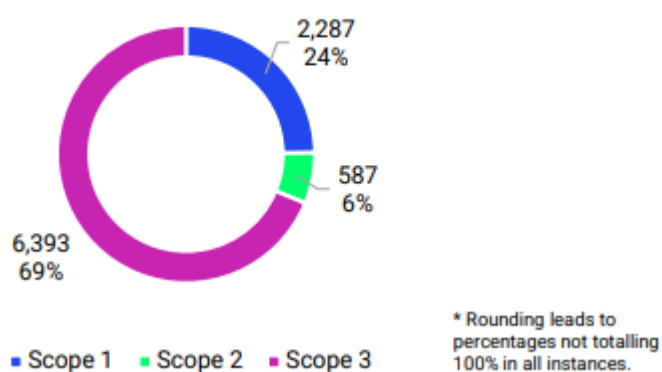
(selected) Scope 3 emissions, upstream emissions associated with the extraction, refinement and distribution of fuels and electricity, classified as "upstream energy related activities" contribute 658 tCO₂e

*These emissions also fall under the Scope 3 total of 6,393 tCO₂e.

Additional Emissions associated with services such as water - 241 tCO₂e and Waste – 6 tCO₂e

Further details of this can be seen on page 5 of the report at appendix a.

Total NSDC emissions by source, 2023/24*



The chart over illustrates how this compares with the review which was completed in 2019:

NSDC's 2035 carbon neutral target	Emission source	2019 emissions (tCO ₂ e)	2024 emissions (tCO ₂ e)
	Electricity	715*	777 (+9%)
	Fleet	1,058*	1,415 (+34%)
	Natural gas	715*	1,340 (+87%)
	Water	10	241 (n/a)
	Waste	11	6 (-39%)
	Total:	2,510	3,779 (+51%)
	Other sources:		
	Housing	15,645 (direct emissions only)	17,315 (direct emissions only) 19,921 (including WTT)
	Purchased goods and services	280	5,074
	Business travel	49	86
	Leased buildings	408	198
	Commuting	108	130

* Updated to include Scope 3 emission sources however methodology in calculation is different than that used in 2019

- 2.1.1 The review shows a significant reduction in our waste emissions (39%) however an increase of 51% in our overall emissions are evident. It is worth noting however that during this period there has been an increase in the Council's operations and workforce, most notably an increase in fleet which was necessary in order to deliver the glass recycling service. Also, the increase in our natural gas emissions is higher at +87%, this can in part be explained as a result of Southwell leisure centre being included in the 2023/24 emissions whereas it wasn't included in 2019. An increase in the number of buildings under the Council's control have factored in most areas but mostly the rise can be explained by enhancements and accuracy in calculation methodology utilised by the Carbon Trust in the current calculation that were not available in 2019.

2.2 Local Government Reform (LGR)

Whilst the review work was being undertaken Government announced its plans for a Local Government Review. Whilst there are several scenarios submitted for consideration all will result in NSDC no longer being an entity and would therefore require a full review of carbon neutrality targets (in addition to other key strategies) to be conducted by the new unified authority. With the likely transition to a unified authority beginning in 2028 it is proposed that it is not reasonable to commit to a new non-statutory target and increase in financial liabilities beyond the life of the current Council.

The current targets set by other Nottinghamshire authorities are listed below:

Bassetlaw

- To meet Net Zero council operations by 2030
- To meet Net Zero areawide emissions by 2045

Broxtowe

- To become carbon neutral by 2027 for the Council's own operations.
- To align to the UK's net zero Commitment of 2050 for the Borough and establish the actions and potential budget required to achieve this (working to an earlier date if possible)

Gedling

- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Mansfield

- Reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2030
- Make Mansfield carbon neutral by 2040

Rushcliffe

- Carbon neutral by 2030 for its own operations.

Nottinghamshire County Council

- Carbon neutral by 2030 for its own operations

Ashfield

- net-zero by 2030 for the emissions 'they are responsible for'

2.2.1 Whilst we don't have an update on each councils' performance to date, all will have different methodologies scopes and baselines. It is likely that progress for each authority will also be mixed and therefore this will be a significant piece of work for the new entity post 2028 to set a single methodology baseline and target post vesting day. A national target for delivering net neutral exists at 2050 so housing could theoretically be given the same timescale. However, it would be up to the new entity to explore whether this target could be advanced.

2.3 **Option A: Maintain 2035 target but include housing**

NSDC's housing stock is not currently included in our 2035 net zero target. Following this review, it is noted that the baseline emissions for the Council's housing is at 19,921 tCO₂e, with 75% of emissions from heating sources. Of these total emissions, 17,315 tCO₂e are attributed to direct emissions i.e. excluding those from Well to Tank (WTT).

2.3.1 It is noted that 97% of the Council's housing stock currently rely on burning fossil fuels such as gas, oil, LPG with the remainder using electrical sources such as air source heat pumps (ASHP) or electric boilers.

2.3.2 To significantly reduce the emissions of our housing stock at this time substantial financial investment would be required. For example, the 'high retrofit' program required would see all houses receive extensive energy efficiency measures and be heat decarbonised by 2035. However, the financial implications of this option would mean a capital commitment of £145m (£14.5m per year not adjusted for inflation). There are also resource implications to this option. Currently the housing team have completed circa 107 houses in their retrofit program. In order to deliver net zero across the Council's housing stock by 2035 the team would be required to deliver 560 houses per year consistently. This would not be feasible without a full review and enhancement of the current structure of the team and would be increasingly difficult due to the evident lack of buy in across the Council's tenant base in addition to supplier shortages nationally.

2.3.3 In the meantime, the Council has and will continue to bid for funding to decarbonise both social and private rented housing through schemes such as the Warm Homes Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (social rented) and the Local Grant (private rented sector) and has recently received an indicative allocation to continue to retrofit energy saving measures to both reduce carbon and where able, reduce running costs for tenants and residents. It is fair to say that demand for such schemes far outweighs

the bids submitted and the latest round has seen allocations for NSDC reach 50% of the bid.

- 2.3.4 Work is also ongoing to update stock condition information and energy performance information to ensure our rented housing stock data is accurate and current. This also enables the Council to model the positive impact of measures on lower performing homes so these homes can be prioritised these homes funding or budgets are available.

2.3.5 **Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)**

Whilst we are not recommending that housing is included within the current target and scope, work is taking place to understand how housing can be decarbonised over the longer term. This work is being picked up under a LAEP which is a 'where and when' masterplan identifying the most cost-effective pathway for the local area to reach net zero and realise local benefits. It is data driven and is a whole energy system, evidence-based approach that is led by local government and developed collaboratively with defined stakeholders.

- 2.3.6 Work is well underway in this project and NSDC are providing data and regularly contributing to workshop discussions with key stakeholders in the region. The outcome which is expected later this year will include 3D modelling of the district which will map all buildings showing their current energy usage/efficiency ratings. This will enable a more targeted approach to the Council's retrofit program for example and help to provide the best account of social value in addition to directing key funding streams toward areas of deprivation and those experiencing fuel poverty.

2.4 **Option B: advance the Council's net zero target to 2030 (corporate emissions only)**

NSDC's current asset renewal plan is forecast with the 2035 target in mind and this is reflected in its MTFP. Any advancement of this target would require additional capital spend of at least £2.2m (not including inflation or borrowing costs). Whilst this option is in theory feasible the interventions required to deliver this target are not thought to be practicable, efficient or necessary. For example, delivering the suggested carbon savings at the Council's Newark Sports & Fitness site would require the total replacement of the heating system on site which itself has only been installed since 2016. The current life of that system is not due to expire before 2031. The reduction of carbon emissions is already factored into the Council's asset renewal plan which will see systems replaced at 'end of life' with greener options where feasible and safeguards value for money from investments already made.

- 2.4.1 The Council's Solar PV installation program has further reduced its carbon footprint from scope 2 electricity usage across 7 of its assets. These changes are not reflected in the report at appendix a as the installation was ongoing through the review period. The recommendations detailed in the Carbon Trust's report also rely on installing Solar PV to sites which have previously been deemed unsuitable throughout the Council's current installation program, namely Blidworth Leisure centre. The Council's current climate strategy action plan currently includes initiatives that aim to significantly reduce its emissions within current forecast budgets. For example, work is well underway to convert the Council's fleet to Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) which will see the current fleet emissions, reported at 1415 tCO₂e, reduced by up to 90%.

- 2.4.2 Moreover, whilst the recent commitment to the wider woodland regeneration scheme will deliver significant carbon offsets these will not be seen until the trees reach maturity and therefore will not be available towards a target of 2030. This would mean that there would be residual carbon that would require carbon credits costing at least 38k in 28/29 and 29/30 which is beyond the life of NSDC in LGR terms.

2.5 **Recommended option: Maintain 2035 target and business as usual**

The current baseline for carbon emissions is 3,779 tCO₂e and this option would see the current net zero target of 2035 maintained. Initiatives already considered by NSDC, such as HVO for fleet (90% emissions reduction) and a green tariff for electricity are expected to be in place within 2025. These will deliver sufficient carbon savings that will give the Council the best chance to meet the 2035 target.

2.5.1 **Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity**

On 7 April 2025 the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero released their plans for 'Cleaning up the U. K's power system' and their proposal states that this as 'central to decarbonising the whole economy'. The policy update states that a clean electricity supply, the electrification of heat, transport and industry open up routes to net zero.

If successful, this commitment would further reduce the Council's carbon footprint caused by scope 3 (upstream) emissions associated with the extraction, refinement and distribution of fuels and electricity.

Actions	Forecast annual CO ₂ saving (tCO ₂ e)
Replace all diesel fuel in our fleet with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)	1,274 (90% of fleet emissions)
Adopt green electricity tariffs across our assets and the decarbonisation of the grid	1,800 tCO ₂ e
Installed Solar PV installations across 7 assets (These will generate over 470,000 Kwh of electricity per year)	100 tCO ₂ e
Committed to the Woodland regeneration scheme (offsetting)	845 tCO ₂ e (median once trees have matured)
Total	*4,019 tCO₂e

*Approximate figures based on expected carbon reduction/offsetting

- 2.5.2 In 2019 the Council agreed to reduce their carbon footprint as much as feasible and targeted becoming carbon neutral by 2035. Due to the ongoing commitment of the Council's Elected Members and Officers this is still an achievable target despite governmental legislative changes, the introduction of additional services such as glass collection and Southwell leisure centre becoming as a Council asset.
- 2.5.3 The 2035 target remains under constant review and through the annual climate update report, Members are able to monitor the Council's progress regularly. Should the situation arise by where the target could be advanced this would be brought forward for discussion and approval in the future. However, with the impending changes due under LGR it is proposed that the target remains extant at this time.

- 2.5.4 Further completed actions and ongoing initiatives that showcase the Council's commitment to meeting their 2035 net zero target can be seen within appendix b

3.0 **Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

3.1 Financial Implications FIN25-26/(4661)

- 3.1.1 Since the Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, the Council has spent over £5.312m on a number of capital projects in order to reduce carbon emissions, reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency:

Scheme	Funding	Total
Decarbonisation of Council Assets Feasibility works	Council	150,000.00
Climate Change Feasibility	Council	36,900.00
Decarb Devolution Council Houses	External Grant	612,609.87
Decarbonisation SDHF	50% Council 50% External Grant	2,358,341.05
Energy Efficient Boilers	Council	253,124.95
EPCs Council Houses	Council	55,673.33
EV Charge Points	External Grant	91,429.00
LED Lights	External Grant	64,526.30
PV Invertors Council Houses	Council	324,279.94
Solar PV Council Assets	Council	866,422.22
Warm Homes on Prescription	External Grant	498,197.99
Grand Total		5,311,504.65

- 3.1.2 Future schemes already within the existing Capital Programme include the following:

Scheme	Funding	Total
Decarbonisation Warm Homes: SHDF/LG	50% Council 50% External Funding	6,370,270.00
EPC	Council	1,724,050.00
Warm Homes on Prescription	External Grant	280,000.00
Woodland Planting Contribution	Council	309,915.00
Grand Total		8,684,235.00

- 3.1.3 Additionally to the capital items above, the 2025/26 revenue budget (and subsequent years) has sufficient funding approved within it in order to fund the switch to HVO fuel and the annual costs of running that type of fuel.

- 3.1.4 The costs identified within the Carbon Trust report relating to the potential works that could be undertaken are summarised in the table below:

	Total Cost	Annual MRP charge	Annual Borrowing charge	Total Borrowing (over 20 years)	Total Cost (principal plus borrowing)
Housing					
Housing 1 High Retrofit 2035	14,500,000	725,000	610,450	12,209,000	26,709,000
Housing 2 High Retrofit 2050	5,600,000	280,000	235,760	4,715,200	10,315,200
Housing 3 Light retrofit 2035	7,600,000	380,000	319,960	6,399,200	13,999,200
Housing 4 Light retrofit 2050	3,000,000	150,000	126,300	2,526,000	5,526,000
General Fund					
General Fund 1 Deep retrofit 2030	3,882,000	194,100	163,432	3,268,644	7,150,644
General Fund 2 Deep retrofit 2035	3,882,000	194,100	163,432	3,268,644	7,150,644
General Fund 3 light retrofit 2030	2,209,000	110,450	92,999	1,859,978	4,068,978
General Fund 4 light retrofit 2035	2,209,000	110,450	92,999	1,859,978	4,068,978

3.1.5 As can be seen above, the cost of completing further works identified within the Carbon Trust report would cost, as a minimum, £4.069m for the General Fund and £5.526m for the HRA.

3.1.6 There may be works that are identified as part of the strategic asset management replacement programme which, as assets come to the end of their useful life, are then replaced with alternative assets which will emit less carbon. Reports will be brought to Cabinet for approval of budget at that point in time.

3.2 Legal Implications (LEG2526/3139)

Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this Key Decision report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

1. Portfolio Holder report - Climate Emergency Action Plan– Further scoping – June 2024
2. [Climate Emergency update – Policy & Finance Committee 24 Sept 2020](#)
3. [Clean Power 2030](#)