

Growth Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Environment Task and Finish Group

1. Purpose

To allow Members to inform the review and development of Environment Policy for Rutland County Council and to consider proposing policy statements for the following elements of the overarching policy:-

- **Environmental Enforcement Strategy**
- **Biodiversity Strategy**
- **Corporate Sustainability Strategy**

2. Background

- 2.1 The need for the review has been influenced by the national environment agenda.
- 2.2 RCC has committed to ensure it is taking reasonable steps within its powers to address the emerging issues.
- 2.3 Environmental Impact covers a wide range of strategic and service issues for the Council. The draft Environmental strategy categorises sub strategies and service areas of work in the narrative in the Appendix. For the purposes of this report, these are summarised below:-

Overarching Environmental Policy incorporating:-

- **Local Transport Plan (including Council Fleet)**
- **Corporate Sustainability Strategy (including Council Assets, reducing energy use and use of plastic)**
- **Local Plan**
- **Municipal Waste Strategy - reduce, reuse and recycle**
- **Environmental Enforcement Policy**
- **Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan**

3. Potential specific issues to be considered

The Local Transport Plan, Local Plan and Waste Strategy will be tabled for scrutiny under the normal Cabinet agenda timetable. It is therefore proposed that the Task & Finish Group may wish to consider the following policies one at a time: -

- **Environmental Enforcement Strategy**
- **Corporate Sustainability Strategy**
- **Biodiversity Strategy**

4. Outcome

Develop the individual strategies for Rutland County Council and proposed policy statements for the strategies in 3 above.

5. Timetable (To be determined by the Task and Finish Group)

- 5.1 Which Strategy will the Group address first?
- 5.2 How frequently will the Task and Finish Group Meet?
- 5.3 Timing of meetings
- 5.4 Key deadlines?
- 5.5 Length of review

6. Methodology/Approach

Consider some of the following:

- Desk-based review of papers from other local authorities
- Workshops / Focus Groups
- Interview officers
- Witnesses /interest groups/ experts to give evidence

7. Evidence Sources – Key lines of Enquiry

What are the key lines of enquiry?

Consider some of the following:

- Government guidance / legislation
- Service plans
- Performance Indicators
- Evidence from other reviews/ councils/LGA
- Independent research articles and papers

8. Members - to be proposed by the GIR Scrutiny Committee

9. Staff Support

The Group will be assisted by the Scrutiny Officer and appropriate officers within the Places Directorate on specific topic areas as appropriate within the overall timetable for review and general availability.

10. Other considerations

- Any obstacles to review outcomes

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

- The impacts of climate breakdown are already causing serious damage around the world.
- We need to develop measures and set targets to contribute to the challenge of keeping global temperature rises below 1.5°C; and
- All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to act, and local governments that recognise this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies.
- Strong policies to cut emissions also have associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits.
- UK local authorities show their commitment in 'Climate Emergency' motions. Therefore Rutland County Council calls on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, and ask local MPs to do likewise.

We will consider other actions that could be implemented, including (but not restricted to): renewable energy generation and storage, providing electric vehicle infrastructure and encouraging alternatives to private car use, increasing the efficiency of buildings, in particular to address fuel poverty; proactively using local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of net carbon new developments and communities, coordinating a series of information and training events to raise awareness and share good practice.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Rutland County Council recognises it cannot achieve climate change alone and will be working in partnership with the community, developers, local businesses and national bodies to ensure its approach is guided by local views and national experience and knowledge. We will:-

- Support and work with, influence and inspire partners and relevant agencies across the region to help make the entire area zero carbon within this timescale through all relevant strategies, plans and shared resources by developing a series of meetings, events and partner workshops.
- Ensure that the Council and partners take steps to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future.
- Set up a Climate Change Partnership Group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, climate science and solutions experts, businesses, and other relevant parties. Over the following 12 months, the Group will consider strategies and actions being developed by the Council and other partner organisations and develop a strategy in line with a target of net zero emissions by 2050. It will also recommend ways to maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, agriculture, transport and the economy.
- We will be drawing on national guidance, including from Natural England, while utilising good practice from agencies such as Friends of the Earth, and utilising the tools and experience from the Local Government Association's Climate Local initiative, which it launched in 2014 in conjunction with the Environment Agency Climate Ready service .

- We will work with local businesses to support them to identify and fulfil their obligations to support our climate change agenda.

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL: STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING AND ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Rutland County Council is committed to taking action on climate change. As the County's Local Authority we recognise that we "are not powerless to climate change" and view our role as twofold:

- 1) Support and encourage our residents play their part to address climate change
- 2) Ensure we practice what we preach and ensure our organisation's impact on the environment and our areas biodiversity is solely positive

To support us in achieving this, this document outlines our strategy to inform our climate change action plan.

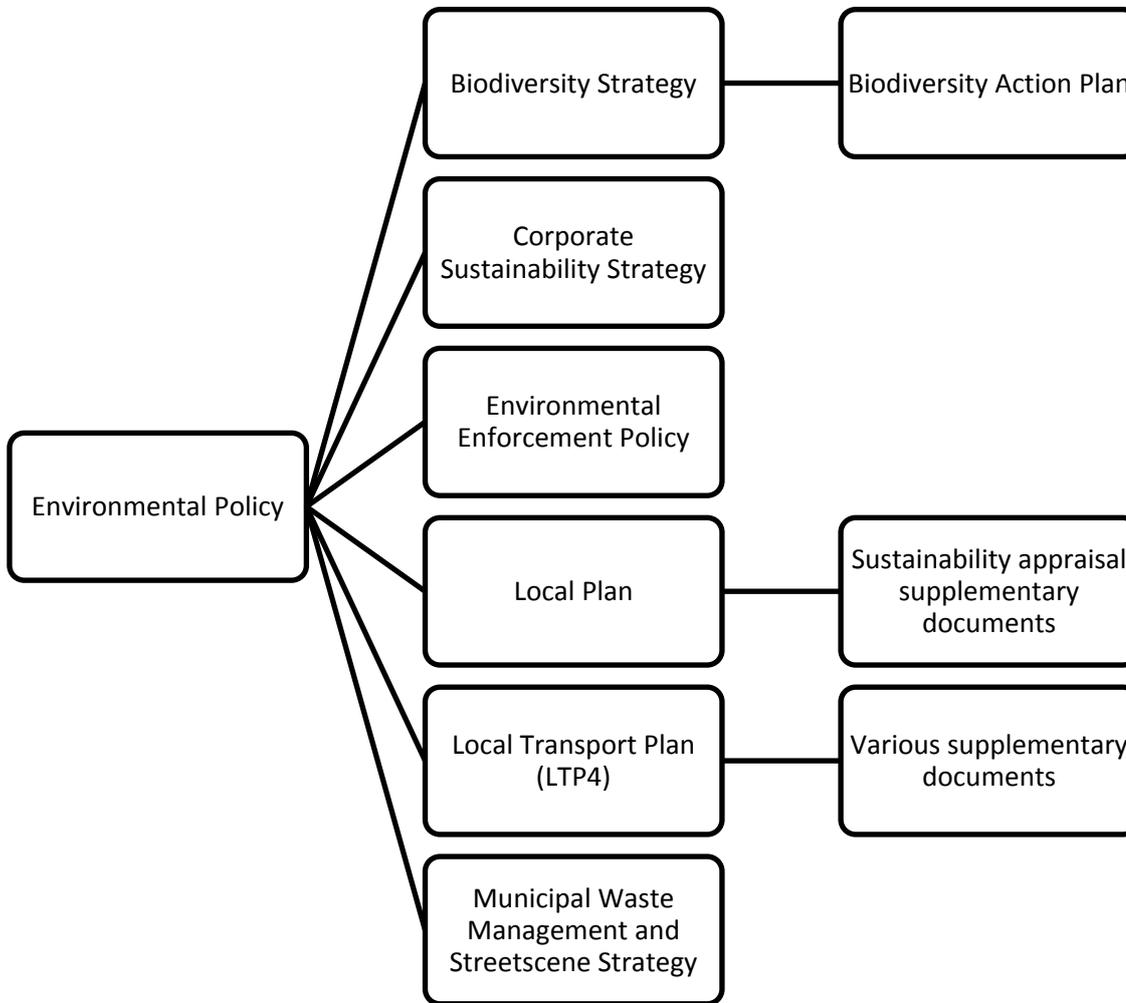
As part of the Council's decision making we will:-

- Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2050.
- Appoint an existing member of cabinet to take responsibility for the delivery of the Zero Carbon activity.
- Ensure that political and chief officer leadership teams embed this work in all areas and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities, ensuring that any recommendations are fully costed and that the Executive and Scrutiny functions review council activities taking account of production and consumption emissions and produce an action plan within 12 months, together with budget actions and a measured baseline.
- Request that Council Scrutiny Committees consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing Council policies and strategies.

STRATEGIES

As part of the hierarchy of interphase on environmental impact within the Environmental Strategy, the Council proposes to implement and review the suite of strategies in the following diagram.

The specific strategy actions are detailed in the following sections:-



STRATEGIES

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Council aims to:-

- Make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2050.
- Achieve 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by 2050.

Transport is the largest single contributor to emissions globally. The Council is seeking to make greener travel more accessible to our residents through the delivery of the measures outlined within our Local Transport Plan ([insert link](#)).

Our commitment to greener travel for residents, visitors and staff will be driven by our sustainable transport statement ([insert link](#))

COUNCIL FLEET

As part of our commitment to tackling carbon emissions, in Rutland we are already working towards transitioning our in-house staff pool car fleet to electric vehicles. We will explore the same transition for our commissioned transport fleet which provides transport to customers within the County when suitable vehicles become available.

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

1) COUNCIL ASSETS

At its meeting of 16th July 2019, Cabinet agreed a schedule of future works for Council assets which will include where practicable measures to protect the environment.

As a Council we include, where practicable, measures to protect the environment. With new works we are required to comply with Part L of the Building Regulations.

2) REDUCING ENERGY USE

Within our offices, we have also installed Passive Infrared sensors to turn lights on and off to reduce energy use.

We are actively exploring the possibility of solar panels in our investment and operational assets.

3) REDUCING PRINTING AND USE OF PAPER

The Council has reduced the number of printers and implemented a campaign to reduce printing across the council.

4) REDUCING USE OF PLASTIC

The Council has replaced the use of plastic cups across its sites. Biodegradable cups are provided in place of plastic in meeting rooms.

LOCAL PLAN & SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISALS ([link to Local Plan](#))

As part of our Local Plan we will consider saving natural resources and reducing carbon emissions through encouraging the use of technologies, such as PV panels, appropriate double glazing for grade 2 listed buildings and the reuse of rainwater to reduce the use of potable water supplies which are liable to come under pressure in the next couple of decades.

We will also work with developers on their obligations to help us support our climate change agenda. Within our Local Plan are measures to encourage and safeguard sustainability in infrastructure and in building development to protect the environment in Rutland.

MUNICIPAL WASTE STRATEGY - REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE ([link to Waste Strategy](#))

We will refresh the Council's Waste Strategy to ensure it reflects national strategy, guidance and targets. The Council has implemented a programme of seasonal campaigns to encourage residents to reduce their waste, and reuse and recycle

ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY

As part of the Council's approach is that we will take action on those who make a negative impact upon our Environment, this will cover the following areas of Enforcement:-

- Abandoned vehicles
- Fly-posting
- Fly-tipping
- Graffiti
- Littering
- Waste duty of care

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PROTECTING OUR BIODIVERISTY

Rutland County Council is committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity across the County and currently maintains about 65 km of protected verges, being either 'local wildlife sites' or Sites of Specific Scientific Interest. We are also aware that our approach to grounds maintenance on our other highway verges, as well as on sites like closed churchyards and public open spaces, are an opportunity to further enhance this biodiversity.

With this in mind, we are currently assessing options as to how these areas can be managed and will consult on this during autumn 2019.

COUNCIL USE OF RESOURCES AND INVESTMENT

Report on the level of investment in the fossil fuel industry that our pensions plan and other investments have, and review the Council's investment strategy to give due consideration to climate change impacts in the investment portfolio.

REPORTING AND MONITORING

The Council will ensure that all reports to cabinet and Council will take into account the actions the council will take to address this emergency by providing a Climate Change impact assessment on relevant decisions the council makes.

The Council will also provide and publish an annual review of measures taken by the Council and their impact on the Council's carbon footprint.