

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Climate Change Strategy

2021 - 2030



Carbon Neutral by 2030 and beyond!

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Forward

There is a global climate emergency. The evidence is irrefutable, and the science is clear. Warnings have been issued about the damage human beings are causing to the planet and how that damage has accelerated over the past 50 years. The impacts of climate change are having a serious effect across the globe. We believe that it's not too late for us to turn things around but to do so requires transformative change and immediate action.

The interim report published by Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was a red alert for our planet. "It shows governments are nowhere close to the level of ambition needed to limit climate change to 1.5 degrees and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement", Secretary-General António Guterres said on the report's findings.

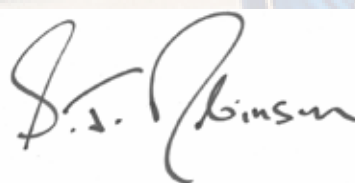
In light of this and in line with the government Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener released in October 2021, Rushcliffe Borough Council has resolved to take action to make all our Council Services Carbon Neutral by 2030 and to work with our communities and partners towards making Rushcliffe a carbon neutral borough.

Climate change is a global issue that requires dramatic action on a local level. The introduction of this Climate Change Strategy sets out our path to achieve these goals.

This strategy runs from December 2021 to December 2030 and, along with our Carbon Management Action Plan, will be regularly reviewed by the Council's Community Scrutiny Group on an annual basis.



Kath Marriott
Chief Executive



Cllr Simon Robinson
Leader

What is climate change?

The earth is surrounded by a blanket of gases, which keeps its surface warm and able to sustain life. These gases, usually referred to as greenhouse gases, include carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxide and fluorocarbons.

There is solid scientific evidence to show our climate is changing because of emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from human activity.

*The bulk of emissions derive from our demand for energy. The largest contributor is carbon dioxide (CO₂), emitted when fossil fuels are burnt to meet those demands. There are also other emissions attached to industrial processes and agriculture.

At the same time, increased deforestation means that the trees which help to absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere are being cut down

"Climate change is the greatest threat to our existence in our short history on this planet. Nobody's going to buy their way out of its effects."

Mark Ruffalo, Actor & Environmentalist

The National Position

In 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.

The UK's 2050 net zero target – one of the most ambitious in the world – was recommended by the Committee on Climate Change, the UK's independent climate advisory body.



Why do we need a Climate Change Strategy for Rushcliffe?

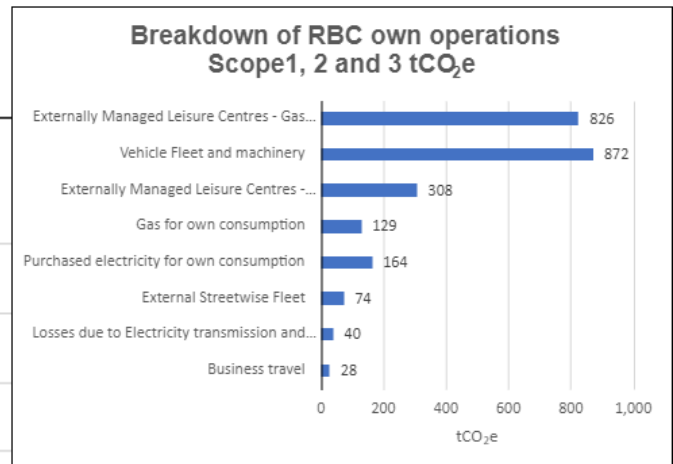
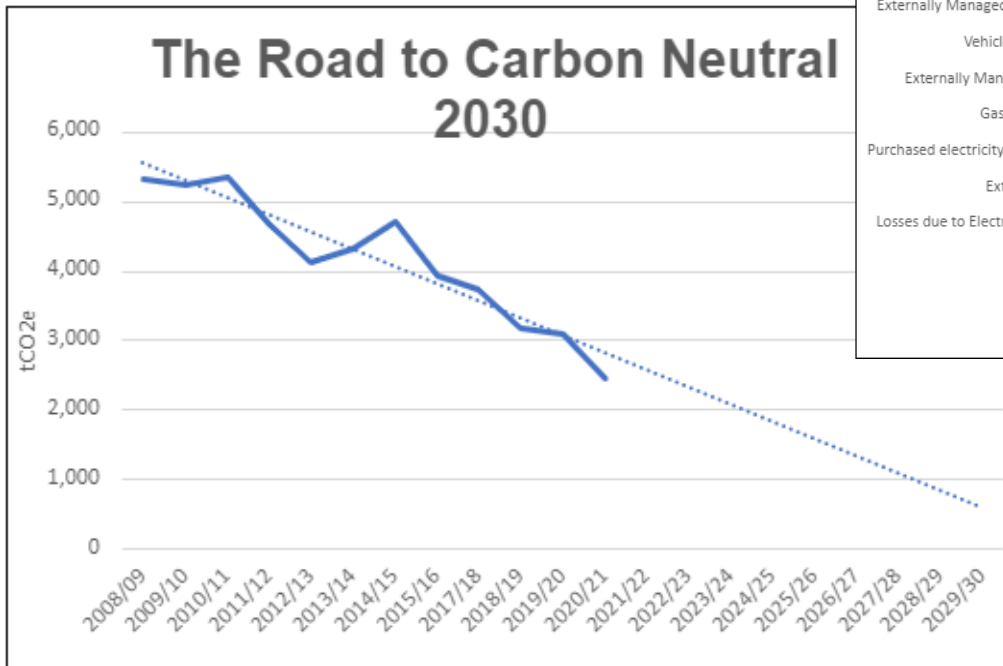
There will always be a demand for energy, but the way we use it, and the amount we use, needs to change.

A study of the Local Climate Impacts Profile for Nottinghamshire states Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of some of the extreme weather events which we already experience, such as heat waves, flooding and drought, though it may reduce the occurrence of severe winter cold spells*.

The impact of these changes will affect all our residents and businesses with increased flooding, increased energy costs and interruptions to supply as well as impacting upon the wider determinants of health.

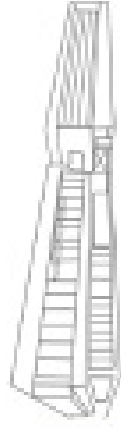
Rushcliffe Borough Council is committed to tackling climate change and to making a major contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the Borough. We recognise the challenge we all face and the action that we need to take to ensure Rushcliffe remains a great place to live now and in the future. This Strategy and its associated Carbon Management Action Plan outline the steps we will take.

Council's own emissions



2017

Our climate change journey so far



Rushcliffe Arena - £15m new energy efficient leisure centre and civic offices opened reducing our carbon footprint

Free tree scheme for residents and Parish Councils begins and continues for three years



2018

Dual stream recycling bins installed across the Borough

Refill Rushcliffe plastic bottle reduction initiative

2019

18.2% reduction in Council greenhouse gas emissions since 2008/9

2021+

2020

£1m climate change action reserve allocated to reach carbon neutral status

New glass recycling facility in Lady Bay, West Bridgford

Work begins on energy efficient Bingham Leisure Centre and Enterprise Centre

Green Rewards app launched

Climate strategy developed

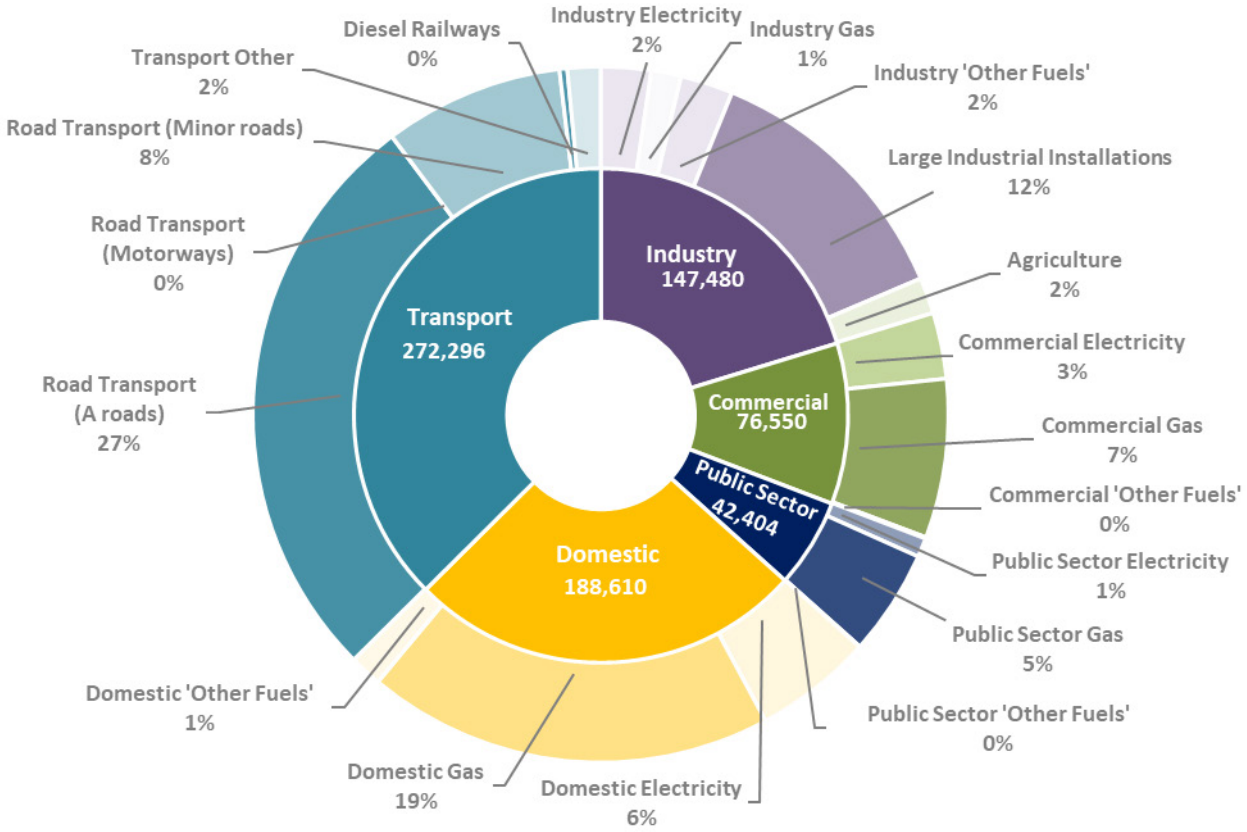
250 trees planted at Collington Common

"I think we should all be more concerned about the environment and the effects of global warming. It will be pointless to talk about all the issues that divide us when it's 300 degrees outside."

Don Cheadle, Actor

Rushcliffe Borough Emissions

Rushcliffe Borough Local Authority territorial CO2 emissions estimates 2005-2019 (t CO2)*



These are the emissions generated by all residents, business and local authority activity in the Rushcliffe Borough area.

- **37%** of emissions came from transportation, from travel by individuals and transportation of goods.
- **20%** from industry
- **11%** from commercial operations
- **6%** of emissions came from the public sector
- **26%** of carbon emissions were emitted from domestic properties, i.e. heating, lighting and use of household appliances

Total emissions for these activities is 727,340 tonnes of CO2 which equated to approximately 6.1 tonnes person per year in 2019.

*Data taken from [BEIS "National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory"](#)

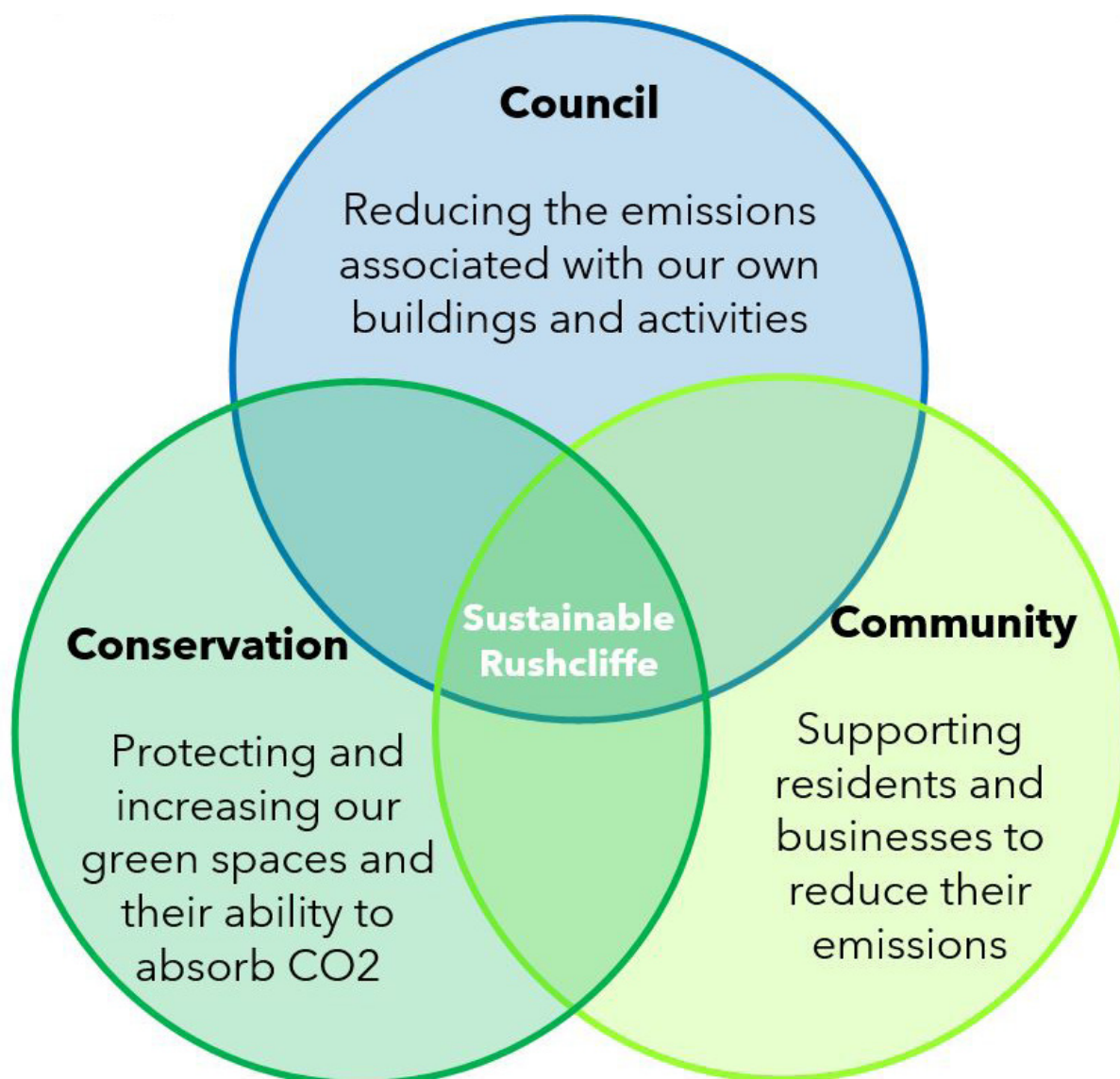
Why do we need a Climate Change Strategy for Rushcliffe?

In [March 2020, Rushcliffe Borough Council made a commitment](#) to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 for its own operations*. The Council is also committed to supporting local residents and businesses reduce their own carbon footprint.

In addition, this strategy confirms our commitment to continuously improve our strategy to ensure the whole of Rushcliffe Borough will be Net Zero for our emissions by 2050 in line with government outcome from COP26.

This document forms part of a suite of documents, strategies, management, and action plans, all focused on environmental sustainability throughout the council, for more detail on any of our plans you can follow the embedded links or visit www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/energy.

Our strategy focuses on three key areas...



"Every action matters. Every bit of warming matters. Every year matters. Every choice matters"

-Hoesung Lee, IPCC Chair

*Our full action plan can be viewed online at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/energy.

Rushcliffe Borough Council's Cabinet approved plans on in March 2020 to become Carbon Clever and work towards our direct operations becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Our strategy is broken down into the following key areas and deliverables.

Buildings and assets

Reduction of carbon in our owned buildings through switching to green tariffs, installation of Solar panels, sustainable heating systems, low energy lighting and low water use facilities where practicable.

Community and business

Making changes to how we manage our activities to deliver sustainable events to the community; working to reduce physical waste, increase recycling and find sustainable ways to supply energy to all our events.

Fleet and transport

Reducing the emissions from our owned vehicles by; running waste refuse vehicles on biofuel to reduce emissions by 90% as a step change to fully zero emission technology, installing greater numbers of electric vehicle charging points in car parks across the borough, and switching to electric work buggies at our country parks where possible.

Waste and Recycling

Improving how we manage waste through our Waste and Recycling Strategy

Supply Chain

Inclusion of Sustainable Procurement in our Procurement policy

We also aim to deliver in house carbon awareness training to all staff to ensure everyone at the council is doing their part to be Carbon Clever.



For more details on the councils plans and commitments visit below:

[Environment Policy](#)
[Carbon Management Action Plan](#)
[Carbon Neutral strategy](#)

Conservation of Biodiversity

As part of our [Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy](#) we aim to safeguard existing nature conservation, encourage the creation of new sites, while seeking to address the Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Crisis.

The changing climate impacts on the natural world. Man-made carbon emissions need to be reduced; however, ecosystems such as trees and woodlands, hedgerows, long term diverse grasslands and some wetlands can help by absorbing carbon.

The council's land currently 'sequesters' 1724.27 Tonnes CO₂e per year. Natural habitats also help to absorb heavy rain, reducing flooding, which is increasing as the climate changes.

We will seek to: maintain as diverse a natural environment as we can. Find opportunities to create re-wilding areas to act as carbon 'sinks'. Increase linkages between habitats to allow movement of species. Be prepared to adapt our efforts as the climate changes.

The council plan includes:

- **Tree management** - establishing and managing trees on council-controlled land where appropriate and supplying trees to communities and the public.
- **Grassland management** - managing council-controlled grasslands as wild-flower rich meadows and avoiding mowing other grasslands during the summer where appropriate
- **Community support** - working with partners to support community nature conservation action, including providing training, grants, and specialist equipment.
- **Development Control** - ensuring that climate change impact reduction and biodiversity are appropriately managed, protected and enhanced in new developments through the planning system



"If we pollute the air, water and soil that keep us alive and well, and destroy the biodiversity that allows natural systems to function, no amount of money will save us"

-David Suzuki, Canadian geneticist, broadcaster and environmental activist

Community

Beyond our target to become carbon neutral for our own emissions, the council is supporting the Rushcliffe community to reduce their own carbon emissions...

Supporting Residents

By applying for funding and grants for residents to adopt energy saving measures - such as external wall insulation and solar panels.

Or through activities such as our Green rewards scheme - working with other councils to encourage residents to take action to reduce their carbon footprint

Monitoring and regulating activities to reduce air pollution as outlined in our [Air Quality Strategy](#).

Supporting Businesses

Partners from across Rushcliffe have come together to create the [Big Business Carbon Club](#); sharing learning, views and skills to make even greater impact on their carbon reduction journeys.

As a council we have updated all our service level agreements with delivery partners to ensure that they incorporate carbon reduction and climate change targets.

Supporting the community

Rushcliffe Borough Council monitor and provide guidance on [air quality](#) in the borough and we are working to adopt a walking and cycling action plan with the aim to further reduce air pollution. We are preparing to adapt to the ever increasing extremes of local weather and have issued a policy statement for localised [flood defence](#).

Existing infrastructure will be used to deliver environmental education in the community where possible.

You can do your part by seeing how you can reduce the energy you use in your home, how you travel, the types of food and goods you buy and by avoiding producing waste wherever possible. Advice is provided on our website:

- [Energy Efficiency, Grants and Renewables](#)
- [Reducing your carbon footprint - householders](#)
- [Reducing your carbon footprint - business](#)
- [Green Rewards](#)



"Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that...The future of humanity and indeed, all life on earth, now depends on us."

-Sir David Attenborough, Broadcaster, historian, and writer

Summary

Rushcliffe Borough Council will continue to adapt our strategy and action plans in line with best available data and technology, we will continue to set ambitious targets beyond 2030 towards being Net Zero by 2050 and will work to influence businesses, our residents, other councils, and government to help tackle climate change.

This is an issue that affects us all, how we act now; every choice we make or don't make, will be felt for decades to come. Humans have collectively damaged, destroyed and depleted our planets natural resources, it is now the responsibility of each and every one of us of us to repair, restore and rebuild our natural world for ourselves and future generations.

Together we have the power to do just that.



References and sources

- [Rewilding Britain](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Environmental Management CIEEM](#)
- [Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#)

Photography

Front cover: Rushcliffe Country Park (RCP), courtesy of Luke Hart RCP Volunteer
Butterfly on flower and RCP lake (left), courtesy of Gary Hart RCP Volunteer
Oak tree (Ratcliffe Power Station) courtesy of Paul Phillips RBC employee
Barn Owl - courtesy of Sr Julien from Holy Cross Convent