

## Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

16 February 2021

# Council shares climate change vision

### Cabinet agrees actions to be carbon neutral by 2050

Today Buckinghamshire Council has made a firm commitment to take action against climate change by adopting 60 different actions to become carbon neutral by 2050. The Climate Change strategy, which is made up of a range of actions worth nearly £10 million, will work at a local level to tackle environmental damage and improve the air quality right across the Buckinghamshire Council area.

The long-term plan is to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the whole county by 2050. By setting out very specific actions it will take, the Council is committed to achieve net zero carbon emissions as early as possible. It has set a target to reduce emissions by at least 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 compared to estimated 1990 emissions.

The detailed strategy includes specific actions which are geared to meeting an ambitious timetable during a difficult time.

Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Bill Chapple OBE, said: “The challenge is to set out the long-term vision when there are so many ‘unknown’ factors at play. At present, the short and medium term impacts of the Covid pandemic are largely unknown. No-one really knows what the future may look like or whether we will return to something closer to pre-Covid normal - for example, travel and commuting patterns may or may not continue or return to pre-Covid levels across Buckinghamshire.”

The Council has outlined practical and realistic steps it will take to reduce both its own emissions and supporting the reduction of emissions from across Buckinghamshire by 2050.

Buckinghamshire Council will take action to reduce emissions, for example by installing renewable energy systems (such as solar panels) on its buildings and

reducing emissions from its fleet by using electric and low emission vehicles and continuing to upgrade street lighting to LEDs.

To help offset carbon emissions, over the next ten years Buckinghamshire Council is going to plant a tree for every person (543,000) living in Buckinghamshire.

The Council is also committed to supporting each of the 16 local community boards serving local communities across the county in their local climate control initiatives which can deliver practical carbon reduction actions at a grass roots level.

Working with all its suppliers and partners to reduce emissions it can also enable others to support change. For example, Buckinghamshire Council will continue to provide more electric vehicle charging points to extend the local infrastructure. It will also work to proactively raise public awareness of climate change and

air quality issues and will use its local planning powers to reduce emissions from new developments where possible.

Bill continued: “My focus is to set out a plan which is not only aspirational and ambitious but, most importantly, achievable. The strategy we have agreed to follow is not an abstract ‘pie in the sky’ vision, it is firmly grounded in reality. It sets out not only what we want to achieve, but how we will reach net zero carbon emissions through real practical measures which are within our control to deliver. We owe it to the people we represent, and as inhabitants of the UK and the wider world to take a real-world approach and deliver on it. We’re taking action on climate change today so we can all bene

#### **NOTES**

Climate change is a global issue which needs action at every level, including national and local across the world. Highly populated and industrialised countries like China, India the US account for around 50% of global carbon emissions; the UK accounts for just 1%. Whilst our carbon emissions here in Bucks are lower than many other parts of the UK, we simply can’t afford to ignore this global issue.

Milton Keynes falls within the geographic historic county of Buckinghamshire, but has a separate unitary council which runs the Milton Keynes area.