

Full Council Meeting – 25th November 2021

Agenda Item CC2261/21

Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions in Croxley Green

Introduction

The influence of “greenhouse” gases on climate change has been widely reported in the media with the recent COP26 event in Glasgow. Nation states have made commitments to try to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) being emitted to the atmosphere. This is going to require significant changes in the way we live our lives.

Both Hertfordshire County Council and Three Rivers District Council have declared a “climate emergency” and set out strategic plans to improve sustainability.

This paper proposes a working group to look into the implications for the residents of Croxley Green and to make proposals for actions the Parish Council could take to help the transition to a low carbon economy.

Discussion

An enormous amount of information and opinion has been published over the years. The increase in the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere has been an acknowledged scientific fact for more than 60 years and the effect of CO₂ in warming the atmosphere has been known for longer. The UN set up the IPCC 33 years ago. The first COP took place in 1995. Since then there has been a steady increase in the rate at which CO₂ has been added to the atmosphere.

The public debate has mainly been about how the climate will be affected and the implications for humanity on the planet. It seems to be widely accepted that more parts of the planet will become inhospitable and that climate stress will cause conflict over resources and mass migration.

Published information shows that the main sources of CO₂ in Three Rivers are travel & transport and domestic heating. Both of these are essentially local matters. Some advice on improving homes to reduce carbon footprint has been published on the Parish Council noticeboard.

The purpose of this working group is to investigate the ways in which people living locally could be encouraged and helped to make the changes that will lead to lower carbon emissions and a more sustainable life style and the barriers to change.

Recommendation

1. To set up a working party with the terms of reference attached
2. To encourage wider community involvement in the working party
3. To investigate, report progress to P&D from time to time, and make recommendations to Council.

Cllr Andrew Gallagher
November 2021

ANNEX A – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

CROXLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

REDUCING CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS IN CROXLEY GREEN

1. Membership

Members of the working group will be appointed by the Parish Council and membership will be reviewed annually.

Members of the public may also be members of the working group, subject to agreement by the Parish Council.

2. Leader

The leader of the working group must be an elected Member and will be chosen by the working group and agreed by the Parish Council. This will be subject to review annually.

The leader will be the working group's main point of contact for Council staff, Council members and members of the public.

3. Responsibility and powers

Working groups cannot make decisions on behalf of the Parish Council.

The working group will report progress to the Planning & Development Committee.

The working group will report its recommendations to the Council for approval.

4. Purpose

The purpose of the working group is to

- Investigate how carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced in Croxley Green.
- Identify the barriers to reducing those emissions and
- Suggest ways in which they might be overcome.

5. Meeting Schedule

The working group will meet on an ad-hoc basis at times convenient to Members.

The aim is to make substantial progress and make proposals to Council this financial year.

ANNEX B – CONTEXT

COP26

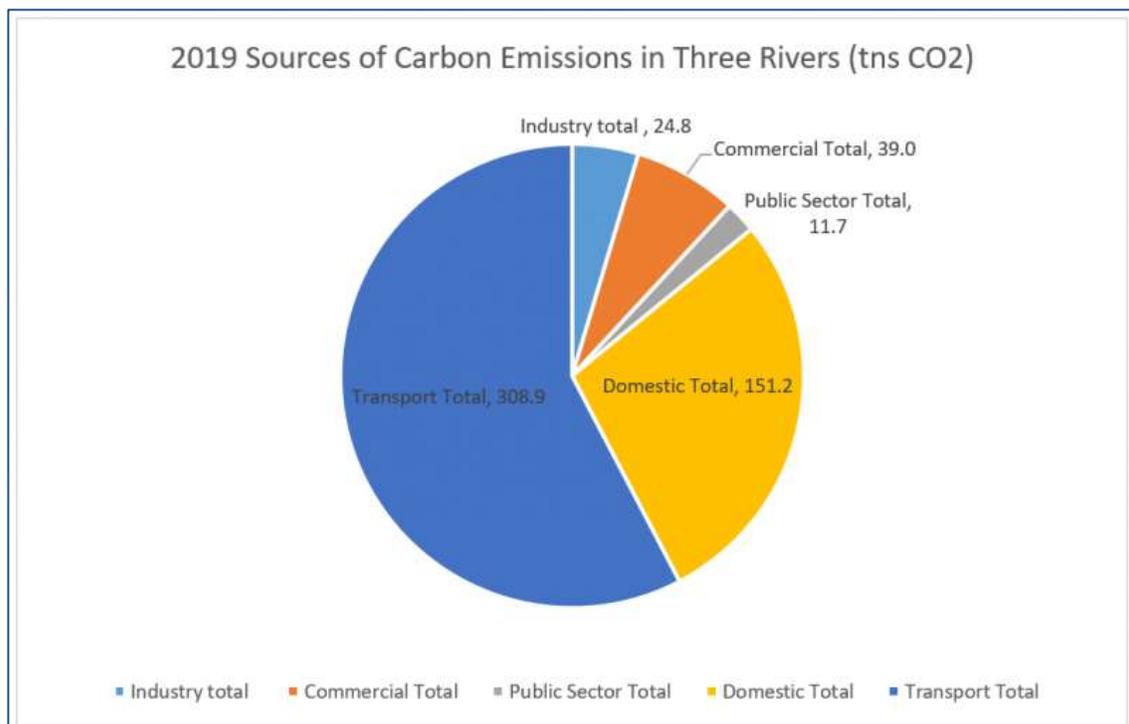
COP26 has proposed the need for very significant reductions in CO₂ emission by 2030 to meet the target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C by the end of this century.

The target is for a 50% reduction from present levels over the next eight years. This is **equivalent to an 8% reduction from year to year**.

Three Rivers emissions report 2019

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/three-rivers-emissions-report-2019>

The government department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) release annual carbon emissions (CO₂) data broken down by local authorities. Due to the complexity of the data, the most recent information is always 18 months old. Three Rivers 2019 CO₂ data has now been released.



Three Rivers Carbon Budget

A *'carbon budget'* is the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide emissions permitted over a period of time.

Once carbon dioxide reaches the atmosphere it can take between 300-1000 years to breakdown, which is why when considering emissions reductions, it is crucial to take into account carbon budgets.

The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research are a leading climate organisation in the UK who use science-based targets to help local authorities calculate their area's carbon budgets so that they can cut their emissions in line with climate science and the UN Paris Agreement. The extract below is from their [summary report for Three Rivers](#).

"Based on our analysis, for Three Rivers to make its 'fair' contribution towards the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the following recommendations should be adopted:

1. *Stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 3.4 million tonnes (MtCO₂) for the period of 2020 to 2100. **At 2017 CO₂ emission levels, Three Rivers would use this entire budget within 6 years from 2020.***
2. *Initiate an immediate programme of CO₂ mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions **averaging a minimum of -14.1% per year** to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action, and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.*
3. ***Reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2040.** This report provides an indicative CO₂ reduction pathway that stays within the recommended maximum carbon budget of 3.4 MtCO₂. At 2040 5% of the budget remains. This represents very low levels of residual CO₂ emissions by this time, or the Authority may opt to forgo these residual emissions and cut emissions to zero at this point. Earlier years for reaching zero CO₂ emissions are also within the recommended budget, provided that interim budgets with lower cumulative CO₂ emissions are also adopted.”*

Implications for Croxley Green

The high figure for Transport emissions within Three Rivers is, in part, due to the M25. This is outside the parish area and not something that the parish council could expect to influence. However the parish council could work with others to promote and encourage the use of sustainable modes (walking and cycling) for shorter journeys within the parish or nearby and encourage the use of lower carbon modes (public transport) for longer journeys to and from the parish.

The next major source of emissions is Domestic (mainly heating). There are three main ways to reduce the level of emissions. One is to substitute a renewable source of energy for a fossil fuel source. Another is to improve the insulation of the existing housing stock. The third is to adapt to a lower level of heating within homes. There are barriers to each of these. All three will be needed to make the kind of reductions implied by COP26 and the UK's national commitments over the necessary timescale.