Report of the Climate Emergency Action Plan Panel - First CEAP Review

Report of the Chairman of the Panel, Cllr Neil Gwynne

Recommended:

1. **That the first review of the Climate Emergency Action Plan is published in Q1 2022 and includes the items listed in section 3.3 of this report.**

2. **That the 2022 review includes an aspirational target of 2035 for TVBC operations to achieve carbon neutrality.**

3. **That the 2022 review includes an aspirational target of 2040 for defined parts of the local community and economy to achieve carbon neutrality, as influenced and supported by the Council.** (It is noted that this target is dependent upon agreed measures being available before that date).

4. **That subsequent CEAP reviews are published every two years, between now and 2034. And that progress updates are published in the intervening years (as has happened in 2021).**

5. **That a presentation of this report is made to Full Council.**

SUMMARY:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed a member Panel to review the status of the Council's response to the declared Climate Emergency; and to collate proposed additions to the Climate Emergency Action Plan for consideration by Council members and the Climate Emergency Board.

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1   Introduction

1.1   The Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019 and agreed its Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) in June 2020. The CEAP is recognised as a *'living document'* which will require regular review. OSCOM reviews progress against the CEAP twice a year.

1.2   In April 2021, OSCOM agreed to establish a panel to undertake an investigation of what a reviewed CEAP should contain. The Panel was chaired by Cllr Neil Gwynne and included Cllr Borg-Neal, Cllr Burley, Cllr Coole, Cllr Johnston, Cllr Lodge, Cllr Parker and Cllr Warnes. Also Anton Page and Lauren Fry (Romsey Future stakeholders), and Carol Bartholomew and Wendy Davis (Andover Vision stakeholders). A full list of contributed ideas and comments by all Panel members is shown in Annex One.

1.3   The Panel met four times. The last of these meetings (and subsequent report drafts/reviews via email) being for Council members and Council officers only.

1.4   At the third meeting presentations were given by the Chief Executive of tec (The Environment Centre) Adam Goulden and by ex-Councillor Simon Pickering from Stroud District Council (Stroud were the first Council in the world to declare net zero carbon emissions, in 2015). The slides from these presentations form Annex Two and Annex Three, respectively.

1.5   At the fourth meeting, the session was facilitated by Graham Smith – and the output from this is incorporated into the relevant sections of chapter 3, which are the Must Dos and Should Dos (see section 2.4 below).

2   Background and Approach

2.1   Since the TVBC declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, the certainty that action is needed – and the urgency for that action – has increased. Particularly with the recent publication of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report[1].

2.2   The overall aim of the Panel was to establish content to be considered for inclusion in the next iteration of the CEAP – not to produce that next iteration itself. To achieve this aim as comprehensively as possible non-councillors were included on the panel who had a background interest/involvement in the topic. And two individuals with significant expertise on the topic were invited to present to the panel.

2.3   To provide structure to what is a long list of possible inclusions, the following subject areas were considered separately (these subject areas align with common practice in considering response to climate change):

(a)   Buildings and Energy

(b)   Transport and Travel

(c)   Suppliers and Consumption

(d)   Capture and Adaptation

(e)   Influencing behaviours

2.4   Within each of the listed areas, prioritisation was considered using the following (MoSCoW rules) guidance:

(a)   **M**ust do   Finance and other resources must be made available to undertake this work.

(b)   **S**hould do   Finance and other resources should be made available to undertake this work – only urgent and essential other work should delay or prevent these activities from being completed.

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[1] See AR6 Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability (https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/)

(c)   **C**ould do   If sufficient finance and resources became available, then this work is definitely of value and worth carrying out. It is also an activity that has no prerequisite dependencies, so is work that could be done.

(d)   **W**ould do   This activity is currently not possible given anticipated available finance and/or resources and/or other necessary prerequisites. If finance/resources/prerequisites change in a way that makes this activity feasible, then TVBC would carry it out.

2.5   None of the ideas put forward have been deemed outside the remit of TVBC, in that there are always opportunities to use Council influence - even when direct action lies outside of the Council's remit. The recent example of writing to the Minister for Housing re new build standards being a case in point.

2.6   Only ideas deemed to meet the Must do or Should do guidance are addressed in Chapter 3 (summarised). That does not mean the other two categories are irrelevant – all ideas and comments from the panel are listed in Annex One, whether they are deemed Must, Should, Could or Would. And it is hoped that these will also be considered by officers whenever the CEAP is updated.

3   Additional Items to be considered for the 2022 CEAP

3.1   Overall targets re carbon neutrality:

Over 40% of UK councils have set a target for achieving carbon neutrality from their own operations by 2030 or earlier. In this context, TVBC's current target of 2050 ('*or earlier if possible*') undermines the credibility of our CEAP – thereby reducing our ability to influence. For this reason and accepting that how we measure carbon neutrality requires further work, a target of no later than 2035 for the council's own operations to achieve carbon neutrality should be included in the CEAP.

TVBC – like other district councils – has a high degree of influence (and is able to provide support to) specific elements within the local community and economy. To not include a target for these elements similarly undermines the credibility of the CEAP. Accordingly the CEAP should include a target of 2040 for all such elements to achieve carbon neutrality, with TVBC influence and support. **This target represents a much higher volume of carbon emissions than does the council operations target of 2035,** so its inclusion in the CEAP is extremely important. That said, for this target to be meaningful then agreed measures must be in place re carbon neutrality across a range of circumstances and industries. Those measures are not yet in place, hence the caveat to this target. But acknowledging the council role in influencing the carbon footprint of others remains an important aspect of the CEAP.

3.2   Available Data and Information

A key finding of this panel is that there is no shortage of pertinent and value-adding information available to inform TVBC's own Climate Emergency Action Plan. Reference documents and websites identified by this panel include:

a) https://cat.org.uk/zero-carbon-connections/ - This is the link to the Zero Carbon Britain Hub and Innovation Lab. A site set up by the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT was established in the 1970s to prepare for a world without fossil fuels). The site's purpose is specifically to "*support councils and community groups in the transition to net zero*".

b) Friends of the Earth – climate related information re Test Valley: https://takeclimateaction.uk/near-you/test-valley?_ga=2.87056728.1185252621.1634115835-1242493720.1611408243

c) Community carbon calculator suitable for use by town/parish councils: https://scanner.topsec.com/?r=show&d=2471&t=1bfd80b3e92f690dd4d5196d072d9b407b5ea412&u=https%3A%2F%2Fimpact-tool.org.uk%2F

d) Centre for Sustainable Energy resources (reports): https://www.cse.org.uk/resources

e) Friends of the Earth report on climate change related divestment: https://foe.scot/resource/divest-councils-2021/ .

f) Ashden resources for councils: https://ashden.org/<https://scanner.topsec.com/?r=show&d=2471&t=815468d6a3722c77c7a15c3aeaba403800067926&u=https%3A%2F%2Fashden.org%2F .

g) Case studies from other councils: https://scanner.topsec.com/?r=show&d=2471&t=e61f7453ee2e10a45e30cb0e751c0cfb7af56646&u=https%3A%2F%2Ftakeclimateaction.uk%2Fresources%2Fcouncils-tackling-climate-chaos .

h) Friends of the Earth - template Climate Action Plan: https://takeclimateaction.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-06/Climate%20Action%20Plan%20for%20councils%20June%202020.pdf

i) National Association of Local Councils - Case studies on climate change: https://scanner.topsec.com/?r=show&d=2471&t=e61f7453ee2e10a45e30cb0e751c0cfb7af56646&u=https%3A%2F%2Ftakeclimateaction.uk%2Fresources%2Fcouncils-tackling-climate-chaos

3.3   Output from Officer-facilitated Session on Must Dos and Should Dos

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
3.3.a BUILDINGS AND ENERGY		
Include use of renewable energy in Local Plan	To include a policy within the next Local Plan to guide / support the uptake of future renewable energy proposals / projects /installations	• Complete the review of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy sources in the Borough and use to inform the next Local Plan • Through the preparation of the next Local Plan, ensure policies are written to facilitate the move towards carbon neutrality, in the context of national legislation and policy
Influence carbon footprint of public buildings	To support and promote the energy efficiency and low carbon systems of community buildings where the Council has an influence	• Specialist learning event for Parish and Town Councils and community organisations who have well developed local climate activities (what worked and what didn't, how could we share to all) • All Parish / Town Council event, following on from learning event, to celebrate and share best practice, inspiring other Councils and groups to follow suit. Also highlighting resources available (officer support and grants).
Influence energy efficiency of residential homes	Through the future Local Plan seek to ensure new developments (including	• Promote and raise awareness of grants available to residents

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
	the town centre masterplans) are built to achieve a high standard of energy efficiency, taking account of changing Building Regulations, to minimize the future need for retrofit	to improve their homes, including in terms of energy performance • Target action on enhancing energy performance of existing private rented homes in the Borough • Develop promotion scheme to provide advice to owners on energy efficiency improvements and trusted installers • Through the preparation of the next Local Plan, ensure policies are written to facilitate the move towards carbon neutrality, in the context of national legislation and policy
3.3.b TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL		
Promote electric vehicles to employees	Promote electric vehicles to employees	• In conjunction with relevant partners, continue to support the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of Electric Vehicles, including the installation of EV charging points at council offices
Exploit home working	That the Council actively consider measures to facilitate hybrid and home working within the organisation where operationally possible.	• Review of future IT equipment and what is available in the market to enable the Council to equip people with the right tools and kit to enable flexible and sustainable working. • Evaluate further roll

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
		- out of mobile devices / tablets within the wider business. - Seek to minimise travel except where there is a specific business or training need
Electric vehicle charging points	To continue to investigate opportunities for delivering Electric Vehicle charging points for staff, at public car parks and to include standards of provision within future Local Plan	In conjunction with relevant partners, continue to support the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of Electric Vehicles including the installation of EV charging points at public car parks and council offices
Promote active travel	Work with stakeholders and partners to promote active travel initiatives and help deliver and maintain the necessary infrastructure	In conjunction with relevant partners, continue to support the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of sustainable modes of travel. This will include the preparation of a Walking and Cycling Strategy and promoting the availability of sustainable modes of travel.
Bus Services	Engage with HCC concerning its proposed Hampshire Bus Services Improvement Plan.	In conjunction with relevant partners, continue to support the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of sustainable modes of travel. This will include the preparation of a Walking and Cycling Strategy and

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
		promoting the availability of sustainable modes of travel.
3.3.c SUPPLIERS AND CONSUMPTION		
Waste Management	Support the delivery of the Waste Strategy in a timely and informed manner	
Promote reduce, reuse, refill and repair	Promote and increase understanding re reduce, reuse, refill and repair as part of the waste hierarchy	
TVBC use recycled products	That the Council maximise the use of recycled or sustainability sourced products as far as practical to do so [issue not necessarily of cost but of appropriate quality as well as considering the source of supply and life cycle impact assessment].	• Ensuring climate change considerations are factored into our thinking throughout planning and delivering services.
3.3.d CAPTURE AND ADAPTATION		
Tree planting	To support & enable the planting of trees of local provenance within land in Council ownership	• Develop a Tree Management Strategy which will detail overarching management principles and replacement planting across Council property • Develop a Tree Planting Strategy to provide a basis for planting in appropriate places across the borough • Continue to explore opportunities for land acquisition for small

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
		scale woodland creation
Natural carbon sinks – other than trees	Investigate creation and enhancement natural ecosystems/habitats that can function as carbon sinks within land in Council ownership, as per the opportunities listed in the CEE Bill that is currently before Parliament	• Work with partners to secure appropriate large-scale opportunities for wilding and nutrient mitigation which will contributed to carbon sequestration
Biodiversity emergency	To continue to co-ordinate and develop the Council's response to climate and ecological emergency	• Whilst it is not anticipated that the CEAP and Biodiversity Action Plan will be merged, the links between the topics that these documents cover will increase and strengthen. At some point this will need to be reflected in the Biodiversity Action Plan.
Adaptation to climate change	Ensure the Council is making decisions and taking action to adapt and improve resilience to climate change	• Whilst not a CEAP action there is a need to recognise the existing community and resilience work the Council undertakes with communities and other partners, many of such opportunities are referred to in in Annex One.
3.3.e INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURS		
Setting TVBC targets	Establish aspirational carbon targets for the Council informed by evidence in order to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050.	• Potential timeline for all such targets to be included in the spring 2022 review of CEAP.

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
TVBC leadership targets	Establish targets for Heads of Service that support the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan	• These to be made available to Council members by mid 2022.
Ensuring knowledge base	Appropriate training and learning opportunities for both officer and members are identified and pursued (with the timeline to be identified) in order to develop and sustain an appropriate level of knowledge re the climate emergency and related issues, across the Council.	• Facilitate behaviour change of staff and members to put reducing carbon emissions at the centre of our approach, reducing our carbon footprint both at work and in wider life.
Making climate change key consideration in decision making	Ensure climate change is a key consideration in decision making	• Ensure the implications of the climate emergency are taken into account in all Council strategic and policy documents, as well as in service planning and decision-making processes
Influencing residents	Continue to work with communities and businesses to signpost information and resources, influence, encourage and inform behaviours	• See actions within the Supporting Communities and Businesses theme of the CEAP, drawing upon the ideas in Annex One as appropriate.
Support relevant prospective legislation and guidelines	Continue to take opportunities to lobby the government to encourage action on climate emergency	• Take opportunities to lobby the government to encourage action on the transition towards carbon neutrality
Promote green economy	Promote the transition to a green economy and associated skills development	• Work with partners to deliver a business event to offer best practice, networking and promote access to

Sub-heading	Recommendation for action	Links to CEAP (2020) Actions or wider council strategy
		Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainable Business Partnership support for businesses • Business event at University of Southampton Science Park to highlight innovative carbon reduction techniques in business and industry • And other similar events in future.

4 Commentary (Panel Chair)

I have included this section of the report on the following basis:

- Firstly, that the council placed me in the role of Climate Emergency Champion and – in that role – I have a responsibility to comment on Climate Emergency matters.

- Secondly, because there was such a wide diversity of views expressed within the panel on some aspects of the Climate Emergency Action Plan that some commentary was – in my view - warranted.

I fully appreciate that not every member of the panel agrees with this approach. OSCOM is under no obligation to approve this panel report of course and/or may request changes to it before granting approval.

4.1 Inclusion of Non-Members

Whilst it is established practice for OSCOM – and OSCOM panels – to include input from external parties (typically by experts in a relevant field), I understand this panel is the first time that members of the public – with pertinent knowledge and interests – have been included as panel members. I would strongly recommend that this approach is considered for future OSCOM panels. It makes influential members of the public aware of council processes and constraints. And it provides the panel with ready access to information and contacts from individuals who will have spent more time considering these issues than most (if not all) of the officers and members involved. The non-councillor members provided much of the input to the Panel because of their wider and deeper knowledge/experience re climate emergency issues.

I was concerned that the inevitable widely differing perspectives that this introduced to the panel might have led to some friction. But I am glad to say that did not happen.

4.2   Objectives / Targets

The need for the next iteration of the CEAP to include overall targets for carbon reduction has been stated. Generally, the panel exhibited a divide between those who deemed targets an essential component and those who are of the view that insufficient information is available to set targets and/or gathering the necessary information may take up excessive resource. The targets within the recommendations are therefore, inevitably, too ambitious for some panel members, and not ambitious enough for others.

Personally, I am firmly in the camp that we have to set targets within the 2022 iteration of the CEAP – albeit aspirational ones, if necessary. The setting of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed/Achievable, Reasonable/Realistic) objectives in personal appraisals is a widely accepted approach. The same must happen with the CEAP, else it is certain to lack credibility with many and provide no means for measuring progress or convincingly demonstrating success.

4.3   Growth

Within the panel – and beyond – some hesitation on taking more action re climate change is (I assume) linked to concern about limiting growth. There are two key points about this:

a.   Some industries and jobs will be adversely impacted (some will disappear) by the steps taken to minimise climate change – but others will grow strongly. Investing in the right industries and jobs will therefore protect overall levels of growth.

b.   Because the world has left it so late before sufficiently addressing climate change, it is not going to be possible to avoid REDUCE as one of the key actions we must take to keep global warming at the safest levels possible. REUSE, REFILL, REPAIR – as actions these will not be enough (not in the 2020s and 2030s anyway) to restrict global temperature rises to 'safe' levels. REDUCE – reduce number of car and plane journeys, reduce consumer activity, reduce the levels of consumption of utilities, etc. – will inevitably make sustaining growth more challenging. But the whole world will be in this position. So even if growth is constrained to some extent for the next two decades (although I don't believe it will be), even then our *relative* position in the world economy does not need to be damaged. Quite the opposite.

4.4   Is There a Climate Emergency?

There was no indication within this panel's meetings or correspondence of any lack of belief in the existence of the climate emergency, its link with human activity, and the difficult actions that tackling the emergency will require. But within the community the council serves, opinions do vary on what priority the climate emergency should be given versus other issues. So, as a council, we should be using our communications and influence to inform and influence behaviours. To achieve this we need to put the climate emergency as front-and-centre in our communications, as we have so successfully done with the Covid-19 pandemic.

That is **not** happening at present. As an example - our website lists council services and information under a total of eighteen different headings. Climate change is one part of the very **last** of these headings, and reference to it comes last in the heading itself. The message this sends out is that (for example) a visitor survey on Vigo recreation ground, and the now largely redundant information on Getting Ready For Brexit, are both of higher importance than is the climate emergency. **This has to change, and quickly.**

5   Conclusion

5.1   This report sets out the outputs of the Climate Emergency Action Plan Panel. The Panel sought to establish content to be considered for the inclusion in the next iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and, in that context, a series of recommendations have been made.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)				
Test Valley Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020) Test Valley Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan Update (2021) https://testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/environmentandsustainability/climate-emergency-action-plan				
Confidentiality				
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.				
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