

# Update on Climate Emergency Action Plan

Report of the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development (Portfolio: Climate Emergency and Countryside)

## Recommended:

**That the update and progress on the implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan is noted.**

### SUMMARY:

An update on the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan is provided. This follows on from the previous report to the Committee in November 2022.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the implementation of the council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP).

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The council declared a climate emergency on 4 September 2019 and committed to '*investigating clear and effective options to become a carbon-neutral organisation*'. The council approved a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) in June 2020.
- 2.2 The CEAP sets out that this committee will be the forum for monitoring progress through biannual reports. The previous report was presented in November 2022.

## 3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The Corporate Action Plan 2019-2023: Year 4, contains 'progressing actions in the Climate Emergency Action Plan'. Key areas of work are noted to include reducing the council's emissions as we work towards becoming a carbon neutral organisation; and through service delivery and partnership work to support carbon reduction across the Borough.
- 3.2 As the committee will be aware, following extensive public engagement and evidence gathering, the corporate plan for 2023 to 2027 has been drafted. Through the deliberative events, the key principles raised included the environment and sustainability, as well as conserving nature – this fed into the drafting of the document. At the time of writing, the corporate plan is due to be considered by the Council. The document includes five strategic priorities, one of which is the environment and reflects on the importance people place on the natural environment and tackling climate change. The emphasis on the need for a place based approach in how we work continues to be recognised. The corporate plan will provide the framework for ensuring that the Climate Emergency Action Plan is embedded in service delivery and decision making.

## **4 Climate Emergency Action Plan Update**

- 4.1 Information has been brought together to update on the latest position in relation to all of the actions, from across the council's services, as identified within the CEAP. This is provided in Annex 1 to the report and reflects the way we have been embedding climate change actions across the organisation. This report refers to the key projects and changes since the last report to the committee.
- 4.2 The greenhouse gas emissions from the council's fleet fuel use is a significant component of the reported figures for the organisation (as referred to below). Options to reduce these emissions continue to be investigated, including electric options and alternative fuels. At the time of writing, a paper is to be presented to the council's cabinet to seek approval for additional funds to switch to using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel to run our fleet vehicles that currently use diesel. This would significantly reduce the council's direct (scope 1) reported emissions for the fleet fuel use – the reduction is anticipated to be in the order of 95%<sup>1</sup>. This would also have a substantial impact on the overall reported emissions for the organisations. Based on the position reported for 2021/22, this would represent an overall reduction of about 60%.
- 4.3 There are currently 11 electric vehicles in the council's fleet (of 119 road registered vehicles, including tractors). There are five electric vans on order, two of which are replacements. Three diesel street sweepers have recently been replaced with electric equivalents.
- 4.4 As previously reported, ten energy audits were completed for some of the council's highest energy consuming assets. This included Bourne House in Romsey. Based on the recommendations identified in the audit, an application was made for phase 3b of the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for a series of works to improve the energy performance of the building and move to a heating system powered by cleaner energy. The bid was for up to £221,871 of funding. The application was successful and works are now underway to refine the design elements and deliver the scheme by April 2024.
- 4.5 The council has been working with its delivery partner to retrofit and improve the energy efficiency of a number of private sector homes within the borough (Local Authority Delivery (LAD) 3 and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) 1 funds). A range of methods were used to encourage uptake, including a targeted mail out to households that fitted the qualifying criteria, as well as publicity through Test Valley News, our social media platforms, the council's e-newsletter and on refuse vehicles. This funding scheme is now closed for registrations, with measures continuing to be installed for the identified properties. Opportunities to access future pots of funding for home energy efficiency continue to be explored. The council, as part of a wider consortium, has recently been successful in accessing additional funding to improve the energy performance and heating systems of off gas homes (via HUG2).

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on direct (scope 1) emission conversion factors published by the government and using the same litres of fuel used by the fleet as in 2021/22.

- 4.6 The guidance for council community grants (councillor community grant scheme and community asset fund) has been altered to highlight that climate change and environmental projects are eligible. To date, some relevant projects have been supported, including funding the acquisition of a thermal imaging camera and a scheme to improve the energy efficiency of an asset. Additionally, the criteria for applications for community asset fund grants have been reviewed and changes are being developed for applications in 2023/24, placing emphasis on the environmental credentials of any project seeking funding.
- 4.7 The council has been awarded its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) allocation, which includes a £100,000 fund for community energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects, as well as £140,000 to help local rural land-based businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. These projects are being developed and implemented during 2023/24 and 2024/25. The community energy project is planned to be delivered through a contract with Community Energy South to engage and work with communities across the borough to identify and deliver projects that will help cut carbon emissions. Community Energy South is already working with community groups locally and has experience in supporting communities across the south east in this way. The rural business support project will incorporate an advice service, a small capital grants scheme and is intended to incorporate an opportunity for progressing a demonstrator proposal. The council has also put in an additional bid to support rural businesses as part of the rural SPF – the outcome of this was awaited at the time of writing.
- 4.8 During the 2022/23 planting season, there were 6,016 trees planted. This number includes replacement planting of 2,460 of the 19,325 trees planted in the 2021/22 planting season. The total for new planting in 2022/23 was 3,556 trees. Cumulatively, during the last two seasons planting is over 22,800 trees and it is expected that the target of 30,000 trees planted and surviving over a three year period will be met. There has been increased community participation in the planting schemes this year. This included 1,500 trees planted by school children at Bury Hill led by Andover Trees United.
- 4.9 In tandem with securing external funding and making progress with those projects identified, work has also been ongoing on refreshing the CEAP. The focus has been understanding the organisation's decarbonisation trajectory and the associated resource and delivery implications that will feed in to the CEAP refresh.

## **5 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting**

### *Emissions for Test Valley Borough Council*

- 5.1 The CEAP sets out the approach that has been taken to calculating the council's greenhouse gas emissions. This concentrates on energy (electricity and gas) used in the majority of buildings we own and operate, as well as the fuel used in running the fleet vehicles and smaller machinery and plant.

The CEAP provided the base line position as at 2018/19 using the measure of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)<sup>2</sup>. Data for 2019/20 and 2020/21 has previously been shared with the committee. There were delays with bringing the data together for 2021/22 while discrepancies in aspects of the source data were resolved. This information has now been collated and is summarised below. It is also available on the council's website.

Table 1: Greenhouse gas emissions for the Council (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e))

Source	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Fleet and machinery fuel use	1,025	1,066	1,091	1,102
Gas use	251	260	251	335
Electricity use	436	387	275	255
<b>Gross emissions</b>	<b>1,712</b>	<b>1,713</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,692</b>
Green tariff	-	-	148	227
Solar power export	8	7	6	5
<b>Net emissions</b>	<b>1,704</b>	<b>1,706</b>	<b>1,462</b>	<b>1,460</b>

- 5.2 As can be seen from Table 1, the gross reported emissions in 2021/22 were higher than the equivalent position in 2020/21, with the net emissions broadly the same. The higher gross emissions for 2021/22 was driven by the change in gas consumption. The reasons for this are likely to include additional buildings in use compared to 20/21 as a result of easing of coronavirus restrictions, increased ventilation requirements as a result of the pandemic (increasing demand for heating) and potentially lower occupancy rates of some sites causing lower internal heat gains. For information, Hampshire County Council also reported an increase in emissions associated with consumption of natural gas.

## 6 Conclusion

- 6.1 An update has been provided on the implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan (2020) following on from the most recent report in November 2022.
- 6.2 The committee is asked to note the content of this update.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the unit of measurement advocated for use by the government to report on greenhouse gas emissions. It looks beyond carbon dioxide, for example covering methane and nitrous oxide. It records the global warming potential of each greenhouse gas, expressed in terms of the global warming potential of one unit of carbon dioxide.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) (June 2020)

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.

No of Annexes:	1		
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