

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 July 2022
Subject:	Carbon Reduction Action Plan
Report of:	Head of Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Lead:	Head of Finance and Asset Management
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in October 2019, officers, together with Members of the Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group, undertook a baseline audit of the Council's current carbon consumption. This was reported to Council in July 2020 along with an overarching action plan designed to achieve carbon neutrality in Council services by 2030.

Good progress has been made in the second year of the action plan, particularly since the appointment of the new Carbon Reduction Officer. There has been disappointment with the inability to progress the replacement of the heating system at the Council Offices, but the delivery of the solar car parking canopy is well underway and should be completed in the next few weeks.

The appendix also includes a draft action plan for year three. The actions recommended building upon the progress made in the second year and setting solid foundations for the delivery of the Council's 2030 ambition. The third year action plan also begins to look at the strategies required to meet targets against the waste and recycling fleet as well as rollout of electric vehicle charging points. As always, the action plan has been prepared in acknowledgement of the resources available to pursue the ambition.

Recommendation:

Executive Committee is asked to

- 1. CONSIDER the progress achieved in Year two of the action plan.**
- 2. APPROVE the recommended Year three action plan.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

To give Members a formal opportunity to consider progress against the Carbon Reduction Programme and approve the recommended actions of year three.

Resource Implications:

Actions highlighted within the report will require funding from the Council's Asset Management Reserve and the newly formed Climate Change Reserve. Further external funding will be sourced but it is likely that additional delivery budgets will be required in future years.

Legal Implications:

None associated with the report.

Risk Management Implications:

If sufficient resources to allow the delivery of the ambition are not allocated, the Council will not be able to deliver all of the points within the council motion and will not be able to play a proactive role in anything wider than energy efficiency measures within the council offices.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The progress against the action plan will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group and an annual outturn report produced for Committee.

Environmental Implications:

The action plan aims to deliver the changes necessary in order to ensure the Council reduces its carbon footprint.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**1.1** Tewkesbury Borough Council declared a climate emergency at a Council meeting in October 2019.

The motion as agreed is reproduced below.

Motion AGREED:

- Declare a 'climate emergency'.
- Commit to doing all in its power to make Tewkesbury Borough Council offices carbon neutral by 2030.
- Expand the remit of the existing Flood Risk Management Group to deal with climate change matters with the following delegations to the Borough Solicitor in consultation with the Group:
 1. Preparation of revised Terms of Reference to include an audit of the Council's current position, an action plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, funding and promotion of good practice throughout the Borough including buildings that provide a public service, such as the Tewkesbury Leisure Centre; and
 2. Membership of the Group, taking account of its wider role.
- Call upon central government to provide additional powers and resources to support local and national action towards the 2030 target.
- Commit to working with partners in Gloucestershire to achieve countywide carbon neutrality aims.

1.2 In July 2020, the Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group recommended to Council the approval of the initial Climate Change and Carbon Reduction baseline audit report and the adoption of the action plan.

1.3 This report details progress made against the initial action plan targets over the last 12 months and recommends the adoption of new targets for the next twelve months to ensure the Council remains on course to meet its stated target.

2.0 ACTION PLAN

2.1 Following the adoption of the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Audit and Action Plan, officers have been reviewing the overarching targets and working on the delivery of actions to advance the Council's ambition. The second year of the action plan has seen good progress made, particularly since the appointment of the Carbon Reduction Officer in February. This appointment means that outstanding year two actions can be delivered and we can aim to deliver a wider plan in the third year.

2.2 Appendix A, highlights the achievements in the second year of the action plan including:

- The approval of funding to support our ambitions including:
 - a £100,000 delivery fund from the Borough Council's reserves.
 - £284,200 of external grant funding and £447,200 of internal funding to support the delivery of a solar car parking canopy.
 - £40,600 of ongoing funding to support a new Carbon Reduction Officer post.
- Appointment of the Carbon Reduction Officer in February.
- Appointment of contractors and start on site for the delivery of the solar car park canopy.
- An updated Tree Management Policy.
- Promotional and partnership work in the run up to COP26 last November.

2.3 Despite the achievements in year, it has also been a frustrating year with significant resource being dedicated to an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to secure external funding for the replacement of the heat system. Having secured funding in year one for this project, the tender for its delivery in year two saw a significant increase in cost for the installation of the new system which resulted in funding being withdrawn for the project. The team then took the opportunity to bid for further external funding, completing a detailed assessment and spending many hours discussing the bid with the funders. Unfortunately, whilst the bid was technically sound and had passed all assessment criteria, the fund had run out of money and could not make an award to Tewkesbury. This project and the securing of external funding remains a key target for Tewkesbury and will continue to be a primary action in our plans until it is delivered. It is hoped that a further round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding will be announced in the Autumn of 2022 and an early bid could be made utilising all of the information gathered in previous rounds.

2.4 The annual emissions report: 2021 against 2019 baseline, attached at Appendix A highlights a significant reduction in emissions across Council services in the last calendar year. A total of 538 T/CO₂e or 33.5% has been saved against the Council's baseline which is a significant achievement. However, it is important to remember the impact that the covid pandemic has had on our working practices and energy demand in this timeframe, some of which will continue into the future and some of which may fall back to 2019 levels. It is also important to note some of the movements in data supplied by outside bodies which require further investigation and understanding to clarify either the base position or the 2021 update.

2.5 Appendix A also sets out the actions recommended by officers to take forward the Council ambition over the next twelve months. The recommended Year three action plan contains actions that cover a number of aspects of delivery but they have been grouped under six themes:

- Communications and Engagement.
- Technical implementation.
- Scoping studies and Policies and Schemes.
- Budgets & External funding.
- Partnership and wider activity.
- Ongoing activities.

2.6 As can be seen in the year three action plan, a number of activities such as branding, communication and training have been carried over and will build on the developmental work carried out by the Carbon Reduction Officer in the first few months in the role. The action plan also highlights the delivery of a number of actions that have begun in recent months including the rollout of electric vehicle charge points, provision of a fully electric car fleet and the decarbonisation of the domestic property portfolio.

2.7 The action plan also starts to consider the strategies that will be required to deal with our biggest emission area – the Ubico fleet of vehicles. The size of the challenge to make this service area carbon neutral, as well as future challenges on the leisure centre, will be significant and will take a considerable commitment and resources to resolve over the next eight years. Finally, the first few weeks of the year three action plan will see the completion of the solar car parking canopy. Once completed, this will make a significant difference to the carbon neutrality of the Council offices and will be a beacon of our commitment to meet the Council 2030 target.

2.8 The programme for year three will be reviewed if there is a successful bid for funding to replace the heating system at the Council offices given the level of resources that will be required to successfully deliver that project.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Details of the Year two and Year three action plan targets have been discussed with the Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Audit and Action Plan.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) and adopted on December 12, 2015, (The Paris Agreement).

International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on 'Global Warming of 1.5°C', following the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2015. (October 2018).

Climate Change Act 2008.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 As set out in the report.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 The Carbon Reduction Action Plan targets carbon neutrality for Council activities by 2030.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 None.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Audit and Action Plan – Council 28 July 2020.

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Appendices: Appendix A – Annual Emissions Report: 2021 Against 2019 Baseline.