

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 September 2023
Subject:	Carbon Reduction Programme Annual Report
Report of:	Head of Service: Asset Management
Head of Service/Director:	Executive Director: Resources
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	2

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 and third years of the action plan, particularly with the construction of the solar car parking canopy at the Public Service Centre and the planned Air Source Heating installation upgrade later this year.

The appendix also includes an action plan for year four. The actions recommended build upon the progress made to date and set solid foundations for the delivery of the Council's 2030 ambition. The action plan also begins to look at the strategies required to meet targets for 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:

- 1. To CONSIDER the progress achieved against year three of the carbon reduction action plan.**
- 2. To APPROVE the Year Four action plan.**

Financial 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:

There are no legal implications arising directly from the content of the report. Officers will liaise with One Legal where necessary in the implementation of the proposals identified in the action plan.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

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

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

As detailed within action plan.

Safeguarding Implications:

None

Impact on the Customer:

Several objectives within the Year Four action plan will have direct benefits to the public, such as access to electric vehicle charge points, positive biodiversity improvements, waste reduction and opportunities for home energy efficiency.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tewkesbury Borough Council declared a climate emergency at a Council meeting in October 2019, which was further extended and expanded by the Council in May 2023.

The original 2019 motion as agreed is reproduced below.

1. Declare a 'climate emergency'.
2. Commit to doing all in its power to make Tewkesbury Borough Council offices carbon neutral by 2030.
3. 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:
 - I. 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
 - II. Membership of the Group, taking account of its wider role.
4. Call upon central government to provide additional powers and resources to support local and national action towards the 2030 target.
5. Commit to working with partners in Gloucestershire to achieve countywide carbon neutrality aims.

1.2 In July 2022, the former Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group recommended to the Executive Committee to note the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Year Two action plan progress and agree the adoption of the Year Three action plan.

1.3 This report details progress made against the baseline data 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.

1.4 In May 2023, the Council passed a motion to expand this declaration to a Borough wide climate emergency and also declared a nature and ecological emergency (Appendix B).

2.0 ACTION PLAN

2.1 Following the adoption of the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Audit and Action Plan in 2019, officers have been reviewing the overarching targets and working on the delivery of actions to advance the Council's ambition. The third year of the action plan has seen good progress made, particularly since the installation of the Solar Canopy in June 2022.

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

- The approval of funding to support our ambitions including:
 - a £200,000 delivery fund from the Borough Council's reserves.
 - Securing of external grant funding and internal funding to support the delivery of the air source heat pump at the Public Service Centre.
 - £83,000 external funding secured for electric vehicle charging points
 - £62,000 external funding for low carbon communities over 3 years
- Installation of the solar canopy supplying electricity to the Public Service Centre and Leisure Centre
- Southwest Energy Efficiency Awards – Winner of Council of the Year and highly commended as landlord of the year and commended for large-scale projects
- Certified as a Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation
- Carbon literacy training provided to 60 members of staff.
- Introduction of a Green Champion network within the organisation
- Publication of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy.

2.3 The annual greenhouse gas emissions report, attached at Appendix A, highlights a reduction in emissions across Council services in the last calendar year. A total of 62 T/CO₂e or 3.7% has been saved against the Council's baseline. However, it is important to remember the 2019 figures were collated at the time with the best available information. During this period since establishing the baseline, significant work has been undertaken to refine the figures and include more areas of activity.

2.4 Appendix A also sets out the actions recommended by Officers to take forward the Council ambition over the next twelve months. The recommended Year Four action plan contains actions that cover several aspects of delivery, which have been grouped under five themes:

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

2.5 As can be seen in the year four action plan, a number of activities continue to build on achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 within the Council Offices and now incorporates additional activities to put in place strong foundations for the delivery of actions against the recently agreed borough wide climate and ecological emergencies. This includes securing additional funding, appointing to a new post and developing a more encompassing borough wide strategy.

2.6 The action plan also continues 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 seven years.

2.7 The action plan remains ambitious and requires dedicated resource to deliver the actions. Additional resources are being sought to assist in the delivery and if these are agreed and a new member of staff secured, it is considered that additional activities can be added to the action plan to support delivery of actions associated with the 2023 Council motion. These will be discussed and agreed with both the Lead Member and the Climate Change and Ecology Management Group.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 The greenhouse gas emissions report and details of the Year Three Progress and Year Four Objectives have been presented and discussed with the Climate Change and Ecology Management Group.

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

4.1 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.

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 The fourth year of the plan is actively monitored by the Climate Change and Ecology Management Group through quarterly updates, whilst specific projects are also monitored by programme board along with monthly updates to the relevant Lead Members.

5.2 The Council also reports into and shares knowledge with the CN2030 Local Authority Officers Group as part of Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 6.1** On 1 October 2019 Tewkesbury Borough Council declared a Climate Change emergency. The Council committed to become carbon neutral by 2030 by addressing Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions for the Public Services Centre building.
- 6.2** In May 2023, the Council passed a motion to expand this declaration to a borough wide climate emergency and also declared a nature and ecological emergency.

Background Papers:	None
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Appendices:	Appendix A – Annual Emissions Report for 2022 and Carbon Reduction Programme Update Appendix B – Council Motion – May 2023