

Cherwell District Council

Executive

5 October 2020

Cherwell District Council Climate Action Framework

Report of Executive Director Place and Growth

This report is public

Purpose of report

To note progress made and seek approval for the Climate Action Framework as a basis to frame action against our Climate Emergency motions.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the progress made.
- 1.2 To approve the Climate Action Framework document (appendix 1).

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, committing the Council to ensure its own operations and activities are zero carbon by 2030 and aspiring to achieve net zero for the wider district by 2030. The Council committed to prioritising action on the Climate Emergency in January 2020 across the Councils activities.
- 2.2 The Council and Oxfordshire County Council have committed to joint working to deliver their climate action commitments. This will be enabled by a joint climate action team and a joint climate action working group sat across both organisations to look for opportunities for joint approaches to programmes.
- 2.3 Both councils will publish their own climate action framework reflecting the different roles and political commitments in each organisation.

3.0 Climate Action Framework

- 3.1 The Climate Action Framework is intended to guide action and mobilisation of the Climate Action programme to the target date. The document has been updated with inputs from officers and reports throughout the Council, the document reflects

detailed projects addressing issues or high level ambition as required. The framework:

- Recognises zero carbon as integral to the Council's vision of the 'renew' element of the Restart, Recovery, Renew approach, underpinning resilient and future proofed infrastructure and economy, and linked to shaping liveable, healthy communities
- Sets out a mobilisation phase; identifying priority work areas and deliverables, moving to integrating Climate Action into the Council's business as usual approach through organisational development
- Sets out that our own estate targets will be delivered through an invest to save, coupled with innovation strand to deliver the business models and technologies needed to address more challenging areas that currently do not have a technological or market ready solution
- Reaffirms our commitment to the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and the need to take this further (given the Energy Strategies target of a 50% emission reduction target by 2030)
- Communicates the limitations of our reach, the need to provide leadership and work in partnership to achieve our vision

3.2 The Action Framework addresses the target of aspiring to achieve net zero for the district by 2030. It recognises that the Council is directly responsible for 0.4% of the emissions, whilst having limited number of levers and influence in being able to achieve the target. The target is significantly in advance of both national government policy (to get to net zero by 2050) and the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy. The action plan identifies a number of key actions the Council can take, whilst identifying key areas that will need addressing with the need for significant action from a wide range of partners alongside market and technological advancements.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 In order to reach the 2030 target and aspiration a step change in activity is needed to make it reachable. The Climate Action Framework and mobilisation phase seek to embed a consideration for the Climate Emergency and associated 2030 targets in all aspects of the Council's services and activities. This important stage will guide key work areas and enable coordination of activities.

5.0 Consultation

Informal consultation has taken place with neighboring Local Authorities and Oxfordshire County Council in the formation of this framework. Regular consultation will continue with all stakeholders in order to realise opportunities.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Members advise officers to take a different approach to that outlined in the report.

The framework sets out a structure to enable comprehensive climate action, embedding change in all aspects of the councils services and activities. A different approach without this structure runs the risk of not fully embedding this priority and subsequently increasing the risk of failing to meet the 2030 target.

Option 2: Members advise officers to undertake no further work on this agenda. This approach has been identified as missing the councils 2030 targets by a considerable margin.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 At this stage the exact costs associated with achieving carbon neutrality are not fully known, given the length of time being considered and the variable nature of solutions and approaches which are expected to change during this time period. Refocusing of existing budgets is intended (such as Fleet) and, where suitable, external funding will be sought to address specific challenges. Financial investment, commitments, or use of other mechanisms such as a Capital Bid being sought would be subject to the usual Business Planning processes and existing policies.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

- 7.2 The measures mentioned here will feed into the wider UK objectives towards reversing climate change, as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008, the objectives of which are to:
- Make the UK's voluntary national targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions legally binding
 - Provide a long-term framework for climate change policy in the UK, which will give businesses and individuals the certainty they need to invest in energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies (such as wind and solar power, biofuels and carbon capture and storage) and
 - Enable the UK to lead by example and drive international negotiations on a post-Kyoto Protocol agreement to take effect from 2020.
- 7.3 At a practical level, any changes to the council's contractual relationships with third parties will need to be negotiated through any change process set out in the relevant contract.

Comments checked by:

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Risk Implications

Delays in implementing related strategies

- 7.4 The main co-dependencies associated with delivery of the councils' own net-zero commitments are:
- **CDC 'Vehicle Replacement Strategy'**: implementation of this strategy might be affected by the lack of cost-effective low-carbon replacement options for some of CDC's heavier vehicles.
 - **CDC Property Strategies**: OCC and CDC are currently reviewing their property strategies. The property strategies have a number of links to the net-zero target – estate rationalisation, travel reduction, creating the certainty for investment in retrofit and generation, and providing locations for an electrified fleet.

7.5 Delays in implementing these strategies create risks delivering early progress against net-zero target.

Third party contract for Cherwell's leisure services

7.6 The Council's Leisure Services Contract represents a risk to zero-carbon targets as leisure centres are currently responsible for 50% of the council's emissions and their management is contracted to a third party.

Financial pressure resulting from coronavirus pandemic

7.7 The council have had to seek in-year savings to compensate for increased expenditure due to coronavirus response. While the financial pressure is expected to continue, it is important to consider the impact of scaling back in-year projects on the longer-term delivery of climate action commitments and potentially planned savings from invest-to-save programmes to ensure there is a balance between project continuity and having a balanced budget.

7.8 The above risks are managed as part of the project operational risks and also reported into the internal governance structure. These will be escalated as and when necessary to the leadership risk register.

Comments checked by:

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Equalities

7.7 The effects of climate change can be expected to disproportionately disadvantage vulnerable groups who are more at risk, for example of extreme weather events or the economic impact of major change. Climate change may also be seen to impact more on young people who will be impacted by longer term consequences, later in their lives.

7.8 Conversely, taking climate action has the potential to have a positive action on vulnerable groups. This applies to our staff as well as in the community. For example, climate interventions that also improve air quality and promote active travel will help to tackle health inequalities. Interventions that reduce energy use and energy costs should benefit the most economically deprived. Acting on climate change is therefore most likely to have a disproportionately positive impact on several of the protected and disadvantaged groups considered within the Councils' equality framework.

- 7.9 The Climate Action framework notes that there is a role for everyone in tackling climate change and in the design of interventions, it is important to ensure that taking action and taking the benefits from schemes are accessible to all. When developing and implementing the Climate Action programme, the Councils must take an inclusive approach, ensuring the costs and benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy are fairly shared.
- 7.10 Specific impacts of new schemes, policies and projects will need to be the subject of detailed equality impact assessments as they are developed.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cleaner and Greener Corporate Priority.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1: Cherwell DC Climate Action Framework

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