

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30 November 2021

Climate Action Programme Update

Report of Director for Environment and Place

This report is public

Purpose of report

To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress in delivering the Climate Action Programme and the reduction in the council's greenhouse gas emissions in 2020/21.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the progress and next steps in the Climate Action Programme.
- 1.2 To note the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2020/21 (Appendix 1).

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Cherwell District Council committed to being carbon neutral by 2030 and to enabling the district's transition to a zero-carbon future. This paper provides an update on the work being done through the joint Climate Action Programme across its three areas:

- a) Becoming a climate active council
- b) Operating at net-zero by 2030
- c) Enabling a zero-carbon future for Cherwell.

2.2 Annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reporting of the councils own carbon footprint is expected as good practice by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Cherwell District Council (CDC) has produced GHG reports in most years since 2008/09 and will report annually in line with its climate action commitments. The report covering 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1.

3.0 Report Details

Progress on delivering the Climate Action Programme

- 3.1 Progress has been made in the delivery of the Climate Action Programme, across its three areas:
- 3.2 **Becoming a climate active council:** Climate action continued to be embedded into the councils' processes and governance:
- Climate Impact Assessments are now required to accompany reports to the Senior Leadership Team (CEDR) and Executive proposing a new policy, procedure, service change, project or programme.
 - 'Carbon Literacy' training is being offered to CDC teams.
 - Staff are being engaged through a joint Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) / CDC staff-led climate action group.
- 3.3 **Operating at net-zero carbon by 2030:** The following initiatives contribute towards CDC's goal of reaching net zero by 2030 across estate and activities:
- £6m grant-funded Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme measures for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects are being delivered across council buildings and leisure centres.
 - Green grid electricity contract for corporate estate started in April.
 - Vehicle-to-grid charger being installed at Thorpe Lane depot.
 - Social value policy and toolkit for procurement developed as part of our commitment to working with suppliers to minimize carbon emissions impact of our purchasing.
- 3.4 **Enabling a zero-carbon future for Cherwell:** the following initiatives contribute to a zero-carbon future for Cherwell:
- £1.5m Green Homes Grant being delivered targeting 150 homes in fuel poverty across Oxfordshire including in Cherwell. A further £3m bid submitted to the Sustainable Warmth Fund to be announced in October.
 - Heat network feasibility study due to start in Cherwell; funded by the government's Heat Networks Delivery Unit.
 - Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy approved by Executive. Park and Charge project has installed EV chargers in Bicester Cattle Market as a pilot, with remaining car parks scheduled for completion before the end of this financial year.
 - OxGUL-e feasibility study started looking at piloting an innovative method of EV charging for on-street residents using gullies, particularly in rural locations.
 - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans approved for Bicester and under development for Kidlington and Banbury.
 - Bicester residents engaged to co-design plans and initiatives to encourage active travel.

Next steps

- 3.5 The key next steps for the development of the Climate Action Programme are:
- Developing a costed decarbonisation roadmap for council properties, further to the work being currently delivered via Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

- Developing a costed EV fleet and charging infrastructure transition plan following work in train with the Energy Saving Trust.
- Working through the Environment Advisory Group on a cross-Oxfordshire 'Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire' net-zero delivery plan to inform a Cherwell transition roadmap and action plan.

3.6 Work will also continue to equip council staff and managers to integrate climate action into day-to-day activities and decision-making:

- Rolling out 'Carbon Literacy' training for staff, senior leadership and members
- Publishing a 'Carbon Neutrality by 2030' dashboard for corporate emission that will enable month-by-month monitoring of corporate emissions and project data
- Developing guidance to help services with the Climate Impact Assessments.

Greenhouse gas report

3.7 In 2020/21, there was an annual 22.5% reduction in carbon emissions to 3,219 t CO₂e, representing a 52.7% reduction since baseline year of 2008-2009 (Appendix 1).

3.8 5.5% of the 2020-2021 reduction was due to the continued decarbonisation of the electricity grid. The remaining was mostly due to leisure centre closure. The graph below shows the evolution of the emissions included in CDC's carbon neutrality target between 2008/09 and 2020/21.

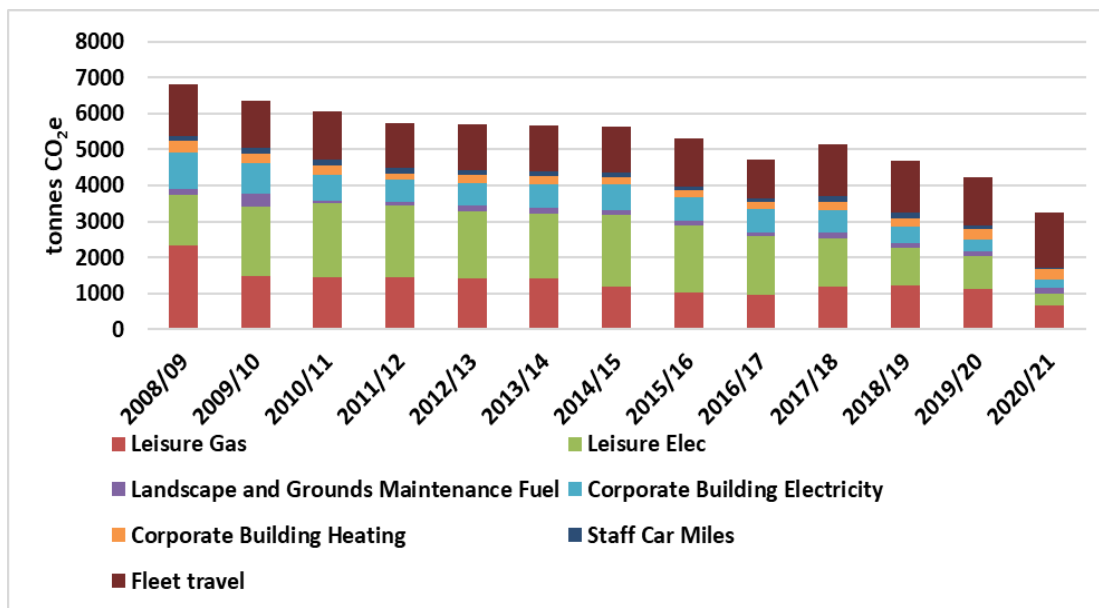


Figure 1 - Evolution of CDC's carbon neutrality target emissions since 2008-2009

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 Due to the work being delivered under PSDS, CDC is on track to substantially reduce its own estate emissions. The upcoming decarbonisation plans for estate and fleet will provide a roadmap to tackling the remaining emissions, as well as an estimate of the level of investment required in the near future.

5.0 Consultation

Not applicable.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The initial decarbonisation measures for council buildings and leisure centres have already been funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS). Further rounds of PSDS funding are anticipated.
- 7.2 The decarbonisation roadmap for council properties and the EV fleet and charging infrastructure transition plan will provide an understanding of the funding required to meet the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 7.3 Capital bids have been put forward for 2022/23 for charging infrastructure in anticipation of fleet electrification, however this does not guarantee approval.
- 7.4 Climate Action Programme bids should be considered alongside other requests for funding for the limited resources of the Council to be allocated in the way that maximises the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Comments checked by:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance, 01295 221845,
michael.furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.5 The report raises no legal implications.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hawtin (on behalf of Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), 01295 221695, Richard.Hawtin@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.6 After a significant drop in carbon emissions in 2020/21 due to work and service provision changes in response to COVID, there is a risk that emissions may bounce back in 2021/22. In particular, the reopening of leisure centres, which represent nearly half of the council's emissions, is likely to lead to a year-on-year increase.
- 7.7 The carbon savings delivered by the £6m programme of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme-funded measures will offset this increase to some extent, with their impact being felt mostly from 2022/23. Risks will be managed as part of

the operational risk register and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by:

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, Celia.Prado-Teeling@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 7.8 When developing and implementing the Climate Action Programme, the council must take an inclusive approach, ensuring the costs and benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy are fairly shared.
- 7.9 While acting on climate change will bring benefits to all, it is most likely to have additional positive impacts on several of the protected and disadvantaged groups considered within the Council's equality framework

Comments checked by:

Emily Schofield, Acting Head of Strategy, emily.schofield@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07881311707

Sustainability Implications

- 7.10 The Climate Action Programme is at the core of the council's response to the climate emergency. A number of its projects have a direct impact on our corporate emissions e.g., installing heat pumps in our buildings, while others, e.g., Local Plan Review, aim to put in place the strategies, partnerships and initiatives that will help reduce carbon emission and increase climate resiliency across the district.

Comments checked by:

Sandra Fisher-Martins, Programme Manager Climate Action, Sandra.Fisher-Martins@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Leading on Environmental Sustainability

Lead Councillor

Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Document Information**Appendix number and title**

- Appendix 1 – CDC Greenhouse gas report 2020/21

Background papers

N/A

Report Author and contact details

Sarah Gilbert, Climate Action Team Leader, 07867467797,
Sarah.Gilbert@Oxfordshire.gov.uk