

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday, 14 July 2022

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT EMERGENCY UPDATE

Report of the Climate Change Manager

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel notes:

- (1) the contents of this report and make recommendations as appropriate; and**
 - (2) the contents of the report 'A Review of Carbon Emission Reduction Opportunities for Eastleigh Borough' (appendix 2).**
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Summary

This report sets out progress from November 2021 until June 2022 of the Climate and Environment Emergency Action Plan.

It also provides a brief overview of the planned CEE Strategy and Action Plan update.

Strategic Implications

1. On 18 July 2019, the Council unanimously declared a Climate and Environmental Emergency. This was subsequently supported with a Climate and Environment Emergency (CEE) Strategy and an updated Action Plan (June 2020).
2. The CEE action plan directly supports delivery of the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Action Plan (2022-2023), particularly the Green Borough theme.

Introduction

2. The Climate and Environmental Emergency declaration sets out the Council's aim to be carbon-neutral by 2025 and to help communities and businesses across the Borough achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
3. This report provides an interim update on action plan progress between November 2021 and June 2022. It also contains a brief commentary on the CEE Strategy and Action Plan update.

Action Plan Progress

4. As the impacts of Covid have reduced and staff resources have become available, progress against the action plan has increased, particularly on policy/strategy actions. There are still challenges with staff workloads, but these are not as widespread as they were. Currently the Sustainability Officer post is vacant, but internal resources have been re-deployed to cover some of this work.
5. Below is a summary of the progress to date in the delivery of the Action Plan. More detail can be found in Appendix one: Climate and Environment Emergency Action Plan Update: November 2021 – June 2022.
 - **Carbon Offsetting:** A consultancy (Anthesis) has been engaged to forecast the Council's emissions trajectory to 2050 and provide advice on offsetting/insetting (carbon reduction projects within local Authority boundary). Projecting the emissions to 2050 will enable long-term projects such as tree planting to be accounted for. The Council's approach to offsetting will be set out in the revised CEE Strategy.
 - **Ecology:** Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) have completed work establishing a carbon baseline for the habitats of the Borough. Work continues to establish an ecological baseline with ground truthing to occur during summer 2022. The Biodiversity Strategy, Biodiversity Action Plan and Nature Recovery Strategy will be consulted on together as they are linked. Twenty-five wildflower sites were planted, but due to weather conditions they have not flourished.
 - **Economy:** In February, 55 businesses attended a green business event organised by the Council, which included a sustainability panel of local businesses. Eighteen business have been awarded a total of £415,000 in Additional Restrictions Grants (central government funding administered by Local Authorities) towards sustainability measures.
 - **Estates:** Cabinet approved the funding for a large solar farm in May 2022 across two sites within the Borough: Allington Lane and Bishopstoke. The proposal will generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of 9,500 homes. Energy audits of directly-managed buildings have been delayed due to staff changes (now resolved). Four energy audits have been carried out on priority buildings and the contract to audit the remaining 20 buildings will be awarded in July.

- **Fleet:** Over 100 vehicles have been successfully running on hydrogenated vegetable oil since September. Three electric refuse collection vehicles and associated charging infrastructure have been ordered. There has been a slight delay (two months) in the delivery of the eRCVs, now expected December 2022.
- **Green Homes:** Phase two of the 'Green Homes Local Authority Delivery Fund' (LAD), has provided support to sixty-eight homes to improve the sustainability of the properties. Fifty-eight solar PV systems were installed, four park homes have had external wall insulation fitted and three homes had loft insulation installed. Phase 3 of the LAD was promoted by the Council in May and will target a further 200 homes.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** The Tree and Development SPD was adopted in April 2022. A climate change guidance note for developers is being prepared to highlight the essential requirements in the local plan for sustainable building design, use of renewables and reduction in energy demand. The guidance will include a checklist for completion to assist in supporting the planning application.
- **Zero-Carbon Development:** In May 2022, Cabinet approved the development of a district heating network and private wire network for commercial premises and electric vehicle charging at One Horton Heath (OHH). Collectively these two systems will reduce carbon emissions by 281,989 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO²e) over their lifetime (50 years). Work to procure specialist consultancy advice on achieving net-zero developments has been delayed as the preferred consultancy was unable to deliver. An alternative has been found and will be appointed in July. The One Horton Heath (OHH) project team is working with AECOM to undertake a whole-lifecycle carbon assessment of the first phase of housing.
- **Nitrate and Phosphate Mitigation:** Further land has been acquired at Bishopstoke. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) report was presented to Cabinet in March which will lead to improved biodiversity and a phosphate strategy will be presented to Cabinet in July 2022 to enable the sale of offset credits.
- **Internal Training:** Carbon Literacy Training project was reviewed in January and it was decided to develop an internal training package to be delivered to all relevant staff by end of 22/23. Sustainability appraisals to map the environmental impacts of the Council have been taking place with managers across executive areas, which have included some climate change/sustainability training as an interim measure.
- **Procurement:** An initial draft of the Sustainable Procurement policy has been prepared. A supplier survey has been drafted to understand current supplier sustainability action and carbon reduction targets. The £10,000 allocated towards carbon impact analysis was not required as internal data provided enough insight.

- **Resident engagement:** The Communications Team has promoted initiatives including investment in solar energy, HVO fuel transition, tree planting, wildflower planting, EV charging point installation and new cycle lanes at OHH. Engagement campaigns have included 'Slim Your Bin' (Oct 21 to Feb 22) with an average reduction of 7% in household waste tonnage, an 8% increase in glass recycling and a 12% increase in food waste recycling. A meat reduction campaign began in June.
- **Sustainable Transport:** Public consultation on the draft Walking and Cycling Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2022 and work on a Public Transport Strategy has begun. Twenty organisations have borrowed bikes across the Southampton City Region as part of the RIDES cargo bike trial, with five considering purchasing Cargo bikes. Electric vehicle charge points have been installed in Places Leisure, Channon and Chestnut retail parks and Romsey Road car park. Delays have been experienced due to supply chain problems in the delivery of 50kw chargers. An initial list of sites has been drawn up for phase 2.
- **Trees:** A Tree Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2022. The tree nursery continues to increase its stock levels (circa 20,000 trees) and over 1,000 trees were planted by staff across the Borough. The first two public planting days were held at Itchen Valley Country Park in January 2022 with 262 members of the public attending. Work is underway to identify and map locations on Council-owned land that would be suitable for tree planting. Once complete, a consultant will be engaged to check the sites and provide information on the soil type, area of planting, species mix and potential grant sources.
- **Waste:** Expanding the rollout of food waste collections to flats continues to be phased in and bin store audits are currently taking place. Work has been completed to improve garden waste collections, including bringing in a fourth garden waste round and streamlining the hard-to-reach garden waste round. Trade waste optimisation has not generated significant capacity on the rounds. Options are being considered about how best to provide a commercial food service that does not require an additional crew/vehicle.
- **Working with Partners:** £30,000 has been ringfenced to support the Greening Campaign (main engagement tool). A trial has taken place with Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council who have just launched their campaign. All Parish Councils will be invited to apply for funding in September.

Carbon Neutral Council – 2025

6. The most recent greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) data the Council has is for 2020-2021 (figure 1). The Government will release the carbon factors for 2021-2022 in July 2022 and the Council's GHG emissions data will be updated accordingly.
7. Procurement is the largest area of emissions for the Council at 76% (see figure 1), representing the embodied carbon of the goods purchased rather than direct emissions. As such, it was identified in the strategy and action plan that a new sustainable procurement policy would be required to aid the delivery of the 2025 target.
8. To develop this strategy sustainability appraisals have been taking place with senior managers across executive areas, identifying environmental impacts and responses. The appraisals will form the basis for a set of sustainability standards to help guide staff to procure more sustainably. To reduce the impact of projects a sustainability checklist is being developed and the project initiation document reviewed to include a climate change.

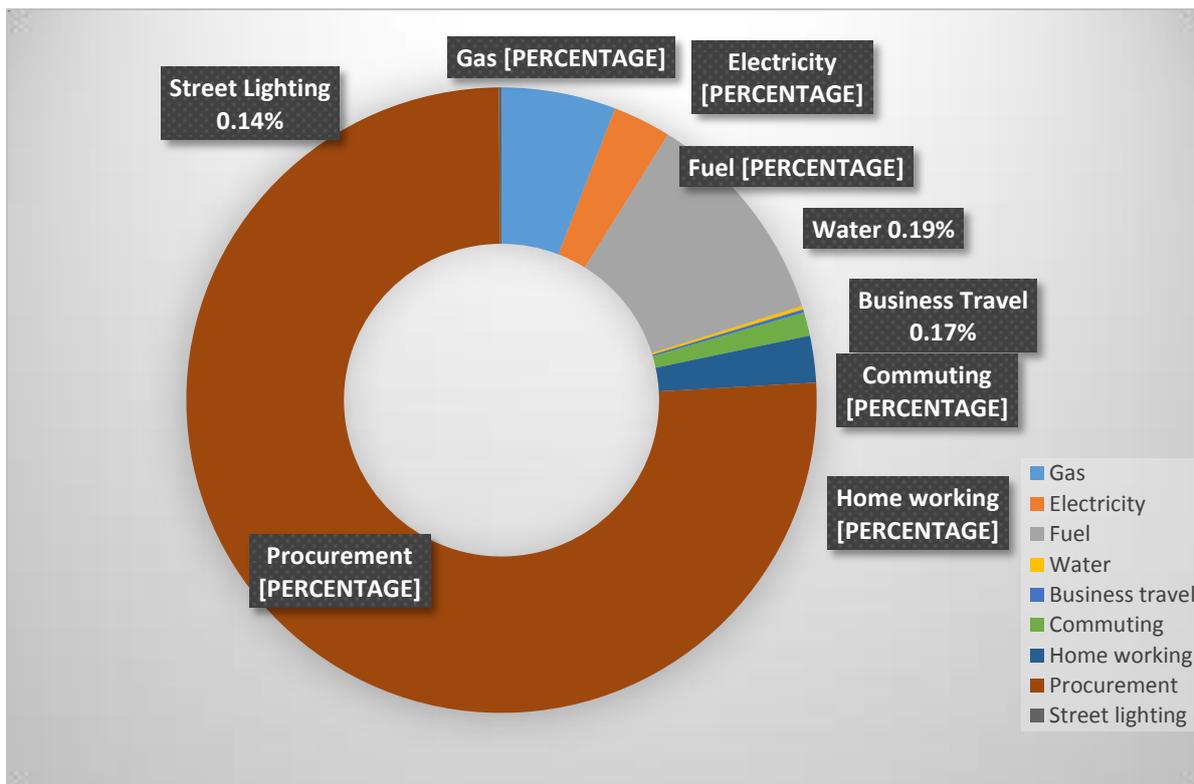


Figure 1: Eastleigh Borough Council carbon emissions 2021-2022

Carbon Neutral Borough - 2030

9. The Climate Change Committee is due to release its latest report on progress against the UK's statutory carbon budgets on June 29, 2022. As such no update is given in this report.
10. The Council commissioned a report 'A Review of Carbon Emission Reduction Opportunities for Eastleigh Borough' (appendix 2). The report considered how different sources of emissions may be reduced and where the biggest areas of impact could be (figure 2). The report concluded that theoretically, a carbon neutral trajectory could be achieved, but it did not consider the deliverability or cost. The information will be used to develop future actions.

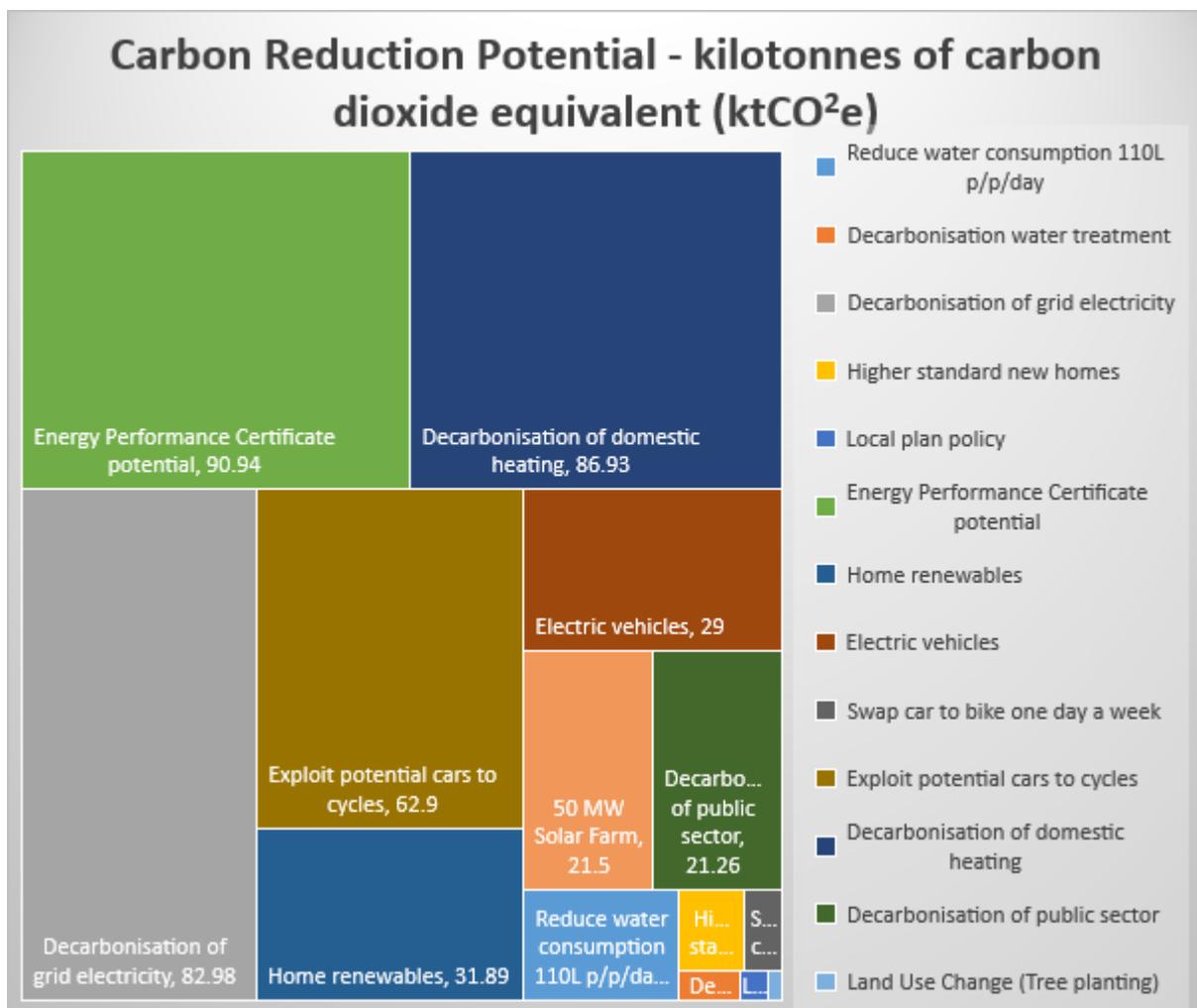


Figure 2: Carbon reduction potential of actions across Eastleigh Borough

Strategy and Action Plan update

11. An updated strategy and new action plan will be developed by Q3 (2022-2023) and brought before Policy and Performance Scrutiny panel in January 2023.
12. The Strategy will be updated to include more recent data, for example 2017-2018 data was used to set baselines as the 2018-2019 data was not available when the declaration was made. There are some minor errors to be corrected and a section on offsetting will be added (see 14 and 15 below).
13. The Action Plan will be re-written with completed and obsolete actions removed. New actions will be added with costings and carbon savings (where applicable).
14. Anthesis have been commissioned to forecast Council emissions across all areas to 2050 and provide advice on offsetting. This long-term trajectory will give us a better understanding of the impact of future development such as One Horton Heath and the role of tree planting and biodiversity improvements in sequestering carbon.
15. This information will be used to inform the updated Action Plan and Strategy, which will include the Council's approach to offsetting. Whilst action will be taken to reduce emissions at source, it is very likely that offsetting/insetting will have to play a significant role in reducing emissions to meet the 2025 target.

Financial Implications

16. There are no financial implications contained within this report.

Risk Assessment

17. There are significant risks should the Council fail to mitigate climate change and ensure that the residents, businesses, and the natural environment are able to adapt to the future climate.

Equality and Diversity Implications

18. The Equality Act is relevant to the decision in this report as the decision relates to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people in the following ways: the various impacts and responses to climate change are likely to disproportionately impact on people with protected characteristics.
19. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to support the Climate and Environmental Programme in November 2019 and this has been used to refine the approach set out. In summary the EqIA shows that care will be needed to ensure that actions to mitigate climate change do not lead to discrimination and that opportunities to reduce existing inequality are maximised.

20. As the Action Plan is developed there will need to be consideration of how it impacts protected groups to ensure that actions are compliant and where possible reduce existing inequality. Actions linked to the review of procurement policy and increased training will support the Council's efforts to eliminate Modern Slavery.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

21. The purpose of the CEE Strategy and Action Plan is to reduce the impact of climate change on residents and the environment through reducing GHGs and increasing carbon storage. Some of the actions focus on improving the state of biodiversity in the borough, increasing the resilience of wildlife to climate change and providing natural carbon stores.

Conclusion

22. The Climate and Environmental Emergency presents significant risk to residents and businesses. This report highlights areas of progress and challenges that persist.
23. The report appended 'A Review of Carbon Emission Reduction Opportunities for Eastleigh Borough'. The carbon baselines produced by HBIC (yet to be reviewed) and the carbon trajectories and offsetting advice from Anthesis will help form the evidence base for the updated CEE Strategy and Action Plan.
24. It is recommended that Policy and Performance and Scrutiny Panel:
 1. note the contents of this report and make recommendations as appropriate
 2. note the contents of the report appended 'A Review of Carbon Emission Reduction Opportunities for Eastleigh Borough'.

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Appendices Attached: 2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

None.