

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Progress Report

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	14/06/2021
Service:	Place Commissioning
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress Report
Completed by:	Diana Tovar
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	No
Signed off by:	Rhian Hayes
Sign off date:	14/06/2021

223

1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

The Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress Report outlines progress made on the actions that were approved in July 2020 towards the target to become a net-zero carbon borough by 2030, including updated estimated costs and carbon saving against individual targets, supported by a thorough methodology. As a live document, this Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out ambitious targets for Wokingham Borough to becoming net-zero carbon by 2030, including positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change. The report summarises the Borough's carbon footprint, the plans for the years ahead and identifies the benefits of becoming net-zero carbon. Most of the actions to be delivered over the first few years set in motion the groundwork and foundations for new strategies and policies that will influence our way of life locally, meaning the biggest gains on carbon savings are expected to come towards the end of the decade after most of the actions have come to fruition.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress Report comprises:

- Current carbon emissions profile for the Borough – This is based on government data and reported two years in arrears, Wokingham Borough’s carbon footprint is **573 ktCO₂e** (based on 2018 data). The assessment for the borough identifies the key priorities to be address to become net zero carbon. These include carbon dioxide emissions from transport (31.8%); industrial and commercial (25.9%), and the domestic (45%).
- Carbon budgets for Wokingham Borough – The trajectory of carbon emissions for Wokingham Borough have been steadily decreasing since 2012. This is partly due to Central Government targets to increase the renewable energy infrastructure resulting in a higher proportion of renewable energy feeding into the electricity supply, and technological advances leading to greater energy efficiency. Assuming that there is minimal action beyond current, national policy and nationally led decarbonisation of the electricity grid and transport through electric vehicles, the estimated carbon emissions by 2030 will be approximately 291.16ktCO₂e. This figure excludes the carbon sequestration levels for the Borough that could potentially increase by -16.71ktCO₂e, providing a final carbon footprint of **274.45 ktCO₂e**.
- Targets and Estimated Carbon Savings – This section summarises the established targets for the priority areas in which the council’s actions are focussed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The priority areas of focus for the council’s actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions centre on; tackling emissions from transport, reducing energy use in domestic properties, generating renewable energy, planting more trees and other green foliage, recycling and encouraging behavioural change. This action plan establishes targets to achieve carbon dioxide reductions within all of these areas as outlined below.
- Detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan – This section provides a list of targets and actions that will be undertaken in order to reach the 2030 carbon neutral target
- Carbon Accounting Methodology and Assumptions – This appendix provides detailed information on how carbon savings for targets and actions have been identified.

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members ect) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

The Wokingham Borough Council Climate Team have lead on the implementation and update of the CEAP, with cooperation from multiple departments across the council in delivering the actions. This **Climate Emergency Officers Group** meets monthly and is attended by officers from across all of the departments in the council. By consulting with these officers the current progress toward each goal was identified, alongside any new projects within the targets or barriers/delays to existing plans, while **Working subgroups** have been set up to work on key priorities to support the delivery of the action plan.

Additional columns have also been added with extra information to provide a greater level of detail, as suggested by the scrutiny committee, while through thorough research and using official government statistics, the related methodology has been updated to be more accurate and again in greater detail. This **Task and Finish Group** is made up of members to scrutinise the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, emerging targets and key performance indicators underpinning the Action Plan. On an ongoing basis they are assessing the level of carbon reduction to be delivered by the Action Plan in light of the Council's 2030 target and produce a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Executive each year, with guidance for improvement relating to the Action Plan.

To support the project there is also a **Climate Emergency Advisory Group**, made up of representatives from industry, academia and charities who meet quarterly to explore what new ideas and cutting edge technology can bring to reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the borough. The board acts as a 'critical friend', to provide a level of scrutiny and understanding that balances the needs of the response against the cost, effort and regulatory processes. Similarly, a **Climate Emergency Working Group**, made up of a cross party group of members, was established to provide a high level steer on policy direction in relation to carbon reduction, investigate and propose further recommendations to help achieve a net zero carbon Borough and liaise with and assist the Town and Parish Councils in implementing measures locally.

Finally, a **Climate Emergency Investment Board** has been established to assess each action in the CEAP in terms of carbon saved, income generated and costs to decide which actions will be invested in by the council. This annual Climate Emergency Progress report will be public and includes updated estimated costs and carbon saving against individual targets to demonstrate to all stakeholders the benefits of becoming net zero carbon.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

The main beneficiaries of the project are all of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough. By delivering this progress report it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

The progress report is designed to communicate the current progress toward each target, alongside any new projects within the targets or barriers/delays to existing plans, demonstrating to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieving the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so.

The overall aims of the project remain the same though:

The Council's Key Priorities for Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions to Net Zero by 2030

The analysis above has helped the council to identify eight key priority areas (below) to focus on for reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The action plan, which has been populated with ideas from local residents, Town and Parish councils, council officers, and local businesses, is not exclusively limited to these areas.

1. Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Transport

The council will seek to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport by using technology to help improve traffic flows, reducing congestion by optimising the use of the existing road network and increasing the number of EV charging points across the borough. The council aims to encourage residents to take up more sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling, and bus and train travel.

2. Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Domestic and Business Property

There are around 72,000 dwellings in the Borough, of which an estimated 85% use fossil-fuel based natural gas. The council aims to convert these towards low-carbon forms of energy and retrofit homes to be more efficient and sustainable. The council will implement the necessary measures to improve the current energy usage of its own corporate properties and aims to become net zero carbon by 2030.

3. Generate more Renewable Energy in the Borough

The council plans to develop five largescale solar PV farms throughout the Borough over the next five years. This will not only increase the production of renewable energy, but has the potential to generate an income, which will then be reinvested into delivering other carbon reduction projects.

4. Create a Local Plan that Specifies Net Zero Construction and Infrastructure

All major residential and commercial developments will be expected to deliver high sustainable construction standards. Policies to enable this will be embedded in the upcoming Local Plan Update (LPU). Major developments will embrace innovative sustainable design solutions for energy efficiency and low carbon energy generation and use.

5. Increase the Levels of Carbon Sequestration the Borough Through Greening the Environment

The council will plant 250,000 new trees over the next five years. As well as increasing the capacity for carbon offsetting, afforestation will allow for a biodiversity net gain, an approach to development that increases levels of biodiversity at a greater rate.

6. Engage with Young People and Support Sustainable Schools

The council will launch a sustainable schools programme. The programme aims to promote behavioural change amongst young people by engaging with schools to work with children to encourage the adoption of new 'climate-friendly' behaviours that will influence their families and communities.

7. Reduce Waste Sent to Landfill

The council aims to achieve zero waste to landfill and 70% recycling by 2030. This will be achieved through encouraging people in the borough to change their behaviour, such as the introduction of food waste collection which has been a great success borough-wide. There remains great scope for future improvement with opportunities available regarding glass recycling and increasing the range of plastics that can be recycled.

8. Encouraging Behaviour Change

As a community leader, the council will set an example and set high standards in becoming net zero carbon. This includes its own estate but also its policies, service delivery and investment decisions. The Council will communicate and engage with all of its residents, businesses, schools, Town and Parish Councils, charities, the University of Reading, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Greater South East Energy Hub and other local authorities to work together to initiate education programmes and encourage behaviour change

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be

		addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Gender:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Disabilities:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Age:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Sexual orientation:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Religion/belief:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and

		achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Gender re-assignment:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Pregnancy and Maternity:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.
Marriage and civil partnership:	No/Neutral	All of the residents and businesses of Wokingham Borough will be equally and positively impacted by delivering this progress report as it demonstrates to residents our commitment to follow up on declaring a climate emergency and achieve the included targets, while improving our transparency in detailing how we realistically plan to do so. Moreover, the analysis process within this progress report identifies any potential areas of weakness which need to be addressed, meaning they can be acted upon and increase the likelihood of achieving the net zero target which will result in positive environmental changes that will improve the quality of life of all our residents and help to avoid the impacts of climate change.

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low or high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by....

Rhian Hayes

Date: 14 June 2021

This page is intentionally left blank