

TITLE	2022 CEAP Progress Report & Task and Finish Group Recommendations
FOR CONSIDERATION	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 7 th July 2022
WARD	Non-Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member, Climate Emergency and Resident Services - Sarah Kerr

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

This report provides an Officer response to the 25 Recommendations which were set out in The Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group Report and Recommendations, June 2021. Also attached is a draft of the annual update of the Climate Emergency Action plan (CEAP), which incorporates these recommendations where possible, to provide an opportunity for member input of how this has been done and any further recommendations, before presenting to Full Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee considers the Officer responses contained within this report and how they impact the action plan.
2. That the Committee considers the draft CEAP annual report and provides comments and suggestions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was set up to make recommendations for improving the CEAP.
- In 2020 the Group stated that this was a bold and ambitious document which required further work to confirm the deliverability of key priorities.
- A number of areas were identified, including: aligning new policies and strategies to the CEAP commitments, working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders, ensuring renewable initiatives should fully consider the impact on biodiversity and the important role of behaviour change in delivering the CEAP.
- The CEAP should be underpinned by the Community Vision for the Borough in 2030 and beyond and must be underpinned by SMART (Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed) targets and robust external validation.
- 25 recommendations were made to strengthen the Action Plan, making it more robust, transparent and evidence based.
- Overall, the recommendations were accepted by Officers, subject to a few cases where Officers have explained their reasoning.
- Those recommendations have now been in place since June 2021, being incorporated into the full CEAP where it relates to, with delivery being monitored on an annual basis.
- The full draft CEAP is attached, to demonstrate where these have been incorporated, and to outline the latest updates on actions for similar scrutiny and further recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Following the climate emergency declaration made in July 2019, the CEAP was adopted, identifying the key priority areas for CO₂ emission reductions, including transport, homes, businesses, and waste. It also includes smart carbon targets and projections to 2030, based on the included actions.

It highlights the size of the challenge and recognises that at this point in time the actions are not sufficient to deliver the level of carbon reductions necessary to meet the Borough's 2030 target. However, it is a living document and planning tool that will incorporate new ideas to help achieve a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030.

To provide deeper analysis of the Action Plan, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group. The primary objective of the group was to produce recommendations for improving the plan where possible. The initial findings were that the CEAP was a bold, ambitious document, in line with national best practice, underpinned by a significant, dedicated budget and a clear governance structure. However, considering the enormous scope of the Action Plan, a number of areas were identified requiring further work and clarification. It was felt these would help strengthen the document and enable the engagement of residents and key stakeholders across the Borough. More work was also required to clarify the impact of specific schemes and ensure that they were supported by SMART targets.

The group concluded that the Council's progress compares favourably with other local authorities, including some of the UK's largest cities. The Council's approach of developing a dedicated in-house team, supported by Officer working groups was also a positive. The Group has since continuously reviewed the Action Plan, with a focus on the specific targets, considering a range of national briefings and reports with reliable and robust data, and received evidence from several internal and external individuals.

As a result, the latest report submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) in June 2021 included 25 recommendations. The majority of these have been accepted by Officers, subject to a few cases where Officers have explained their reasoning. These have therefore been incorporated into the CEAP where appropriate, as outlined in more detail in appendix A.

What happens next?

The below actions are currently being explored and implemented into the wider action plan as agreed. Their delivery is monitored annually by the OSMC, who analyse performance and communicate any further recommendations through a scheduled meeting. The latest version of the draft CEAP is attached for this purpose, to provide opportunity for further recommendations to be submitted based on the changes made.

Areas for celebration:

- Recycling has definitely seen an increase, from 50 to 54% and total tonnage, increasing by approximately 3000, particularly in terms of food and garden waste, with these two aspects alone rising to over 16500 tonnes following new incentives and targeted campaigns.
- Multiple council assets have undergone retrofitting to net zero standards including Dinton Activity Centre, Woodley Library, Carnival hub and 75 London Road.
- Carbon sequestration projects have now begun in earnest, with over 15,000 trees planted in a number of areas, including schools and residents gardens.
- Renewable energy installations continue to rise, with significant progress at Barkham Ride and numerous new installations at schools and other council sites contributing to the generation of 42,572.84 MWh (Megawatt hours) renewable electricity in the last recorded year (2020).
- Over 1500 households so far are now getting assistance from help to heat, the councils locally set ECOflex scheme.

- Development of the EV Infrastructure to support the transition continue to perform strongly, with 176 active sockets installed and a further 190 planned. This means 1,099 tCO₂e savings have been identified.
- Homeworking and other travel reductions continuing throughout, and post Covid, have delivered significant carbon savings in the borough and are now more established to remain long term.

Areas for development:

- Some strategies have been delayed, such as the EV strategy, the Low Emission Transport Strategy (LETS) and Local Plan Update (LPU), while staffing issues at consultants have contributed.
- Engagement has been limited in terms of involvement / participation from community on actions in general. For example, low turnout in workshops, webinars and for specific actions such as community energy scheme, which is supposed to be community led. While there are a good number of subscribers to newsletters, there seems to be less response to act on projects, meaning a focus is needed to shift residents and business towards action. A full engagement strategy and review of comms is underway to address these aspects.
- The love to ride programme has declined so is now under review.
- Procurement elements of the plan remain not started due to staffing shortages, meaning those projects requiring procurement of goods and services have been unable to contribute towards these targets at this stage.
- The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), greenways and some other grant funding bids have been unsuccessful, meaning delays to these actions as the amount required is substantial and can only be covered by such grants. In response new approaches are being considered and new bids will be submitted to secure this funding.

Financial Implications

Recommendations are subject to financial approval. The council will consider carrying out due diligence and take into account the cost of recommendations to ensure their financial sustainability

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation listed below are wide ranging and covered many areas of the authority and in doing so impacting on a wide range of budgets. The implementation of many of the schemes listed below will come at a higher cost than would have been the case to deliver these without the CEAT requirements. The council therefore needs to accept that in implementing these proposal additional funding may need to be found.

The exact budget requirement will be identified and delt with as each proposal is developed.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	More funding may be required to support additional resource to deliver some of these recommendations as proposals are developed	Revenue

Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	More funding may be required to support additional resource to deliver some of these recommendations as proposals are developed	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	More funding may be required to support additional resource to deliver some of these recommendations as proposals are developed	Revenue

Other Financial Information

More funding may be required to support additional resource to deliver some of these recommendations as proposals are developed. Where possible this will be sourced from relevant government grants and schemes, but for smaller local actions such as engagement in particular, this will require council funding.

However, many of these actions will act to save the council money in the long run, for example from retrofitting assets and utilising EVs. The majority of these costs are already incorporated where possible to calculate into the full CEAP report and so are captured in the related cover report.

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

Stakeholder consultation will continue through the Climate Emergency Advisory Board.

Public Sector Equality Duty

This report relates to adoption processes which in themselves have no particular equalities implications. Due regard to Public Sector Equality Duty and equalities assessments are considered in the context of each scheme.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

This decision has a significant on the Council’s carbon neutral objective, by determining the actions to be taken to achieve this goal.

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Appendix A: Actions taken following recommendations.

Transport

<p>The Low Emission Transport Strategy is being completed and its alignment and similarity with the CEAP targets, methodology and actions will be considered.</p>
<p>The environmental impacts from the LPU, of which the majority of these roads comprise, aims to minimise environmental impacts wherever possible, relative to the increase in population.</p>
<p>The Local Transport Plan (LTP4) is in development and emerging guidance from DfT suggests that it will need to be centred around Carbon emissions.</p> <p>Borough wide LCWIP Study assessments for primary routes have now been completed with the consultant. Public consultation on LCWIP routes and infrastructure ideas are expected in June/July 2022.</p> <p>We are currently considering a trial Cargo-bike scheme where businesses can make deliveries more sustainably; this will help contribute to a last mile delivery strategy.</p>
<p>The council already has a target of 50% EV adoption which incorporates national expectations.</p> <p>We will be carrying out communication campaigns as part of this action, under action 7.6 as mentioned.</p> <p>The council is collaborating with local authorities to ensure EV infrastructure is effective across the region.</p> <p>The EV strategy is underway but was delayed due to staff changes/illness at consultants and crossover with the transport plan. This will consider the likelihood of meeting the CEAP target and propose further actions to help us get there.</p>
<p>The initial BSIP has been completed and reflects these elements. It has also been submitted for the government funding required to deliver on these requirements. However, at this stage this application has been unsuccessful, though further rounds of funding are anticipated in future.</p>
<p>As previously, schemes continue to be assessed against LTN1/20 and the local plan aims to mitigate environmental impacts wherever possible.</p> <p>The addition of multiple walking and cycle routes, along with the LCWIP, also contributes towards increased active transport accessibility.</p>
<p>The local plan aims to incorporate commercial and residential chargepoints as requirements wherever possible, and will be supported by the EV Strategy which will identify optimal locations for chargepoints, alongside vital details on costs, running and overcoming barriers to adoption.</p> <p>A funding application will be re-submitted to the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme following amendments due to changing criteria for the funding.</p>
<p>The PPP has been awarded a £259k grant to deliver various projects focusing on improving air quality across the 3 authority areas, including more monitoring.</p> <p>As part of this 5 Smart Living Pillars have now been installed in Twyford as a pilot to improve air quality, which is being monitored for potential wider implementation.</p> <p>This is alongside many further AQ updates in these areas documented more in the CEAP.</p>

Homes

<p>SPDs are to be produced to support the Local Plan Update, which is currently still under development.</p> <p>A SPD will follow the Local Plan Update and provide additional detail and guidance for achieving net zero development.</p>
<p>This communication will happen as part of wider engagement with developers on CEAP aspects, following confirmation of local planning policies (including above requirements).</p>
<p>Additional funding options are explored on an ongoing basis as new government schemes are announced, with many relating to specific actions.</p> <p>We are also working with partners such as banks etc to bring together the various current schemes available to support homeowners.</p>
<p>As part of multiple retrofit actions underway, each recognises and analyses the challenges and barriers presented, identifying opportunities to overcome them through the action.</p>

This includes over 1500 households getting assistance so far from help to heat, the councils locally set ECOFlex scheme. Meanwhile, advice is being provided to residents where possible on improving energy efficiency, connecting them with services such as the Green homes and Sustainable homes grants
Among multiple retrofit projects underway alongside organisations, a pilot project has been completed in Riseley that raised an SAP D house to SAP B and is being monitored to assess wider opportunities. This also helps demonstrate viability to wider residents. Furthermore expansive pilot schemes will be reliant on significant additional funding becoming available, due to the scale required to achieve wider efficiency savings. Basic condition surveys are underway to assess stock and EPC ratings.
The council agrees to use council housing companies and council (HRA) housing stock to showcase high standards of energy efficiency in any future development. This action is ongoing, with examples such as Gorse Ride regeneration project doing a presentation to Finchampstead Parish Council to demonstrate this on 31 st May 2022

Renewable Energy

This continues to be the case, with work underway with finance to ensure the income generated from these projects savings is recycled into CEAP actions, including additional staff support.
This is currently underway as part of the LPU, including recommendations from the advisory board and the community energy scheme. A number of partners have also been contacted to discuss further opportunities around PV installation.
Campaigns are ongoing to residents across all key aspects of the CEAP, including many targeted specifically at energy efficiency improvements.
Biodiversity considerations have been included into all major renewable projects as part of the standard equality assessment process.

Behaviour Change

The actions within the behaviour change section are being applied to cover all key areas where possible, feeding back into the relevant actions to deliver this.
Information on relevant technologies is included within the ongoing wider communications to residents.
The community deliberative process on climate change is a wide community engagement process. The project is currently coming to the end of the first stage where key stakeholders came together in 'deliberative peer groups' to discuss key issues of local climate change impacts and potential solutions and form recommendations for the council to adopt into its CEAP. New actions identified from the process will be evaluated internally and by the committee prior to implementation.

Other Priorities

A coaching feasibility study is underway to deliver training to all members and senior staff, alongside wider training for all staff and the below embedding elements.
An assessment tool which assists staff in identifying the potential impacts of projects and how they can potentially mitigate these, to align with the CEAP, is currently under development.
This is included in the above tool.
The existing trajectories used within the CEAP are the most accurate possible, given the data available and the scope of emissions included. The CO ₂ savings from this work remain the same, though it is recognised to be an ambitious target, but one vitally important in reaching net zero overall. The remaining changes to a reduction in private car use relates to overall reduced mileage from reducing the need to travel and increases in active transport too, not only public transport. Public Transport remains a challenge following Covid.