

# Agenda Item 7

<b>TITLE</b>	Progress against the recommendations of the 2020 and 2021 Climate Emergency Task and Finish Groups
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Climate and Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2023
<b>WARD</b>	All
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Simon Dale – Interim Director of Place and Growth
<b>LEAD MEMBER(S)</b>	Executive Member, Climate Emergency and Resident Services – Sarah Kerr

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Climate change poses a significant threat to our community, particularly the most socially vulnerable. Mitigating carbon emissions whilst adapting to the impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing will have positive implications on the environment, and on the economy, health and quality of life of our community.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee notes and comments on the progress made against the recommendations of the 2020 and 2021 Climate Emergency Task and Finish Groups.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

### **Background**

In July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council declared a climate emergency and committed to do as much as possible to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Following the declaration, the Council published a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), in January 2020.

In February 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee established a Task and Finish group to review the Wokingham Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan, and provide recommendations for the improvement of it. Following completion of the Task and Finish Group review, in July 2020, the Group proposed 14 recommendations to strengthen the CEAP and make the reporting process more transparent.

Another review of the CEAP by the Task and Finish Group took place in early 2021. This review focused on four key elements of the CEAP: transport, homes, renewable energy and behaviour change. The Group received evidence from internal and external individuals representing the Council, Imperial College London, University of Leeds, National Grid, Giki Zero, University of Reading, Reading Buses, and the Executive Member for Climate Emergency. The results of the review, including 25 recommendations, were presented to the O&S Management Committee in July 2021.

This report includes an update on the progresses made against the 2020 and 2021 T&F Groups recommendations. A summary progress update is presented in the analysis below. Officers' updates have been included in Appendix 1. The Appendix is meant to be read in conjunction with the analysis below, as it includes the officer's updates.

## **Analysis**

The Climate Emergency Action Plan is a living document. It is updated every year, through a progress report that includes officers' comments, and is presented to Council over the summer. The CEAP has evolved significantly over the years, with an increasing number of actions and targets being added to it. The CEAP has undertaken the following reviews, with the approval date shown in brackets.

- Initial CEAP (January 2020)
- First CEAP progress report (July 2020)
- Second CEAP progress report (July 2021)
- Third CEAP progress report (September 2022)
- Fourth CEAP progress report (currently being finalised, for submission in September 2023)

The T&F Group recommendations were made against the first and second progress reports, so they don't address the entirety and complexity of the most recent CEAP but have helped shape it. All of the recommendations were found to be still relevant to the delivery of the current CEAP. Officers provided comments against each recommendation, highlighted where actions and targets have been modified over time, and how the recommendations have been considered in the amended plans.

Most recommendations are currently being implemented or have been included into existing work programmes. The main obstacle to the delivery of the recommendations is lack of funding, and officers' time.

With regards to future steps to continue to scrutinise the CEAP, plans are in place to re-establish the CEAP Advisory Board a group of independent industry experts that will provide recommendations to support the maintenance and delivery of the Plan and of the Council's carbon reduction targets. Similarly, the newly set up Climate Emergency O&S Committee will have the opportunity to regularly scrutinise the CEAP and provide recommendations to the delivery of the plan.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA	NA	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA	NA	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA	NA	

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
NA
<p><b>Cross-Council Implications</b></p> <p>The delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan requires involvement from all Council departments. In 2023, the Climate Emergency team established monitoring groups to support the CEAP delivery. These meet every 6 weeks, review the CEAP actions, assess synergies in their work and aim to identify funding opportunities to support the delivery of carbon reduction projects. The delivery of the CEAP supports a range of Council priorities and areas of work. These include: access to clean and green spaces, promotion of sustainable and active travel modes, provision of sustainable and quality homes, improving the health and quality of life of our community. Addressing the climate emergency requires commitment from all Council departments.</p>
<p><b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b></p> <p>Yes, Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken into account. Climate changes affects every member of our community, particularly the most socially vulnerable people. Tackling the climate emergency, by minimising carbon emissions, whilst adapting to the impacts of climate change will have positive impacts on health and quality of life of our residents.</p>
<p><b>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</b></p> <p>Addressing the climate emergency through delivery of the CEAP will ensure the borough plays as full of a role as possible in achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.</p>

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Appendix 1: 2023 progress report to the 2020 and 2021 T&F Group recommendations – officers' comments

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