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| TITLE | WBC Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) Fourth Progress Report September 2023 |
| FOR CONSIDERATION BY | The Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 11 th of July 2023 |
| WARD | None specific; |
| LEAD OFFICER | Sabrina Chiaretti – Climate Emergency Service Manager |
| DIRECTOR | Giorgio Framalico – Director of Place and Growth |
| LEAD MEMBER | Cllr Sarah Kerr – Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Residents Services |

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide updates and information on the status of the Council's climate emergency work, including:

1. The progress made by the Council, over the period May 2022 to May 2023, to deliver its Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP)
2. The new format of the CEAP, including significant design changes to make it a more effective engagement and communication tool.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee considers the draft CEAP fourth progress report and comments on the delivery of the CEAP actions, prior to the report being presented to leadership teams in August 2023 and to Council in September 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This CEAP fourth progress report summarises the Borough's current carbon emission profile and the Council's progresses towards its 2030 carbon neutrality goal for the last year (May 2022 to May 2023).

The CEAP comprises 10 key priority areas for carbon reduction, and over 100 actions that the Council has committed to deliver to achieve its 2030 goal. The progress report contains full details of the actions and their associated outcomes, milestones and the latest status update, alongside anticipated costs and expected carbon savings.

As per the fourth progress report, Wokingham Borough's carbon footprint is currently 505 ktCO₂e (DESNZ 2020), with a remaining shortfall in 2030 of 240 ktCO₂e after all the actions in the Plan are implemented. Therefore, if the Council is to meet its 2030 carbon neutral goal, further actions and resources, as well as strategic embedding of climate emergency considerations across the organisation are needed, alongside discussions on carbon offsetting for residual emissions.

The CEAP is a working document and a planning tool that allows us to understand where the Council is heading from a carbon emissions point of view, and to implement new actions accordingly. Hence, the Plan will continue to be updated annually and change over time as many of the actions will develop and new actions will be identified.

The CEAP fourth progress report, as well as a document outlining the carbon accounting methodology and carbon savings calculations are attached to this document. These may encounter minor changes once they are circulated with leadership teams in August 2023, prior to being submitted to Council in September 2023.

BACKGROUND

Following the Council's climate emergency declaration made in July 2019 the CEAP was adopted. The CEAP identifies 10 key priority areas for carbon emission reductions, to enable the Council to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. These are: Transport, Renewable Energy Generation, Building Retrofitting, Carbon Sequestration, Schools, Waste & Recycling, New Developments, Procurement, Engagement, and Council specific actions. The CEAP includes over 100 actions that the Council has committed to deliver to reach its carbon neutrality goal.

Every year, a progress report is produced to update the Council on the progresses made around the delivery of these actions. To increase the strength and transparency of the Plan, every year the progress report is externally and independently reviewed by experts at the Council Climate Scorecards and the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), an internationally accepted process used by many large cities and companies.

This is the fourth year that the CEAP progress report is brought to Council. It covers progresses made by the Council over the period May 2022- May 2023. The report also includes updated projections of the Borough's emissions to 2030.

This year's progress report incorporates the recommendations of the 2022 community deliberative process. As part of this process, in early 2022, 60 representatives from various stakeholder groups from across the Borough came together to identify barriers and propose solutions to the Council's carbon neutrality transition. Alongside this, in late 2022, a residents survey titled "Let's Talk Climate" was delivered, that provided the Council with further insights into barriers that our community faces when making daily decisions which impact their carbon footprint. The recommendations from the stakeholders' groups and residents survey were discussed with officers and incorporated into the CEAP actions, and also used to draft a "vision" for a carbon neutral borough that is now included in the CEAP.

To better monitor and evaluate the delivery of the CEAP actions, in March 2023, monitoring groups have been established to cover the 10 strategic priorities of the CEAP. Through these monitoring groups, the Climate Emergency team regularly captures updates on each CEAP action and identifies and addresses delivery barriers. The CEAP remains a living document and a planning tool, with new project ideas being incorporated throughout the year to deliver maximum carbon savings.

The following paragraphs outline the areas for celebration as well as the areas for development that the Committee should be aware of when reviewing the Plan.

Areas for celebration:

- Emissions trajectory - As of 2020, the Council's overall emissions went down from 557.8 to 505.7 KtCO₂e, representing a fall of over 52 KtCO₂e. This was largely from

travel and commercial aspects (Over 20kt each), primarily attributed to the pandemic and lockdowns. While this is a larger than expected decrease in this particular year as a result of these external factors, the overall downward trajectories over the long term are not significantly affected.

- Greatly simplified design: the CEAP has been fully revamped for improved accessibility, engagement and understanding.
- Inclusion of adaptation actions. Whilst the CEAP remains a climate mitigation tool, there is a need for the Council to start adapting to the impacts of climate change that the Borough is already experiencing. For the first time ever, an action has been included in the CEAP to support the development of an adaptation plan for the Borough.
- On-street charging scheme figures well beyond expectation following initial pilot, so carbon savings have increased.
- Carbon savings associated with reduction in waste not just recycling, which is the main goal of the waste strategy.
- Greater focus on businesses. Targets specific to businesses have been included in the plan, to ensure the Council works with and supports businesses to understand their carbon emissions and decarbonise their operations and infrastructure.
- Two significant energy schemes launched in 2022/23: launch of the Solar Together scheme in partnership with the other Berkshire Local Authorities, that will hopefully reduce emissions from private homes in the Borough. Similarly, the Council successfully applied to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and received £292k to bring around 110 social homes to an EPC C by 2025.
- Development of a climate change comms and engagement plan to maximise stakeholder involvement in the Council's climate work.

Areas for development:

- The CEAP actions are not sufficient to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030. Further actions and resources, as well as strategic embedding of climate considerations across the organisation are needed in order to reach carbon neutrality. Similarly, discussions around the Council's position on carbon offsetting should take place imminently, in order to prepare for a scenario where offsetting is utilised to offset residual emissions.
- Climate emergency needs to be further embedded throughout the organisation at every level. This will help climate considerations to be automatically prioritised as matter of course.
- There is a need to address conflicting priorities for the Council, such as facing increasing financial pressures. For instance, schools' actions have not been progressed significantly due to limited resources and officers time being allocated to this. We need to deliver the best possible outcome for Climate emergency whilst meeting other priorities.
- There is potential to make significant carbon saving through the Councils procurement processes. The Climate Emergency and Procurement team are looking to work more closely for better alignment between the Council's procurement work and climate commitment.
- Review of the carbon savings for some the actions means that the Plan savings fell by over 16kt – mainly due to changes to retrofit actions and some renewable energy projects.

What happens next?

There is a need for further embedding of climate emergency across the organisation. The delivery of the CEAP actions is a responsibility of each department, and it's currently

challenged by the unprecedented financial pressure that the Council is facing. In light of this, we need to make sure that climate change considerations are given sufficient weight through strategies and in decision-making, particularly where they bear a financial cost to the departments.

The Climate Emergency team will continue to coordinate the actions listed in the plan, and report on progresses. The team will continue to support all departments by delivering expert advice in sustainability, carbon accounting, and project specific advice.

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

The exact budget requirement will be identified and dealt 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 | NA | NA |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2) | £0 | NA | NA |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | £0 | NA | NA |

Other Financial Information

The cost of delivering all the CEAP actions is currently estimated to be in excess of £250m. This is a high-level estimate for all actions up to 2030, including those which have already begun. Many of these ongoing projects have already had partial/full funding secured, but the remaining future projects and stages (f projects will require additional funding, in excess of the current council internal budget, in order to be fully implemented. Suitable funding sources will be identified for these projects as and when schemes are brought forwards, with funding confirmed before schemes are progressed. These will need separate decision(s) which will go through the forward programme in their own right. Where possible additional funding will be sought from government grants and schemes, but for some actions such as engagement there is likely to be a requirement for council funding.

Many of the CEAP actions will save the Council money in the long run, for example from retrofitting assets, utilising EVs and delivering solar farms. The majority of these costs are already incorporated where possible into the CEAP report.

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| Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation |
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| Stakeholder consultation will continue through the climate emergency engagement and comms plan, and separately for each individual project as relevant. |
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| Public Sector Equality Duty |
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| 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. The fourth progress report was subject to an EqlA and this is provided in attachment. |
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| Climate Emergency – <i>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</i> |
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| This review has a significant positive impact on the Council’s carbon neutral objective, by providing comments on the actions the Council has committed to take to achieve this goal. |
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| List of Background Papers |
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| Appendix A. WBC CEAP Fourth Progress Report September 2023 |
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| Appendix B. WBC CEAP Carbon Accounting Methodology and Assumptions 2023 |
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| Appendix C. WBC CEAP September Progress Report EqlA 2023 |
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