

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:	05/05/2023
Service:	Economy and Housing
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) Fourth Progress Report
Completed by:	Andrew Collins
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	No
Signed off by:	Rhian Hayes
Sign off date:	20/06/2023

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.

<p>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:</p> <p>This 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. The report summarises the Borough’s carbon footprint, the plans for the years ahead and identifies the benefits of becoming net-zero carbon, towards delivering as much carbon savings as possible within the borough by 2030.</p> <p>This is being presented by officers on behalf of members and officers will continue to support these key projects, and offer impartial professional advice throughout, regarding the best opportunities and what is achievable, towards the overall goals outlined.</p> <p>A more ambitious approach would be required to enable WBC to play as full a role as possible in achieving the net-zero carbon borough by 2030, as per the declaration and commitment laid out in 2019. This remains a live document and will continue to updated over the coming year as more details become available to support decision making and methodologies for figures.</p>
--

The Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress Report comprises:

- Summarises the Borough’s current carbon profile and the councils performance for the last year.
- Demonstrates the current situation around reaching net zero and how more support is needed.
- Details the benefits of becoming net zero and WBC’s scope of influence towards such.
- Outlines related policies released this year which may impact the actions/trajectories.
- Presents updated summaries for each section explaining the purpose and format of the sections targets, along with outlining key achievements, upcoming actions, challenges, and overall carbon savings.
- Contains full details of actions and their associated outcomes, milestones and the latest status update for each, alongside updated anticipated costs and expected carbon savings wherever possible.
- Includes definitions and inventories as appendices to explain the information more clearly for all.
- Involves a separate methodology document to outline carbon savings calculations.

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 lead on the implementation and update of the CEAP, with cooperation from multiple departments across the council in delivering the actions. This is coordinated within **monitoring groups** for each team and then a shared **Lead Officer Group** to share progress and best practice. 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 the monitoring groups have been set up to work on key priorities to support delivery.

Additional elements have also been added with extra information to provide a greater level of detail, such as the carbon savings and co benefits 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.

This specific **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee** is set up to meet approximately every 3 months to receive major updates on the CEAP and its key actions, to analyse them from a neutral external perspective and provides recommendations for potential improvements, which the council will consider and implement where viable and supportive of the objective.

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.

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 where possible, to demonstrate to all stakeholders the benefits of reaching net zero.

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. Within this there are opportunities for specific positive impacts to stakeholders in a number of areas, for example building retrofitting will reduce energy costs for residents, businesses and the council, in particular socio-economically disadvantaged homeowners.

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 ten 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. Generate more Renewable Energy

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.

3. Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Domestic and Commercial Property

There are around 70,000 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Reduce Waste and Increase Recycling

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.

7. 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.

8. Achieve sustainable procurement practices

Within these external targets, the council recognises its ability to influence certain elements through its own procurement processes, utilising its scale, power and presence to establish requirements for a low-carbon economy.

9. 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

10. Lead by example and Reducing Council Emissions specifically

Within the wider borough target the council aims to lead the way on helping deliver neutrality, by improving its own operations, to become a net zero carbon organisation by carbon 2030.

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: 20/06/2023

This page is intentionally left blank