



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 6 MARCH 2024
Subject	CARBON ACTION PLAN
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Andrew Prosser – Executive Member for Climate Change. Email: andrew.prosser@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Charlie Jackson – Assistant Director, Planning and Sustainability. Email: charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk
Report Author	Hannah Kenyon – Climate Change Manager. Email: hannah.kenyon@publicagroup.uk
Purpose	To present the West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan, which is proposed to be adopted and resourced by the Council from April 2024.
Annexes	Annex A – West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan; Annex B – KPI Tracker.
Recommendation	That the Executive Resolves to: I. Approve the West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan to deliver on the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting Residents First• A Good Quality of Life for All• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency• Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO

<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Andrew Prosser – Executive Member for Climate Change. • Andrew Turner, Business Manager – Assets and Council Priorities.
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I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** In June 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council passed a motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency and made a pledge to become a carbon neutral Council by 2030. The decision was taken at a meeting of Full Council on 26 June 2019.
- I.2** To become carbon neutral, the Council's carbon dioxide emissions must balance the amount of carbon dioxide emissions removed from the atmosphere.
- I.3** The Carbon Action Plan was published in 2020 and includes actions to reduce carbon emissions from the council activities, buildings, and services.
- I.4** From 2019/20 to 2022/23, emissions reduced by 4%. This has primarily been due to reductions in gas and electricity because of energy efficiency measures in Council buildings and leisure sites. On the current trajectory of emissions reduction, the Council will not meet its carbon neutral target by 2030 with approximately 2,289 tonnes of CO₂e needing to be offset and/or inset in 2030.
- I.5** The Plan has been updated to set out the Council's pathway for achieving its carbon neutral target. It also accounts for additional emissions and removes completed actions.
- I.6** The Plan has been written for reference by multiple teams across the Council.
- I.7** The Council's emissions represent 0.49% of the district's total emissions. In addition to minimising internal carbon emissions, the Council is committed to facilitating districtwide carbon reduction through the delivery of the West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy 2021-25.
- I.8** The Climate Change Officer has been made permanent to provide long-term support in delivering the Plan.

I. MAIN POINTS

- I.1** The Carbon Action Plan sets out the Council's pathway for achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, highlighting where there is greatest opportunity to influence change and reduce climate impact. The priority is to minimise carbon emissions then inset and/or offset any residual emissions by verified means.
- I.2** It is a high ambition pathway which is reliant on external factors, for example the availability of funding, national policy, and progress in technological innovations in key areas, as well as embedding carbon reduction across the Council.
- I.3** The Plan includes ten priority actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from council activities, buildings, and services. These actions relate to prevention, buildings, water, waste, transport, procurement, and offsetting/insetting residual emissions.
- I.4** There is strong alignment with the energy hierarchy which minimises energy demand first, followed by improving energy efficiency and renewable energy. Emissions that cannot be removed entirely within the 2030 Pathway will be offset and/or inset, but only once all other steps to minimise carbon emissions have been taken.

- 1.5 The actions will be worked up into projects by various teams and be brought forward for approval in line with the roadmap to 2030. This will involve research and development and an assessment of viability to facilitate well-informed decision making.
- 1.6 The Plan will be monitored and reported on as part of the Council's commitment to reporting its annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, in line with government guidance and the GHG Protocol. A KPI tracker will be used (Annex B).
- 1.7 As well as carbon reduction, actions will also deliver co-benefits, for example avoiding offset costs, providing costs savings and investment returns, increasing thermal comfort, reducing water stress, and upskilling staff.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council does not adopt the Plan. This risks not achieving the Council's carbon neutral target by 2030 as there will be no action plan. The Council would be required to offset more carbon emissions to reach its carbon neutral target through paying for additional carbon credits.
- 2.2 The Plan could be scaled down from its current level of ambition to smaller projects and a shorter timeframe. This also risks not achieving the Council's target.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and made a pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.2 The Plan prioritises actions to achieve the Council's carbon neutral target.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The resourcing required for each project will be worked up as part of the initial viability assessment and feed into annual budget discussions. External funding will be secured where possible.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Some actions do not have funding allocated to them for delivery. There is a risk that not all the actions will be completed by 2030, as resources are yet to be secured.
- 6.2 There is a reputational risk to the Council if it does not achieve its carbon neutral target by 2030.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 Adopting and implementing the Plan for the Council will support carbon reduction and improve the climate for all.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATION

8.1 The Plan will help to address the climate and ecological emergencies.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

(END)