

Climate Action Update

Carbon Action Plan

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/tslaufqh/carbon-action-plan.pdf>

1.0 Council Offices, Properties and Sites

Carbon Account: The Council's carbon account for the financial year 2021/22 is almost complete. Once it has been audited, the results will be published in the Climate Action Biannual Report to Full Council and in the Annual Monitoring Report.

Agile Working Strategy (AWS): As part of the AWS, the heating system for Woodgreen is being reviewed. Heaton Design and Engineering Ltd were commissioned to provide updated costs and carbon savings for the two heating options: installing new gas boilers or installing a hybrid heating system comprising gas boilers and an air source heat pump. The Chief Executive has delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet members for Climate Change and Finance on the system that is selected.

2.0 Leisure Centres and Facilities

Carterton Leisure Centre: An application is being prepared for the next round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding, expected to open for applications in October 2022. Completion of the decarbonisation project under the current PSDS funding round became unviable following discussions with the distribution network operator (DNO) SSEN and a number of independent DNOs who confirmed that the timeframes to deliver a new substation (which is required as part of the decarbonisation works for the building) would mean that the project would not be completed ahead of 31 March 2023 deadline. In the meantime, an investment grade proposal for the low-carbon heating system and decarbonisation works is being commissioned as part of a two-stage Design and Build contract. Appointment of a contractor is expected in October 2022. The outputs of the IGP, coupled with a refined business case, will go to Scrutiny Committee ahead of formal approvals.

3.0 Council Vehicle Fleet, Machinery and Transport

Waste Service Review: The Waste Service Review report is being prepared by Frith Waste Management Consultants. The outputs of the options appraisal will inform the waste vehicle fleet replacement plans.

Climate Change Strategy

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/32wj4oq1/wodc-climate-change-strategy-24-03-21.pdf>

1.0 Protecting and Restoring Natural Ecosystems

Prosperity Fund: Two projects were successfully selected to receive support from the WODC Prosperity Fund: Deer Park South enhancements and the Biodiversity Toolkit.

Kilkenny Lane Country Park Volunteers: A new volunteer group to support the management of KLCP was launched in June, undertaking activities such as ditch and pond clearance, seed collecting and wildflower surveys.

Land Management Plans: Ubico have been successfully delivering the new LMPs, with the new urban wildflower areas and floodplain meadows managed appropriately. Completion of the wildflower meadow restoration at KLCP is being undertaken.

Windrush in Witney: WODC, the Wychwood Forest Trust and the Lower Windrush Valley Project (OCC) are developing a lottery fund bid to carry out landscape restoration across the Witney floodplain meadows. Potential activities include coordinated floodplain meadow management, reintroduction of grazing in areas, a new volunteer group and a programme of events and rural skills training over the course of several years.

Hedgerows: Hedgerow planting is to take place around the WODC estates over the autumn, with free tree stock from the Woodland Trust and Tree Appeal following successful donation applications. These will be planted with help from Publica employees, Madley Park school, the Witney Woodland Volunteers and the KLCP volunteer group. The Wychwood Forest Trust will also be carrying out hedge laying on the Madley Park estate and providing training opportunities for local volunteer groups.

Cross-council collaboration: Biodiversity Officer Rachel Crookes has 0.5 days seconded to the Lower Windrush Valley Project for 9 months to cover a maternity leave period.

2.0 Energy

Retrofit Funding: LAD 3, Sustainable Warmth, and HUG funding will focus on supporting low-income households. The Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) from the South East NZ Hub is being reviewed by Legal before being signed.

Affordable Warmth: The Better Housing Better Health service (BHBH) is run by the National Energy Foundation (NEF). A contract waiver has been approved to secure the continuation of the BHBH service for FY 2022/23.

Fuel Poverty Grant: During the cost of living crisis, it is proposed that the fund be opened up to emergency repairs for low income households that either live in high cost properties to heat or with a vulnerability to the cold. Examples include emergency boiler repairs, boiler replacement or smaller repairs such as windows.

3.0 Active Travel and Low-Carbon Transport

4.0 Standards in New Development

PaZCO Route Map and Action Plan: Hannah Kenyon has assisted in the development of the Action Plan through involvement in the Enabling Mechanisms Focus Group and Action Plan Consultation Session.

5.0 Engage, Support & Educate

Climate Action Bulletin: The next edition of the quarterly newsletter will focus on retrofit advice and cost of living support.

Climate Q&A: To celebrate the Great Big Green Week, an informal climate Q&A session is being run on 28 September to answer staff's questions on climate.

KLCP BioBlitz: A 'Bioblitz' has been successfully held at Kilkenny Lane Country Park to educate the public about the wildlife at the site and collect environmental records over a 24 hr period. The day had several sessions run by experts from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre for families, and a wildlife trail around the site.