

# Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	<b>Council</b>	
MEETING	<b>24 March 2022</b>	
TITLE:	<b>Climate Emergency Annual Report 2021/22</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>		
1. Climate Emergency Highlight report 2021/22 and key actions for 2022/23		

## 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The council declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019, committing to provide the leadership to enable Bath and North East Somerset to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. An annual update is provided to Council.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Council is asked;**

**2.1** To note:

- i. Progress on the delivery of the Year 2 (2021-22) Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- ii. The extensive and wide-ranging action being taken across the council to tackle the climate emergency.
- iii. The latest available data relating to carbon emissions (Council managed and district-wide emissions).

## 3 THE REPORT

3.1 This report provides an update on progress made in Year 2 of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. It has been prepared in the following context:

- The Covid pandemic and the resulting economic crisis, continued to affect business and life, in 2021. The council with partners has continued to play key roles in the pandemic response, including the vaccination programme. This has involved a co-ordinated response across all the council's services,

including public health, social care, community wellbeing and support, enforcement, Business support and communications.

- In August 2021, the International Panel on Climate Change released its Sixth Assessment Report and a further update in February 2022.
- In November 2021, the global 'conference of the parties' (COP26) took place in Glasgow which further focused citizen awareness on the climate emergency and the need for action at local, national and global levels. We will be closely monitoring changes in central government policies and programmes resulting from commitments made at the conference.

3.2 Audit West are currently carrying out a benchmarking exercise of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan against other Local Authorities. This will be completed by summer 2022.

3.3 Progress and achievements during 2021/22

- See Highlight Report, Appendix 1 for details of activity on leadership, the three priority areas for action and community engagement.

3.4 Organisational and staffing changes have been made to align and prioritise Council policy and service delivery.

- Appointment of a new Sustainable Communities Director role and the recruitment of two Head of Service roles for Sustainable Transport and Green Transformation. The Climate and Ecological Emergency work will report to the Head of Service for Green Transformation.
- Three new officers were recruited to the Climate and Sustainability Team in the last quarter of 2021 and one new climate officer in the Planning Policy team. Four more new posts will be recruited in the first half of 2022.
- One Shared Vision, the district-wide strategic vision report, forms the basis of work being undertaken by the Future Ambition Board (FAB). Climate and Nature is one of four theme groups set up by the FAB and will reflect the 'green' ambitions set out in the One Shared Vision report. Scoping work is underway with partner organisations and proposals for future Climate and Nature work will be presented to the FAB on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

3.5 Leadership, lobbying and shaping national policy.

- The council leader, supported by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainable Transport, called for WECA's proposed Climate Emergency Strategy, to include for more significant strategic ambition to enable the region to lead a zero carbon transition.
- The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainable Transport spoke as a witness at the Bristol Airport Expansion Enquiry, opposing the expansion on climate grounds.

- Responses submitted to Government Consultations including to the Waste and Resources Strategy – polluter pays and deposit return scheme, BEIS greenhouse gas dataset, Heat Decarbonisation Strategy, Transport Strategy, Planning Policy White Paper.
- The council attended the UK100 Leaders' Summit and is a signatory of UK100's COP26 Letter calling for stronger climate leadership from the Government.

### 3.6 Key actions planned for 2022-23. See Appendix 1

- The route map outlines two tracks 1) the key national climate and carbon emission policy context, 2) local milestones. In collaboration with other local stakeholders and citizens, the council will play a range of roles to lead, facilitate or enable area-wide emissions to be cut and targets achieved.
- To note, the route mapping exercise planned for 2021 has been delayed due to prioritisation of resource and capacity in response to COVID and to allow for staff capacity building. Therefore, this action has been carried forward to the Action Plan for 2022/23.
- The Council recognises that there is a gap in our response to the Climate Emergency in terms of adaptation to unavoidable climate change and intends to take action to fill this gap during 2022-23.

### 3.7 Carbon emission reporting and inventory

- Reporting and progress across the organisation is monitored through the Council's Integrated Reporting Framework.
- The council's carbon emissions inventory is updated each year. The inventory captures scope 1 and 2 emissions. Scope 1: carbon emissions directly from the burning of fossil fuels for heating and transport: gas, coal and vehicle fuel. Scope 2: indirect carbon emissions calculated through the consumption of electricity for heating, cooling, equipment and lighting.
- The carbon emission inventory report is also used to submit the council's annual returns to the Covenant of Mayors and CDP reporting programmes.
- Area wide emissions continue to reduce in a downward trend (source: BEIS annual data). The latest data shows emissions are 671.3 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e. A reduction of 37% when compared to 2005 the baseline year.
- Emissions from council buildings and operations for the year 2020/21 are 2,699 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. It should be noted that the council has achieved a substantial cut in its emissions by two thirds (67%) compared to the baseline year of 2009. Achieved through a range of mitigation measures, covering building measures, street lighting, technology upgrades, greater efficiency, and renewable energy installation.

See Highlight Report Appendix 1 for more detail.

### 3.8 Community engagement activity

- The Climate Emergency Community Engagement programme developed around the key principles of informing, sharing, leading, connecting and enabling has delivered a wide range of activity throughout the period and has enabled more by local residents.
- Issues and topics covered, range from community group action planning through to home energy efficiency, business energy efficiency and volunteering opportunities. The programme was adapted to enable activity to take place during lock-downs.

See Highlight Report, Appendix 1 for more detail.

### 3.9 An update on the Ecological Emergency/Nature Recovery Action Plan

- The Council declared a separate Ecological Emergency in July 2020. We have a long and strong history of work on biodiversity, landscape and ecology and a range of current strategies, partnerships and projects, both at local and West of England level that are relevant to the ecological emergency.
- The November 2021 Environment Bill, will bring in the 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement for most planning applications from November 2023, and for the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Our local Ecological Emergency Action Plan is being reviewed to assess how the Local Nature Strategy and Action Plan will work together and be developed during 2022/23.
- Within the Green Transformation service area, a new Green Infrastructure & Nature Recovery team has been formed to lead on our approach to Biodiversity Net Gain and a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- This year, working across the West of England we have taken a key role in the development of:
  - The West of England Nature Partnership Strategy
  - The Bristol Avon Catchment Plan
  - The West of England Tree & Woodland Plan (funding for tree planting)
  - The B&NES Tree plan has also been developed.
- In B&NES, a new policy for Biodiversity Net Gain has been developed as part of the Local Plan Partial Update. Existing green infrastructure and nature recovery work has continued through Bathscape, Waterspace and Bath River Line, as well as funding bid development for Somer Valley Rediscovered, Chew Valley Reconnected and the Connecting Landscape programme connecting Mendip Hills and Cotswolds.
- B&NES has contributed to the following external nature recovery projects:
  - the development of a Fish Recovery Strategy
  - the update of the Bristol Avon Catchment Management Plan
  - Woodland Trust - Emergency Tree Fund bid
  - the review and update of priority habitat across WoE
  - BNG standards and guidance for the WoE
  - Avon Beaver Management Group
  - Working guidance on protective habitat buffers for new development.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The activity outlined in this report is fully in line with the expectation on local authorities to take local action on the climate issue contained in the Climate Change Act 2008. And, further, is in line with the 2018 UN Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change report on the need to reduce carbon emissions more quickly in order to prevent the world from warming by more than 1.5°C.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 The recruitment programme underway to expand capacity in the Climate and Environmental Sustainability Team and the 2022-23 work plan are budgeted for.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

- 7.1 The climate emergency research programme in 2019 included a review of per capita carbon emissions, showing higher carbon emissions for higher income households. This analysis informs the development of the Council's work to ensure support for lower income and vulnerable residents such as the Housing service's work on home energy efficiency and fuel poverty alleviation.

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 8.1 This report updates on the corporate effort to drive, coordinate and support action across the Council and the area in pursuit of the commitments made in the Climate Emergency Progress Report to Council in October 2020, to enable delivery of the March 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The Council's approach to tackling the Climate Emergency referred to in this report was developed and determined following discussions at senior officer and Cabinet member level, informed by specialist consultants, who conducted the first stage of evidence gathering and research during the summer of 2019.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The report has been reviewed by the Sustainable Communities Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team, Chief Executive, the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

<b>Contact person</b>	Jane Wildblood, Strategic Manager: Climate & Environmental Sustainability
<b>Background papers</b>	For further details on how the Council is responding to the climate emergency see the Climate Emergency section on the website.
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	