

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Test Valley Borough Council

June 2020



Foreword

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face, locally, nationally and globally. It is a challenge that will continue to grow over the coming years, becoming ever more critical for future generations. That is why we must take action now.

In declaring a Climate Emergency, Test Valley Borough Council has committed to identifying steps we can take to achieve carbon neutrality as soon as possible, certainly before the Government target of 2050. Although we recognise the challenges of achieving this, we will move forward with application and ambition.

This action plan concentrates on what the council can do to make a difference. However, we cannot face this challenge in isolation. It requires the joint effort of all our communities and businesses to take steps to make Test Valley a greener borough for us all and to help sustain and improve the quality of life for our residents, now and into the future.

CLlr Zilliah Brooks,
Chair of OSCOM

CLlr Alison Johnston,
Environmental Portfolio Holder



Introduction

Climate change will affect all of us. Reducing the scale of the impact will be a significant challenge given the size of the task involved. It means that the current ways which we all do things will need to be reviewed and adapted as necessary.

This action plan sets out how the Council intends to respond to the climate emergency. The actions focus on how the Council functions and its role as an employer. It identifies ways in which beneficial projects can be delivered and what we can learn from existing partnerships including with our businesses and communities.

The Council has already made progress with initiatives to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, ranging from the purchase of electric vans for its fleet, installing solar panel on the depot roof at Portway and soon to be completed Ganger Farm pavilion, and the introduction of LED lighting at its Beech Hurst offices.

On some occasions the role of the Council, and the decisions that it needs to make, will appear to conflict with the larger task of tackling climate change. However, the Council will need to weigh up all the different evidence and requirements in making those difficult decisions.

Wider Context

Across the world, a number of organisations and authorities have been pressing for action on climate change based on significant scientific evidence of the magnitude of the crisis. In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹ issued a special report in relation to global warming. The report describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise and a need for urgent action. The report went on to say that limiting global warming to 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 may still be possible with ambitious action from national and local authorities, the private sector and local communities.

Opinion is divided on the pace required to meet this emergency; Extinction Rebellion state that we should aim for net zero emissions by 2025, the UK Committee on Climate Change references 2050 for carbon neutrality for the UK. The Climate Change Act 2008 set a target to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. In June 2019, this target was updated to a 100% reduction by 2050.

¹ UN body for assessing science in relation to climate change.

The Committee on Climate Change² (May 2019) highlighted that 'a net-zero Green House Gas target is not credible unless policy is ramped up significantly' and that 'delivery must progress with far greater urgency'.³

Across the country, councils and organisations are setting targets for carbon neutrality. It cannot be stated strongly enough that to meet such an ambition will be incredibly challenging. The Council is prepared to move forward with reducing its carbon emissions and play its part. The scale of the challenge is daunting and one where the Council cannot provide all the solutions. Nor can it, or should it, work in isolation. To really achieve carbon neutrality there needs to be a system change at all levels of government and within all sectors of the community. Close co-operation already exists with Hampshire County Council and this is echoed in their Vision for Hampshire 2050.

² *Independent statutory body whose purpose it is to advise the UK Government on emissions targets and progress made in reducing emissions and preparing for climate change.*

³ *Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, Committee on Climate Change, May 2019, executive summary.*



Test Valley Context

Test Valley has not been immune to the impacts of climate change. Those most visible and familiar to everyone are the increased flooding, wind, rain and storm intensities and the resultant damage to property, the environment and the disruption it causes.

There are also less obvious impacts such as increased risk to the health of vulnerable people, such as the elderly, as a result of hotter summers. In addition, there is the increased risk of invasive species on the Borough's precious habitats.

In response to the increased focus on the climate, the Council declared a climate emergency on 4 September 2019. The Council agreed:-

- i. That the Council declare a 'Climate Emergency' and commit to investigating clear and effective options to become a carbon-neutral organisation.*
- ii. That the Council invite the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to establish a cross party working group comprising Council Officers and Members (including the Environmental Portfolio Holder), with a remit to draw together the existing work of the Council in reducing the impacts of climate change and develop an action plan that identifies the steps the Council can take to achieve carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.*
- iii. That the working group be requested to provide their draft recommendations within six months.*
- iv. That the Council work with our communities and partners to identify opportunities for making the Borough carbon neutral.*

The thread of tackling climate change runs implicitly through many of the priorities of the Council's [Corporate Plan 2019-2023 'Growing Our Potential'](#). At its centre is our commitment to place-based working and enabling our communities to tackle the issues that are most important to them. This sets the context for working with our communities and partners to learn and share their ideas for tackling climate change.

In addition, the Council's [Sustainability Framework \(2017\)](#) set out a series of objectives the Council works towards in promoting sustainability. This includes using resources more efficiently and trying to encourage those living and working in the Borough to do the same; continuing to look at ways to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions; and ensuring we plan appropriately for the long term.

The Council is not starting from scratch on its journey towards becoming carbon neutral or on adapting to climate change impacts. At the Council's depot in Andover we have installed a solar photovoltaic panel array on the roof and some internal LED lighting. The electricity usage from the national grid has been reduced due to these steps. Last year, the solar panels provided approximately 20% of the electricity used at this site. Also, air source heat pump technology has been installed at the sports pavilion at Hunts Farm in Timsbury reducing the site's carbon footprint.



There are currently seven electric vehicles within the Council's fleet, being used by a number of teams. We have worked with partners to provide 18 electric vehicle charging points in public car parks in Romsey and Andover.

The Council has grants and loans available for home improvements including enhancing energy efficiency and promote County-wide schemes providing advice and assistance on energy efficiency. We have been working with partners to bring forward flood resilience measures in Romsey, and support wider resilience forums with the communities within the Borough. We have also helped fund improvements to community facilities to enhance their energy efficiency.

A number of organisations, including the Council, are working to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the Borough. The Council manages a number of green spaces, including Nature Reserves. As part of the management of green spaces we have a tree planting programme to ensure we have a robust and sustainable tree stock.

In order to understand our progress in reducing emissions, we have calculated our current greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In reporting such emissions, one of the widely recognised independent standards divides emissions into 3 different scopes, namely:

Scope 1 - direct GHG emissions from activities owned or controlled by your organisation that release into the atmosphere e.g. combustion from boilers and vehicles owned by the organisation.

Scope 2 - indirect energy GHG emissions, related to the use of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling that are a consequence of your activities but which occur at sources you do not control.

Scope 3 - indirect other emissions, relating to emissions as a consequence of your actions which occur at sources you do not control / own and fall outside Scope 2 (e.g. combustion from vehicles not owned by the organisation and the emissions associated with products purchased).

For calculating the Council's greenhouse gas emission, we have concentrated on scope 1 and 2, this includes the energy (gas and electricity) used by the buildings we own and operate, as well as the fuel used in running the fleet. We recognise that this does not cover emissions from all activities, however the Council will endeavour to bring forward ways of reducing the impact of actions within scope 3.

For 2018/19, the Council's emissions based on the above approach totalled just under 1,550 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)⁴. This is broken down by source as set out below.

Source	Total tonnes CO ₂ e
Fleet fuel use	870
Gas use	251
Electricity use	436
Total	1,557

Total allowing for offsetting electricity back to the grid	1,549
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The Government publishes figures on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions for local authority areas⁵. These do not cover all emissions but are readily available and published every year. The emission per person (2017)⁶ for Test Valley is 6.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide. In comparison, for Hampshire the equivalent is 5.0 tonnes, the South East region is 4.8 tonnes, and England is 5.1 tonnes.

Over the period 2005-2017, emissions have fallen from 1,067.7 kilotonnes CO₂ to 819.0 kilotonnes CO₂ in Test Valley. The emissions per person figures for Test Valley fell from 9.5 tonnes per person to 6.6 tonnes per person over the same period.

	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Transport	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry	Total
Test Valley (kilotonnes CO ₂)	195.2	193.4	485.4	-55.0	819.0
Percentage	22%	22%	56%		

⁴ CO₂e is the measurement advocated for use by the Government to report on greenhouse gas emissions, which looks beyond carbon dioxide, for example covering methane and nitrous oxide. It records the global warming potential of greenhouse gas, expressed in terms of the global warming potential of one unit of carbon dioxide.

⁵ Available: www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics

⁶ This uses the full dataset, rather than the subset within the influence of local authorities.

Moving Forward

We all have a role to play in achieving the necessary reductions in carbon emissions. We have therefore focussed the action plan on moving the Council towards being a carbon neutral authority. We want to make sure our communities and businesses have the support to do the same. The action plan therefore also looks to help to facilitate their transition.

Developing the action plan for how the Council can work towards becoming carbon neutral depends on a sound understanding of where we have come from, where we are now and crucially how we can forecast the benefits of our actions.

Establishing baseline information, the varying approaches for what is included within the scope of studies, and the many variables to take into account makes the task of establishing a target a complex one. However, the Council does not intend to wait until these issues are resolved and



baseline information is gathered and established. We know there is a challenge and we must move forward to meet it, even if at this stage the size of the challenge is unclear.

For some of the initiatives proposed it will be possible to estimate the current and post implementation carbon savings. It will be more difficult to do this where the actions are linked to behavioural change in working practices.

In some circumstances it may not be practical, at this time, to undertake its statutory and operational duties without causing some emissions. In these situations the Council may look at offsetting the carbon emissions, including through tree planting and habitat creation.

Establishing the Actions

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee co-ordinated the preparation of this action plan. A number of work streams were established including officers and members. The outputs of the work streams have been collated in this action plan, based on a number of themes.

As well as indicating whether the actions are likely to be commenced in the short, medium or longer term, the action plan has identified those projects which have a higher priority than others. This is not to indicate the importance of actions but reflects where current resources are to be focussed.



Some of the actions have already commenced and will continue throughout the timeline of the project. An example of this is with the Council's acquisition of land and future tree planting regimes. This approach has the multiple benefits of not only reducing carbon emissions via offsetting but also providing ecological mitigation and public recreation to help improve our residents' health and wellbeing.

Fleet fuel use is the Council's largest source of Council emissions. This has been identified as one of the main focuses for reducing carbon emissions. The Council already has some electric vehicles but the challenge lies predominantly with the larger refuse vehicles. In order to achieve a reduction the Council will assess the introduction of electric or alternative fuel vehicles before 2025. From then it is proposed that there will be a phased programme of replacing the current fleet with electric or alternative fuel vehicles with the intention that this will be completed by 2035. As with many of the possible actions, technology may improve to enable such changes to happen quicker.



Resource

In some circumstances the upfront cost may be high, but in the longer term the cost of adaption may be higher. In these circumstances it could be more effective to spend money in the shorter term to achieve a long term benefit.

Monitoring

The picture surrounding climate change is ever evolving. Change in technology, government policy and people's behaviour mean that this action plan should be seen as a living document to allow for it to be amended as issues or opportunities change. To allow for this review to be undertaken the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will act as the main monitoring board, receiving 6-monthly reports. It is also intended to hold annual OSCOM-sponsored workshops for all members to distil new ideas and actions that have been identified.



Action Plan

(priority actions in bold text)

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Corporate Action	Throughout the timeline	
	Ensure the implications of the climate emergency are taken into account in all Council strategic and policy documents, as well as in service planning and decision making processes	Ensuring climate change considerations are factored into our thinking throughout planning and delivering services.
	Take opportunities to lobby the government to encourage action on the transition towards carbon neutrality	To promote action on a national scale to support local delivery in emission reduction.
	Work closely with partners to share best practice and work jointly on initiatives	To make best use of resources to facilitate action.
	Identify and learn from leading carbon neutral employers	To understand the most effective ways to move towards carbon neutrality
	Facilitate behaviour change of staff and members to put reducing carbon emissions at the centre of our approach, reducing our carbon footprint both at work and in wider life.	Ensuring climate change considerations are factored into our thinking in the way we work and in sharing knowledge with others. It will emphasise that we all have a role to play. It will include using energy more efficiently, reducing overall waste generation and increasing recycling as much as possible.
Update the Procurement Strategy in the context of the Climate Emergency and build ethical, sustainable criteria into the procurement process	To ensure opportunities are taken to minimise carbon emissions associated with our purchasing of goods and services.	

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Property & Energy	Throughout the timeline	
	Review and reduce energy loss associated with windows, including through draft proofing and, where relevant, assessing the feasibility of the installation of new double glazed windows or secondary glazing	To enhance the energy performance of Council buildings, resulting in more efficient use of energy.
	Short Term	
	Review and improve energy data collection and monitoring	To ensure we have robust data to understand our carbon emissions.
	Carry out an audit of the office waste produced in Council owned and occupied buildings	To ensure robust data is available to inform future waste management arrangements.
	Review energy purchasing and procurement	To help the move towards renewable and low carbon energy sources, thus reducing emissions.
	Deliver measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce our energy consumption, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review lighting within and external to the Council's buildings • Replace boilers at Beech Hurst • Investigate heating controls and optimum start controls to the heating system at Beech Hurst • Review and install pipework insulation • Assess the feasibility of installing more energy efficient water heaters 	To reduce emissions associated with the running of Council buildings and assets.
	Undertake a general review of buildings and removal of redundant equipment	To reduce unnecessary energy consumption and resultant emissions.
To consider an integrated waste collection contract across all sites that maximises the range of materials that can be separated and recycled	To ensure a consistent approach to management of waste that increases the scope for reusing and recycling materials.	

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
	To develop an office based system that 'dovetails' with the range of materials that can be collected	To maximise the uptake of reuse and recycling based on opportunities available.
	Establish a network of staff champions, looking at energy and recycling	To provide a pool of staff that are able to advise others on opportunities to reduce energy consumption and maximise reuse and recycling of materials.
Medium Term		
	Review the estate energy strategy	To provide a strategic and long term approach to the use of energy across the Council's estate.
	Assess the feasibility of the use of voltage optimisation in all buildings	Consider options to reduce unnecessary energy use.
	Investigate opportunities to reduce the unnecessary use of disposable / single use materials	To promote the more efficient use of resources and limit waste generation.
	Assess the feasibility of the collection of rainwater from our buildings for reuse	To make more efficient use of water resources in management of the Council's estate
	Assess the feasibility of installing living walls and green roofs	Living or green walls and green roofs can help to remove air pollutants, regulate temperature and support biodiversity.
Long Term		
	Review the need for and install new boilers or suitable alternatives, and assess the feasibility of heating control, anti-dry cycling and optimum start control to the heating system in our buildings	To reduce emissions associated with the running of Council buildings and assets.
	Re-assess the feasibility of installing solar panels at Beech Hurst, Bourne House, the FMC and the Chantry Centre car park. Include a review of battery storage options.	We have previously looked at opportunities for solar panels at certain sites. However, the technologies have evolved, so it will be appropriate to review this work to seek opportunities to increasing the use of local renewable energy sources.

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Smarter working and use of technology	Short Term	
	Install video conferencing facilities at Beech Hurst and other Council offices to facilitate meetings and appointments, where there is a business need	To reduce the need to travel for meetings, thus reducing associated emissions.
	Investigate the digital casting of meetings	To reduce the need to travel for meetings, thus reducing associated emissions.
	Seek to minimise travel except where there is a specific business or training need	To reduce fuel consumption and the associated emissions.
	<p>Reduce the unnecessary use of paper including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing internal printing of documents and agenda papers Reducing internal forms and roll out payroll / HR self-service to all employees and members Challenging the Government around any statutory requirements for hard copy papers Analysing and reduce paper coming into the Council Enabling digital signing 	To reduce the unnecessary use of paper and associated distribution of such material.
	Review of future IT equipment and what is available in the market to enable the Council to equip people with the right tools and kit to enable flexible and sustainable working. Evaluate further roll out of mobile devices/tablets within the wider business.	To ensure the effective use of technology and opportunities for digital working.
	Medium Term	
	Expedite the focus on channel shift, moving residents to digital communication channels, reducing printing and postage and increasing self-service.	Reducing the need to travel to access services whilst minimising the unnecessary use of paper and associated distribution of such material.
	Long Term	
No actions identified at this time		

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Housing, Development & Infrastructure	Short Term	
	Promote and raise awareness of grants available to residents to improve their homes, including in terms of energy performance	To aid residents to reduce their energy consumption at home, where they might not otherwise be able to afford to implement such measures. May also help reduce fuel poverty.
	Complete the review of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy sources in the Borough and use to inform the next Local Plan	Enhance our understanding of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy opportunities within the Borough.
	Continue to support Government's proposals to increase energy performance requirements for new development through national Building Regulations	To facilitate the roll out of more ambitious energy efficiency standards for new development in a consistent way across the county.
	Medium Term	
	Target action on enhancing energy performance of existing private rented homes in the Borough	To encourage the delivery of measures to improve energy efficiency, thus reducing emissions, of homes within the Borough.
	In relation to historic buildings, share available advice on how to reduce energy consumption whilst conserving the heritage assets	To provide access to more targeted advice where standard ways of improving energy performance may not be practical.
	Through the preparation of the next Local Plan, ensure policies are written to facilitate the move towards carbon neutrality, in the context of national legislation and policy	New development will be planned in a way to reduce emissions and facilitate more sustainable living.
	Raise awareness of best practice examples within the Borough to share insight	To help those living and working in the Borough understand the most effective ways to move towards carbon neutrality.
	Long Term	
Develop promotion scheme to provide advice to owners on energy efficiency improvements and trusted installers	To aid residents to reduce their energy consumption at home.	

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Transport, Travel and Plant	Throughout the timeline	
	For refuse vehicles, before 2025 undertake an assessment and trial of the practicalities of introducing electric or alternative fuel vehicles. This assessment would ensure that such vehicles would meet the service needs. From 2025 there will be a phased programme of replacing current fleet with electric or alternative fuel vehicles with the intention that this will be completed by 2035.	To facilitate the move to alternative fuels and power sources when they are available.
	Short Term	
	In conjunction with relevant partners, continue to support the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of sustainable modes of travel. This will include the preparation of a Walking and Cycling Strategy and promoting the availability of sustainable modes of travel.	To reduce fuel consumption and facilitate the move towards more sustainable travel options.
	In conjunction with relevant partners, continue to support the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of Electric Vehicles including the installation of EV charging points at public car parks and council offices.	To reduce fuel emissions and facilitate the move towards green travel options
	Consider viability of electrically operated bin lifts for refuse collection vehicles by the end of 2020	To facilitate the move to alternative fuels and power sources when they are available.
	Medium Term	
	To investigate the infrastructure required for a fleet that may become increasingly reliant on electricity as its source of power by the end of 2022	Ensuring the Council is prepared for changes to the way vehicles are run, facilitating a reduction in emissions.
	To transition to electrically operated hand plant by the end of 2023	To reduce emissions and the release of other pollutants.
	To ensure that end of life vehicles and plant are disposed of in an environmentally friendly way	To ensure the appropriate use of resources through whole lifecycles.
Long Term		
No actions identified at this time		

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Supporting Communities and Businesses	Short Term	
	Identify and support climate change initiatives that emerge through communities undertaking local action planning, for example through Andover Vision and Romsey Future, or through rural action planning in the Parishes.	To facilitate reductions in emissions by individuals and communities within the Borough.
	Contribute to the Andover Vision-led Day of Action including high profile involvement on the day.	To facilitate community action to raise awareness on ways to reduce emissions.
	Work with partners to deliver a business event to offer best practice, networking and promote access to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainable Business Partnership support for businesses.	Lowering emissions from the business sector within the Borough.
	Specialist learning event for Parish and Town Councils and community organisations who have well developed local climate activities (what worked and what didn't, how could we share to all)	To facilitate community action to raise awareness on ways to reduce emissions.
	Business event at University of Southampton Science Park to highlight innovative carbon reduction techniques in business and industry	Lowering emissions from the business sector within the Borough.
	All Parish / Town Council event, following on from learning event, to celebrate and share best practice, inspiring other Councils and groups to follow suit. Also highlighting resources available (officer support and grants).	To facilitate community action to raise awareness on ways to reduce emissions.
	Recycling Behaviour Change Project – working in two specific areas to explore best ways to improve recycling behaviour	To raise awareness and understanding of recycling opportunities within the Borough, and to reduce contamination of waste streams.
	Medium Term	
	No actions identified at this time	
	Long Term	
No actions identified at this time		

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
Natural Environment	Throughout the timeline	
	Continue to explore opportunities for land acquisition for small scale woodland creation.	This will support the offsetting of carbon emissions, with the potential to enhancing biodiversity. In some cases, additional planting can also help with managing the movement of water as part of a catchment based approach.
	Short Term	
	Work with Hampshire County Council to review the management of roadside verges which will positively contribute to carbon capture and/or reduce cutting frequency, operational carbon emissions and increase wildlife value. A network of connected verges will be prioritised	This will reduce emissions with the management of the verges, whilst also enhancing biodiversity.
	Through management of green spaces, continue to develop ways to reduce operational carbon emissions across our green spaces whilst improving value of wildlife. A network of linked wild meadow / pollinator corridors will be prioritised.	This will reduce emissions with the management of the spaces, whilst also enhancing biodiversity. (Pilot sites to be confirmed.)
	Develop a Tree Management Strategy which will detail overarching management principles and replacement planting across Council property	This will ensure our approach takes account of all considerations, including supporting habitats and offsetting opportunities.
Develop a Tree Planting Strategy to provide a basis for planting in appropriate places across the borough	This strategy would provide a basis for maximising appropriate tree planting on our own land whilst ensuring the approach of the right trees in the right places. It would include prioritising local provenance stock, biosecurity and options for contract growing of seed collected in Test Valley. It would also support our approach to supporting local habitats and offsetting opportunities.	

Theme	Action	Impact / Outcomes
	Medium Term	
	Work with partners to secure appropriate large scale opportunities for wilding and nutrient mitigation which will contributed to carbon sequestration	This will support the offsetting of carbon emissions, with the potential to enhancing biodiversity.
	Long Term	
	Explore the inclusion of policies for woodland creation to increase urban canopy cover within the next Local Plan	This will have benefits in offsetting carbon emissions, enhancing biodiversity, supporting management of water, and supporting wider public health objectives.

