

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee



Report of Head of Partnership and Insight

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To: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

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Climate Emergency Year One Work Programme:

Recommendation(s)

- (a) Committee to note the progress and process to date, including the activity commissioned within the existing 2019/20 budget, in respect of providing a strategic response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and adopted carbon neutrality targets for the Council and the District.
- (b) Committee to review the proposed year one climate emergency work programme, which will provide a base for a future proposed Vale of White Horse District Council Climate Change Strategy.
- (c) Committee to approve the submission of the proposed year one climate emergency work programme to Cabinet, to recommend for their implementation and adoption, including proposed additional measures in the budget for 20/21.

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines a proposed year one climate emergency work programme the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) could recommend to Cabinet as a strategic response to the climate emergency declaration and adopted carbon neutrality targets for the Council and the District.
2. The items put forward for inclusion in a climate emergency work programme were originally outlined in an initial paper to the CEAC on 15 October 2019; the items have now been considered and evaluated by either external consultants or, where it was felt there was internal expertise on the subject/item, by service area representatives. This report sets out the journey to selection for items put forward

and prioritised within the proposed year one climate emergency work programme included in this report.

3. The work programme proposal is categorised into seven themes; council business, partnership, housing, infrastructure, transport, biodiversity and behaviour change, emphasising the holistic response required in order to achieve the adopted targets.
4. In addition to proposing new activity for the Council, this report outlines the significant ongoing projects in regard to this agenda which the Council is already involved in, items considered business as usual for council officers and items which have already been commissioned within the existing 2019/20 budget to support meeting the climate emergency targets that have been adopted.

Strategic Objectives

5. This work is supported by the current Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan 2016-2020 through the commitments to 'Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing', 'Housing and Infrastructure' and 'Running an Efficient Council' through aspects such as improving recycling rates, finding solutions to flooding problems across the District and seeking to reduce energy costs.
6. Work is currently being undertaken to develop the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and update priorities, which provides an opportunity to embed climate emergency related goals. It is envisaged that the draft of the future corporate plan 2020-2024 for Vale of White Horse District Council will be reviewed by the CEAC and there will be an opportunity for recommendations to Cabinet on its contents.

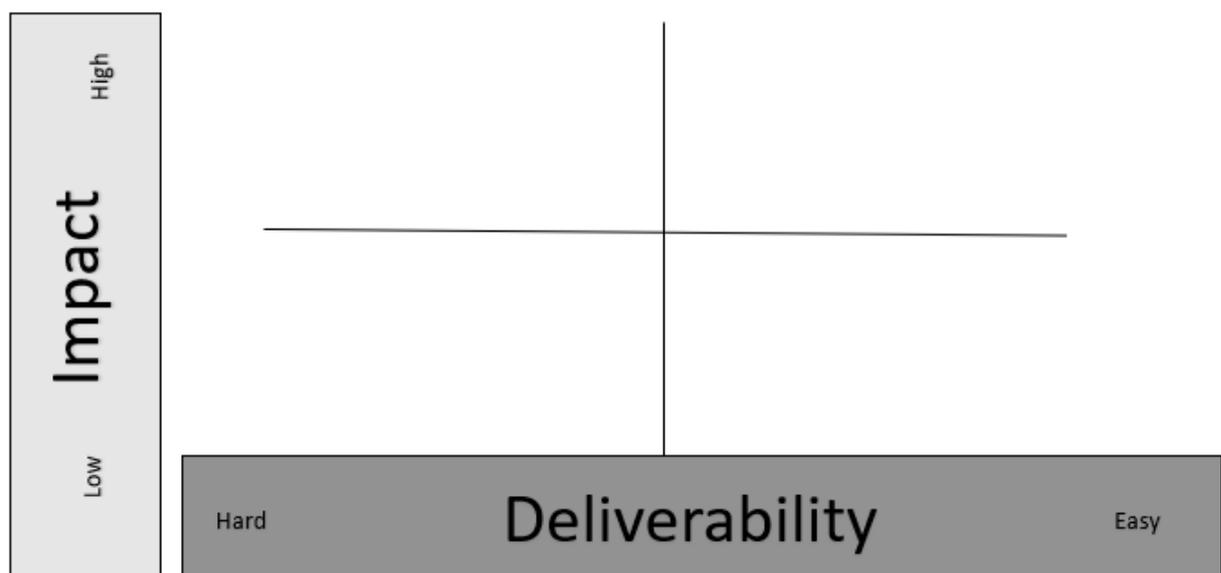
Background

7. A climate emergency was declared by the Vale of White Horse District Council administration at Full Council on 13 February 2019. The motion outlined the intention for the Council to consider adopting an early carbon neutral target.
8. To support a response to the climate emergency, the Council established the CEAC to develop and recommend mitigating actions and advise Cabinet on matters relating to climate change.
9. The CEAC reviewed a report from officers named 'Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps' and subsequent recommendations, at its first meeting 15 October 2019. At this meeting, the CEAC opted to select target option one (a Carbon Neutral Council) and three (a Carbon Neutral District) to recommend to Cabinet as overarching goals for the Council in respect of adopting an early carbon neutral target.
10. The CEAC opted to recommend to Cabinet that Vale of White Horse District Council reduce its carbon emissions by 75% by 2025 and become a carbon neutral Council by 2030. For Vale of White Horse District, the CEAC recommended to reduce carbon emissions by 75% by 2030 and aspire to become a carbon neutral district by 2045, at the latest. These targets were agreed at Cabinet on 6 December 2019.
11. The CEAC report 'Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps' included the options of items for inclusion in a programme of work to address the climate emergency, of which Committee members reviewed and contributed to at the

meeting. This amounted to a final list of items for further exploration, full evaluation and costing, before these items were to be prioritised and selected for inclusion in the proposed year one work programme detailed in this report.

The Journey to Selection

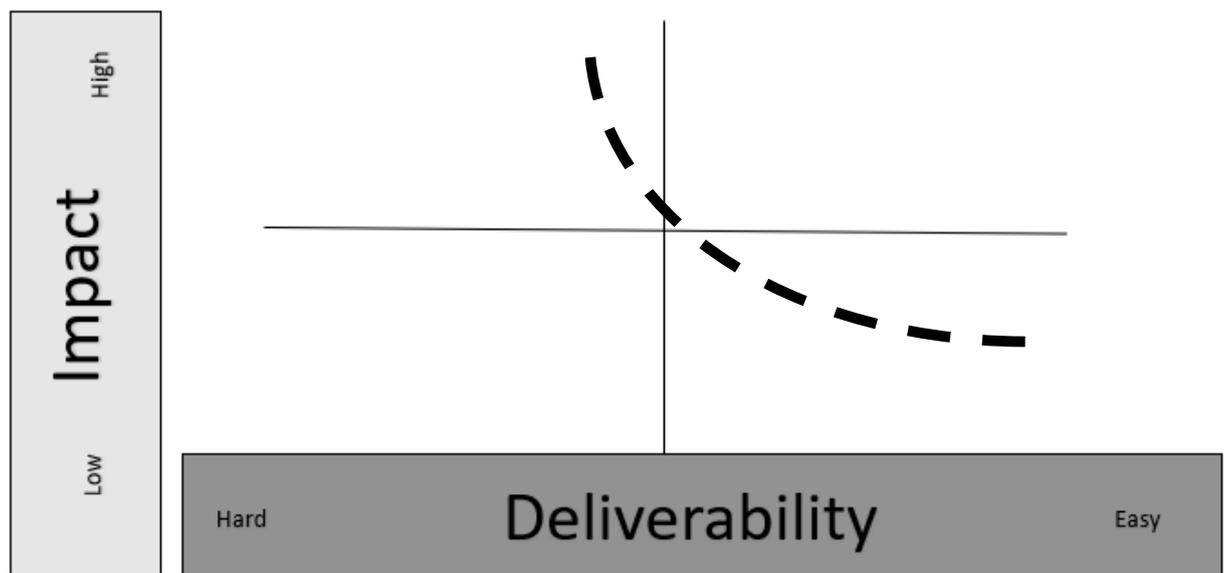
12. At the CEAC meeting on 15 October 2019, the Committee established a task and finish group consisting of self-nominated committee members, to work with officers on developing work programme proposals, including assisting with building the programme proposals into a coherent strategic response and presenting options back to the CEAC.
13. The task and finish group have met twice. Once on 25 November 2019, to review the work programme item options to be fully scoped, evaluated and costed and for the second time, on 20 December 2019. On 20 December, the group then reviewed all the information received from the scoping exercise and based on this information, selected and prioritised items to include in a climate emergency work programme to support the development of a future strategy, to subsequently recommend to Cabinet their implementation following full committee review.
14. The prioritisation exercise on 20 December 2019 was conducted with officers as facilitators, guiding members through the process and offering information as scoped by consultants and internal officers, to support member discussion.
15. The purpose of the exercise was to prioritise the merits of alternative options/items in an interactive way, quickly generating and gaining consensus amongst the task and finish group. The aim of the exercise was to shortlist the best options to recommend to Cabinet, as part of a climate emergency work programme to provide a strategic response to the climate emergency.
16. During the exercise, each option/item was reviewed and placed on a matrix, considering impact (range low to high) and deliverability (range easy to hard), as per the illustration below:



17. The criteria for impact were defined as giving consideration to what favourable impact the item would have on fulfilling the Council's climate emergency objectives, for example, measures such as carbon savings and reputational benefit.
18. The criteria for deliverability was defined as the ease of an item to implement, including factors such as cost, risk, implementation time, amount of influence and resource.
19. It was noted at the beginning of the exercise that the criteria could additionally be made up of many other components, however for the purpose of achieving the desired exercise output, the criteria were not broken down any further in order to achieve a basic qualitative assessment of impact Vs deliverability.

Prioritisation Exercise – Output

20. The output of the prioritisation exercise, and therefore the items it is proposed the CEAC recommend to Cabinet for implementation as part of a coherent, strategic response to the climate emergency targets, can be viewed in the paragraph 27 table. The items are listed under an overarching theme, and within this, in cost order. All costs stated below are provided on one off basis for the year one work programme unless explicitly specified as a recurring annual fee. It is also highlighted whether these items are to be delivered internally or externally.
21. The task and finish group wished to place a curve on the matrix diagram, as per the illustration below, in order to capture an appropriate range of items to the right of the curve, predominantly 'easy deliverability, high impact', as well as some 'high impact' items which may be harder to deliver, in addition to items from the top section of the quadrant which included those which were considered 'easy deliverability, low impact'.



22. Officers recommend the items included within the climate emergency work programme are formed of priority one items, as captured within the curve.
23. Items placed in priority two (the remaining hard deliverability, hard impact), priority three (the remaining easy deliverability, low impact) and priority four

(hard deliverability, low impact) quadrants, are available to review in appendix A.

24. Additionally, included in separate tables below, are the items of which officers consider business as usual, items already commissioned within existing 19/20 budget and ongoing projects the Council is involved in, in respect of this agenda. These will be included within the scope of any future climate change strategy but are not additional activities being put forward by the CEAC.
25. Alongside the proposed year one work programme response as detailed below, some additional gains are available through the committee in its advisory capacity; fulfilling its role and reviewing policies and strategies as they naturally evolve and enter the governance cycle, for example car parking fees and charges, the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the taxi licensing policy. A forward programme for the CEAC is being discussed as agenda item 10.
26. The predominant theme prioritised and put forward by task and finish group members within priority one items, is 'council business'. This includes items which will be significant in contributing towards becoming a carbon neutral council. It is recognised that a prioritised focus on council business allows the Council to get its 'own house in order' which will be reputationally positive for the Council, if it is to then fulfil its role as an influencer, in respect of the aspirations for Vale of White Horse to achieve a 75% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and become a carbon neutral district by 2045.

27. PRIORITY ONE ITEMS:

Action	Cost
Theme: Council Business	
Council reporting and decision-making templates to include climate impacts section	Within existing resources (internal)
Information on the climate emergency for the public, to include; website information and communication tools and campaign opportunities	£1000(external)
'Single-use plastic free' pledge and action plan	£2250(external)
Promotion of low carbon (plant based) diets within council operations, facilities and buildings, and associated action plan	£2250(external)
Creation of a vision for a low carbon future for Vale of White Horse and associated action plan	£2300(external)
Identify opportunities to invest in solar energy off site	Study/report: £2500 <i>If projects identified are implemented, costs of these will be high and subject to the council's financial procedures</i>
Implement electric pool vehicles for staff business travel – Initial three vehicles for testing and evaluating	Initial upfront cost for leases: £5000(external) <i>Expected to be cost neutral or revenue saving over five</i>

	<i>years (upfront costs recurring should additional vehicles be added in future years)</i>
Identify energy saving opportunities in council buildings	Site energy reviews (Leisure centres): £3280 Plus (Other sites): £2000 <i>If projects identified are implemented, costs of these will be high and subject to the council's financial procedures</i>
Identify opportunities for solar energy on council buildings	
Identify opportunities for heat pumps in council buildings	
Strategy for the refurbishment of buildings to match zero carbon objective	
Review use of building management systems to increase energy efficiency	
Exploration of battery storage on council sites	
Estimation of future district-wide carbon emissions under different carbon reduction scenarios, and development of a model for future use	£12,500(external)
Theme: Housing	
Home retrofit service for private households	Within existing resources: Refer to Cosy Homes Oxfordshire retrofitting scheme (internal)
Exploration of providing zero carbon, council owned, affordable housing	Initial report/study: Within existing resources (Internal)
Theme: Behaviour Change	
Residents and Communities	
Residents' survey on climate change	Within existing resources: Scoping of survey (internal)
Provision of summary data on energy use for towns in the district, including maps for their use	£3340 <i>There is the potential to explore match funding basis with town councils(external)</i>
Offer to work with interested community action groups	<i>Cost not available at time of prioritisation, further scoping required. This will be subject to the council's financial procedures</i>

Businesses	
Join Oxfordshire Greentech (network for low carbon and cleantech companies) as a 'founder member'	£2500 per year for a three-year membership (external)
Theme: Infrastructure	
Investigate opportunities to promote renewable energy, including external funding	£1500(external)
Theme: Transport	
Electric vehicle hire facility for residents – initial feasibility study	Initial study: Within existing resources (internal)
Explore monitoring schemes which target taxi idling	<i>Cost not available at time of prioritisation, further scoping required. This will be subject to the council's financial procedures</i>
Theme: Biodiversity	
Feasibility study into setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and facilitate planting of trees	Initial study: Within existing resources (internal)
Develop a Biodiversity Net Gain Targeting Strategy	Within existing resources: Create a stand-alone VoWH strategy (<u>CEAC preferred option</u>) An additional option: Oxfordshire wide strategy £6000
Tree planting	High cost, with potential to be provided/funded by CIL contributions (Internal)
Total cost	£41,020

28. ITEMS ALREADY COMMISSIONED (existing 2019/20 budget):

Item	Cost
Theme: Council Business	
A baseline review of council energy consumption and CO ₂ e emissions	£250
Creation of a 'glidepath' tool to assess the contribution from	£750

identified initiatives and other variables, with the facility to consider different timelines in order to arrive at the optimum sequence of actions to achieve the adopted targets and track progress towards zero emissions, noting milestones and any necessary adjustments on the journey	
Define the scope of carbon emissions across the District to be included in the target	£1965
A baseline review of district wide energy consumption and CO ₂ e emissions	£1650
Theme: Behaviour Change	
Implement training for officers on Vale of White Horse's target and work to address the climate emergency	£600
Full day conference for officers and members on the subject of climate change	£900
Work with town councils across the district and facilitate a workshop to understand theirs and their parishes' local needs in respect of the climate emergency. Seek to connect with the District approach and create actions plans that complement and link to an overarching vision for the Vale of White Horse district	£1500
Total cost	£7615

29. ITEMS CONSIDERED BUSINESS AS USUAL:

- a. For the Council to meet the adopted targets, we need to ensure that there is a deep understanding of the subject and its importance as well as an assured commitment of staff across the organisation. It is envisaged that the climate emergency will be embedded at the heart of the organisation by ensuring that we have formalised and embedded it in within our internal governance – e.g. climate implication section on all reports.
- b. The Council will need a robust strategy and policy framework, that could include a climate change strategy. More broadly, it should ensure that when other policies are developed or reviewed, they are done so understanding any climate considerations. A policy and strategy guidance document has already been created, as part of the council's Corporate Delivery Framework, which will provide staff with the tools they need to develop robust fully rounded policy. In addition, we have also undertaken a 'light touch' policy audit to identify existing policies that could have high climate impacts, in order for us to target our interventions effectively and allow the CEAC the opportunity to review them at future meetings.
- c. Moreover, it is also important that the climate emergency is considered as a key factor in other business as usual activity such as procurement, especially major contract renewal. In particular this will include early preparation for the specification of the new leisure facilities and waste management contracts in 2024, and ongoing leisure centre maintenance and refurbishment.

- d. In addition, the table below highlights the items originally outlined in the CEAC report 'Options and Next Steps' which are considered business as usual for officers:

Item
Theme: Council Business
Embed partnership collaboration to develop external funding bids in order to deliver agreed targets and commitments
Theme: Partnership
Identify public and private partners that have similar goals and compatible interests to work with, allowing the Council to leverage their resources. The most obvious way to leverage resources is to combine the response for South and Vale and create a working partnership with other districts and Oxfordshire County Council, as well as established charitable and community organisations with missions that line up with climate emergency
Influence policy by agency partners. Central government have a very large role to play in reducing carbon emissions with regulatory control of building, large scale public education campaigns and public transit infrastructure, for example
Actively monitor or participate in projects by trusted partners as resources allow. There may be specific projects that directly contribute to the target that is set which could be funded by Vale of White Horse and delivered by outside partners who have an established track record and expertise with the work
Monitor Oxfordshire councils' positions and action plans in response to their climate emergency declarations
Provide a response to Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Part 5 consultation

30. ONGOING PROJECTS:

Project	Description/Status
Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy	This is a county-wide collaboration to set common standards for electric vehicle infrastructure, and an action plan to deliver the charging points needed to support the transition to low emission vehicles
Park and Charge Project	Innovate UK funding has been received for an estimated 120 electric vehicle charge points in council car parks, including smart technology allowing overnight use by residents who do not have off street parking
Oxfordshire County Wide Climate Change Collaboration Group	All district and county councils in Oxfordshire have created a collaboration group at Director and Chief Executive level hosted by Oxford City Council to ensure action in this area is maximised, complimentary where possible and has strong senior leadership

Planning Design Guide	Initial initiation of a project to produce a new Design Guide to act both as a guide and as an assessment tool. It is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners in the process of developing high quality development and in assessing its design quality. One of the aims of this project is ensure alignment with the climate emergency.
Vale Local Plan	Should Vale of White Horse District Council choose to review their Local Plan, this would provide the opportunity for the CEAC to input into climate policy, which would form business as usual.
Energy Procurement	Energy procurement options are currently being explored by the council's property team in preparation for the expiry of the current LASER contract in 2020. This will include consideration of the procurement of renewable electricity
Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 11: Smart travel and new technology	DGT are participating in MultiCAV consortium to pilot autonomous vehicles to transport between Milton Park and Didcot Parkway railway station.
Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 38: Feasibility study for sustainable fuels for council fleet and local private fleet operators	Capacity funding (revenue) awarded from Homes England, subject to cabinet budget approval. Delivery plan identifies this as a near-term project, to be coordinated through the DGT team
Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 62: Third party development for housing projects to review outcomes of zero carbon showcase homes to support future policy development	Capacity funding (revenue) bid/request made to Homes England July 2019. Awaiting notification from Homes England. Delivery plan identifies this as a medium-term project, to be coordinated through the DGT team
Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 48: Strategy for promotion of growing local food	Included within DGT delivery plan; estimated cost £45,000 (funding not currently sourced). Further funding to support implementation by third parties may be required. Delivery plan identifies this as a near-term project, to be coordinated through the DGT team

Financial Implications

31. Any decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the council's overarching financial position. This is as reflected in the council's medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to Full Council each February as part of the budget setting report. The February 2019 MTFP and the budget report showed that the council was due to receive £474,000 less in revenue funding than it planned to spend in 2019/20 (with the balance coming from accumulated New Homes Bonus). This funding gap is predicted to increase to over £5.6 million per annum by 2023/24. Every decision should be made in cognisance of the need to eliminate this funding gap during the next five years.
32. Many of the projects and items within the proposed year one programme will have financial implications for the Council. Within the 2019/20 Corporate Climate Budget there is currently £5,500 unallocated.
33. It is clear that we cannot fund and undertake all of the work that is required to tackle the Climate Emergency. Additional sources of funding will be needed in addition to any new budget allocation. This could include government grants, investment by businesses, households, town and parish councils and resource support from community action groups. We believe that Oxfordshire is well positioned to secure the increased funding for responding to climate change that has already been alluded to by central government.
34. The base budget for 2020/21 is £20,085, therefore it is recommended the committee puts forward to Cabinet the request for an investment as outlined in the table below in order to implement priority one items as part of the year one work programme that could provide a base for a future strategy to address the climate emergency in the Vale of White Horse.

In summary,

Total cost - priority one items, climate emergency work programme	£41,020
10% overall contingency	£4,102
2019/20 Corporate Climate Budget - unallocated	-£5,500
2020/21 Corporate Climate Budget – base budget	-£20,085
2020/21 Climate Change Lead – 1 FTC 12 months (including 25 per cent on-costs)	£31,798.13
Total additional budget request 2020/21	£51,335.13

35. Moreover, officers recommend in order to support implementation of the climate emergency year one programme of work, a resource of one additional officer on a twelve-month fixed term basis with a cost of £31,798.13 This cost shown is a fifty per cent share of a total cost of £63,596.25 as officers recommend that any

additional resource will be shared with South Oxfordshire District Council on a fifty: fifty basis subject to both councils choosing to proceed in this way.

36. It should also be noted that many items included within the proposed year one programme of work are feasibility studies and therefore there will be significant resource implications and additional budget required beyond year one of the programme, if the recommended projects are implemented following the studies, they will be subject to the council's financial procedures. The additional resource will provide capacity to move forward, review and evaluate the year one programme and draw findings and activities from the year one programme into a coherent strategy to address the Climate Emergency over a longer term.
37. As this area of work develops it is also likely that existing resources will need to be redirected and refocused to these outcomes.
38. Some of the items prioritised by the task and finish group have been costed at a fifty: fifty cost to Vale of White Horse District Council with South Oxfordshire District Council, due to benefits of scale from our shared resources. As a result, if some of the items prioritised by the task and finish group are not approved for submission to Cabinet by the CEAC, or if Cabinet amend or do not adopt some of the items within the proposed programme of work, there is the potential for an increased financial cost for South Oxfordshire District Council.

Legal Implications

39. Carbon Neutrality itself is not a legal requirement and consequently there is no legal duty for the Council to undertake actions and activities to achieve this.
40. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Legal implications may arise in respect of individual projects included within the subsequent work programme as they are scoped, approved by Cabinet and implemented. These will be subject to identification and appropriate action as required.

Risks

41. This agenda is not currently a statutory function for district councils; many of the projects/activities detailed within this report require a funding stream and have resource implications, including implications arising from redirecting current resource from areas across the Council to this agenda if this is the approach the Cabinet decide to take.
42. Moreover, due to the current financial position, it may not be possible to deliver on the full climate emergency aspirations declared by the Council.
43. Vale of White Horse District Council is in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council and any items implemented in relation to council operations could lead to complexities, due to shared resources and offices at 135 Milton Park.

Conclusion

44. In conclusion, this report outlined the process by which a proposed work programme to address the climate emergency declared by the Council was formulated and presented this proposed year one work programme.

45. Moreover, this report re-emphasised the targets set by the Council to achieve carbon neutrality for council operations (carbon neutral by 2030), and for Vale of White Horse district (carbon neutral by 2045) and the subsequent strategic steps required to work toward these targets and achieve the 75% incremental reduction in emissions, particularly in the area of 'council business'.
46. In addition to proposing new activity for the Council, this report outlined ongoing projects the Council is already involved in to address the climate emergency, and detailed items considered business as usual for council officers as well as items which have already been commissioned within the existing 2019/20 budget to support meeting the climate emergency targets.

Background Papers

- **Appendix One** Full Prioritisation Exercise Output