

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Report of Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations

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To: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

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Climate Emergency Work Programme update

Recommendation(s)

(a) Committee to note the progress on the Climate Emergency Year One Work Programme with consideration to the context of COVID-19 and its impacts on the progression and steer of this programme.

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an update on the Climate Emergency Work Programme since the most recent Climate Emergency Advisory Committee meeting on 28 January 2020.

Strategic Objectives

2. 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. Climate change and the environment are already emerging as strong priorities in the initial draft for the Corporate Plan 2020-24; however, this has currently been delayed due to Covid-19. It is still considered appropriate to continue to progress the Climate Emergency Year One Work Programme, as a sensible response to the emerging priorities in the Corporate Plan 2020-2024, acknowledging some projects may be delayed, re-focused or re-prioritised.

Background

3. The most recent meeting of the Vale of White Horse Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) took place on 28 January 2020. The agenda for the CEAC meeting on 28 January included the proposed Climate Emergency Year One Work Programme for recommendation to Cabinet.
4. At their February meeting, Vale Cabinet approved the year one work programme and additional budget request proposed by the CEAC. The programme will begin to tackle climate change and provide a strong foundation towards the adopted carbon neutral targets. The programme included an additional budget request of £51,335.13 for 20/21 to support delivery and to resource the programme with a Climate Change Lead.
5. The subsequent Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) scheduled for 30 March 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Since 23 March 2020, a number of council staff have taken up volunteer roles within the Covid-19 Community Hub for Vale of White Horse including key officers who were previously focussed on the creation of the Climate Emergency Year One Work Programme. This has led to limited resource and capacity across the whole council to further this area of work.
6. Officers in the Insight and Policy team held two internal meetings on 4 and 18 March to review the agreed one-year work programme and prepare a provisional timetable for project delivery. The provisional timeline, prepared before the coronavirus outbreak, is noted in the table below.
7. National statistics and reports have shown that the Covid-19 lockdown has subsequently cut carbon emissions across the UK. Officers will continue to monitor this and work closely with partner organisations to harness this trend and review the opportunities to boost low-carbon businesses through the development of economic recovery plans. The council will also seek opportunities to support safe walking and cycling and improve air quality; walking and cycling are forms of transport which have been further encouraged by the Government as part of their Covid-19 response. These issues are likely to impact on the work programme set out below.

Work programme review

8. Updates on projects in the Climate Emergency Work Programme are given below.

	Project	Progress	Budget	Original Proposed Timeline (March 2020)	Status
Items postponed from March Climate Emergency Advisory Committee					
1	Define the scope of carbon emissions across the District to be included in the Climate Emergency target. Establish a baseline of district wide energy consumption and CO ₂ e emissions	Aether have completed a report reviewing the potential scope of emissions to be included within our district wide target. Aether's methodology and recommendations are summarised in a presentation, which was due to be presented to the CEAC on 30 March. The presentation also includes draft baseline data based upon the recommended scope. The scope of emissions requires input from the CEAC, and this piece of work is still outstanding however forms part of the agenda for the virtual Vale CEAC meeting on 01 June 2020.	2019/20 budget	March/ April 2020	In progress
Completed reports					
2	Vale of White Horse Greenhouse Gas Emissions report 2018/19	The Greenhouse Gas Emissions report for the Vale of White Horse District Council 2018/19 has been completed and uploaded onto the council's website. This report would normally be published in August each year. This is the first year that the Insight and Policy Service have taken over responsibility for this work, and it has taken more time than usual to finalise and check data and review the report.	Existing resources	n/a	Completed

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3	Baseline review of council energy consumption and CO ₂ e emissions	<p>Concept Energy have completed a review of the council's Carbon Footprint Data Collection Processes and submitted a report. The main conclusion is that our system of compiling energy data is unfortunately not sufficiently robust now we are looking to increase and enhance the monitoring of this data in light of the Climate Emergency.</p> <p>A key issue to be addressed is the establishment of an audit trail, especially when we are receiving data from contractors, when meter readings are taken and when units are converted.</p> <p>Insight and Policy will prepare an action plan to take this forward.</p>	2019/20 budget	March/April 2020	In progress
4	Heating options appraisal for Faringdon Leisure Centre	<p>The gas boilers in the Faringdon Leisure Centre dry side are in urgent need of replacement, hence this project has been initiated in advance of the main review of the council estate in line with our intention to identify opportunities for renewable energy in council buildings.</p> <p>A report has been received from Concept Energy and is currently being reviewed by the Leisure Team.</p>	£1,850	April 2020	In progress
New Projects					

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5	Oxfordshire Tree Mapping project	<p>The council will be participating in a project to produce a tree-planting opportunities map for the County. The 'Tree Opportunity Map' will show where tree cover might be increased, assessing a range of current land uses and habitats such as existing woodland, arable and pastureland or parks and golf courses. This map can then be used as a basis for the formation of policy and strategy, and to guide individual plantings. In order to ensure that the recommendations of the map are as widely adopted as possible, a wide range of groups will be engaged in its formation.</p> <p>The Tree Mapping project is led by a management group including Oxfordshire County Council, the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), Nicholson's Foresters, Oxford University Environmental Change Institute and Oxford Friends of the Earth and is also supported by Cherwell and Oxford City Councils.</p>	£1,000	Project due to commence June 2020 and be completed by December 2020	In progress, (however timescale may be impacted by Covid-19 response)

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6	Identify opportunities to invest in solar energy off site	<p>This project will review opportunities to invest in solar energy offsite in Oxfordshire and produce a business case. The aim of this work would be to generate renewable electricity that could then be matched to the council's electricity demand through a commercial Power Purchase Agreement, reducing our carbon emissions. This is also a revenue generation opportunity for the council.</p> <p>The project specification has been finalised and reviewed by the Procurement and Legal teams. A quotation to deliver this work has been received from the Low Carbon Hub. We aim to complete project sign off as soon as possible. Timescale of sign-off is dependent on key officer capacity and pending advice from Legal on the appropriate level of authorised sign-off.</p>	£2,500	April/May 2020	In progress
7	Oxfordshire Greentech	<p>The council wishes to enter into a contract to become a member of Oxfordshire Greentech, Oxfordshire's network for low carbon and cleantech companies, to develop a comprehensive support package for growing the low carbon economy in the Vale of White Horse.</p> <p>Oxfordshire Greentech is the only local business network of its nature therefore we are seeking an exemption from the council's procurement rules as a Specialist Contract. The necessary paperwork has been approved by the council's Procurement Officer and is currently under review by the Legal Team.</p> <p>The membership of Oxfordshire Greentech would be led by the Economic Development Team.</p>	£2,500	April/May 2020	Paused (Economic development team fully committed with Covid-19 business support activities)

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8	General public information on the Climate Emergency.	<p>A quotation for this work has been received from Bioregional to be delivered as part of the One Planet Oxfordshire project, using match funding from the KR Foundation. The KR Foundation is a not for profit grant giving body that awards grants to address the root causes of climate change and environmental degradation.</p> <p>As the project has attracted 50 per cent match funding, we are seeking an exemption from the council's procurement rules as a Specialist Contract. The necessary paperwork is being completed.</p>	£1,000	May/June 2020	In progress
Ongoing projects					
9	Grounds Maintenance and Public Toilet Cleaning services	Feedback has been provided to the Technical Services Team relating to the potential insourcing of these services.	Existing resources	Ongoing	In progress
10	Crowmarsh offices	<p>South Oxfordshire District Council Project; South Oxfordshire District Council is engaging with the Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) to review the plans for the new council offices and identify any funding opportunities.</p> <p>GSEEH and the Public Sector Energy Efficiency team within the Government department BEIS are also keen to promote this as a Flagship Public Sector Estate Project, including to other countries as part of COP 20, the United Nations Climate Change Conference.</p>	Existing resources	Ongoing	In progress

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11	Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy	The Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy Project Board met on 2 April 2020 and agreed the project Scope and Vision document, and Governance and Terms of Reference.	Existing resources	Ongoing	In progress
12	Park and Charge	This project aims to ensure that those people who live in houses with no access to off street parking have access to electric vehicle charging points. Hubs are being established within suitable car parks, both owned by the district council and by other organisations. The Technical Services Team have identified a number of our car parks suitable for this project. A pilot car park in Cherwell district will test out the Oxfordshire-wide project. Installation of this pilot is planned for July 2020. Once a short evaluation has been undertaken, car parks through the district will have EV chargers installed over the next nine to 12 months.	Innovate UK funding	Ongoing	In progress

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13	Planning Design Guide	This project is being led by the Specialist Planning team; a GW1 form for the project has been submitted to SMT and approved, a GW2 form will be submitted mid-June. It is anticipated that this project will have an 18-month timeline, with delivery of the project being in September 2021. It is suggested that a CEAC Task and Finish Group session is held to support the establishment of the guide's principles in respect of addressing the climate emergency, before a draft of the guide is reviewed at a future CEAC meeting. Further, Planning Policy have produced two documents that outline current planning policies that seek to address climate change, and these are being reviewed by Specialist Officers within the planning team and Heather Saunders in order to identify where the gaps may be.	Existing resources	Ongoing	In progress
Communications and Engagement					

	Project	Progress	Budget	Original Proposed Timeline (March 2020)	Status
14	<p>Engagement with residents, parish councils and community groups</p> <p>Support town councils in delivering Climate Emergency plans and projects</p> <p>Residents' survey on climate change</p>	<p>In January we wrote to parish councils and community groups informing them of our Climate Emergency work and invited them to respond with any suggestions on how we can work together to help tackle climate change. We also approached residents as part of the Turn It Off campaign flier sent out with the annual council tax. Twenty-three responses have so far been received. As the information for residents accompanied the Turn It Off campaign, there was a focus on transport related themes in the responses, including requests for more electric vehicle charge points and safe cycle lanes. Another key theme was the request for solar panels on all new buildings, as well as heat pumps where appropriate.</p>	<p>Existing resources</p> <p>2019/20 budget</p> <p>Existing resources (scoping of survey options)</p>	<p>Review March/April 2020</p>	<p>Paused – Towns, Parishes and community groups directly supporting Covid-19 efforts</p>
Consultations					
15	<p>Oxfordshire Pension Fund Consultation on Investment Strategy Statement</p>	<p>Councillors were invited to a Climate Change Policy Workshop held by the Oxfordshire Pension Fund back in November 2019. Oxfordshire County Council have now commenced a consultation on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Investment Strategy Statement including Climate Change Policy. On 8 April this consultation was circulated to councillors for their comments and responses were due by Friday 15 May 2020.</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>	<p>Initiated externally</p>	<p>In progress</p>
Further work					

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16	Recruit Climate Change Lead	The 2020/21 budget for the Climate Emergency includes the provision of a Climate Change Lead post for 12 months, shared jointly with South Oxfordshire. A job evaluation has been requested for this post.	£31,798	March 2020	Ongoing (Job evaluation and SMT approval required before being advertised)
17	Launch work programme	Internal 'low key' launch of year one work programme through a workshop/session with internal stakeholders	Existing resources	April 2020	Paused
18	Electric pool vehicles for staff business travel. Initial pilot for testing and evaluation	A Gateway 1 form will be drafted to initiate this project	£5,000	Initiation (GW1) April 2020 Delivery March 2021	Initiation scheduled to start Q1, year 2020/21
19	Low carbon council estate work package including energy saving opportunities and renewable energy in council buildings	An Invitation to Quote and project specification will be drafted to initiate this project	£6,780	Procurement initiation April/May 2020	Scheduled to start Q1
20	Energy efficient lighting at the Beacon	£5,000 was allocated in 2019/20 for lighting upgrades at the Beacon. This project has been delayed due to closure of the building.	2019/20 budget	March 2020	Paused
21	Community Climate Initiatives grant scheme	On 12 February the council agreed to allocate £50,000 to a new grant scheme to support community initiatives to help tackle climate change.	£50,000	tbc	Paused
22	Taxi idling	Liaise with Licensing Team to explore monitoring schemes which target taxi idling	Not yet available	Initiate March/April 2020	Paused

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23	Council reports	Council reporting and decision-making templates to include climate and biodiversity impacts section	Existing resources	April 2020	Paused – Democratic Services directly supporting establishing virtual meeting protocols
24	Biodiversity theme projects	Specialist Planning Officer to provide project plan	Existing resources	Initiation April 2020 Delivery March 2021	Paused
25	Community Action Groups	Offer to work with interested Community Action Groups (CAGs)	Not yet available	April 2020	Paused – Directly supporting Covid-19 efforts
26	Vale Vision	Creation of a vision for a future low carbon Vale of White Horse including mapping the Vale Climate Emergency Work Programme onto the vision and carrying out a gap analysis.	£2,300	May 2020	Paused
27	Policy and Strategy review	Internal review of existing Council policies and strategies to embed the climate emergency	Existing resources	May/June 2020	Paused
28	Conference	Full day conference for officers and members on the subject of climate change; a CEAC task and finish group was held 17 January 2020 to discuss the desired outcomes for the event and capture speaker/subject ideas from South and Vale CEAC members	2019/20 budget	June 2020	Paused

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29	Officer training	Training for officers on South Oxfordshire's target and work to address the climate emergency	2019/20 budget	Initiation August 2020 Delivery October 2020	Scheduled Q2
30	Cosy Homes (Oxfordshire retrofitting scheme)	Officers to review the scheme and assess referral confidence prior to promotion of the Cosy Homes scheme	Existing resources	September 2020	Scheduled Q2
31	Single use plastic Plant based diets	'Single-use plastic free' pledge and action plan Promotion of low carbon (plant based) diets within council facilities and buildings, and action plan	£2,250 £2,250	One project in October 2020 and one in January 2021	Scheduled Q3 and Q4
32	Town-based energy data	Provision of summary data on energy use for towns in the district, including maps	£3,340	October/ November 2020	Scheduled Q3
33	District wide emissions model	Development of a model to estimate how future district-wide carbon emissions will reduce on implementation of range of projects, demonstrating how South Oxfordshire can move towards the adopted district-wide target	£12,500	Review October 2020	Scheduled Q3
34	Electric vehicle hire facility	Feasibility study	Not yet available	November 2020	Scheduled Q3

Conclusion

This report gives an overview of key activities that have been progressed, and those that have been paused largely due to the Councils' essential refocus on the Covid-19 response, since the most recent Climate Emergency Advisory Committee meeting on 28 January 2020.