

Cheltenham Borough Council Cabinet

Meeting date: Tuesday, 28 May 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm

Meeting venue: Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

Membership:

Councillors

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SECTION 1 : PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of interest

3 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 5 - 14)

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

Questions must be received no later than 12 noon on the seventh working day before the date of the meeting

SECTION 2 :THE COUNCIL

There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Council on this occasion

SECTION 3 : OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion

SECTION 4 : OTHER COMMITTEES

There are no matters referred to the Cabinet by other Committees on this occasion

SECTION 5 : REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS AND/OR OFFICERS

5 Updated Climate Action Plan (Pages 15 - 58)

6 Rent Support Grants to Voluntary Sector (Pages 59 - 74)

SECTION 6 : BRIEFING SESSION

- Leader and Cabinet Members

7 Briefing from Cabinet Members

SECTION 7 : DECISIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS

Member decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting



CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**SECTION 8 : ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE LEADER
DETERMINES TO BE URGENT AND REQUIRES A DECISION**

Section 10: BRIEFING NOTES

Briefing notes are circulated for information with the Cabinet papers but are not on the agenda

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Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

Minutes

Meeting date: 2 April 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.15 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Rowena Hay, Peter Jeffries, Victoria Atherstone, Flo Clucas, Mike Collins, Iain Dobie, Martin Horwood and Alisha Lewis

Also in attendance:

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Wilkinson.

2 Declarations of interest

As Honorary Club Secretary of the Cheltenham Tigers Rugby Club, who are mentioned several times in the report, the Cabinet Member for Cyber, Regeneration and Commercial Income declared a non-pecuniary interest in, Agenda item 9.

3 Minutes of the last meetings

13 February 2024

The Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services made two corrections:

- he declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, not Item 7;
- Under Item 6, a statement in the first paragraph is misleading, relating to the delegation of powers. The minutes state "It will take the form of an examination" which appears to relate to the proposal in front of Cabinet; this isn't right. It should say "There will be an examination,..."

With these corrections, the minutes were approved as a true record and signed accordingly.

23 February 2024

These minutes were approved by Members and signed by the Leader as a true record.

4 Public and Member Questions and Petitions

There were none.

5 Cheltenham Ice Rink

In the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing's absence, the Leader read out his introduction, saying that the 2023-24 ice rink set new standards in the town and wider events industry, welcoming 31k visitors, bringing £1.6m to the local economy (including £860k additional spend as a result of the ice rink), creating new jobs and supporting others.

In addition, the council kept its pledge not to use diesel generators, using vegetable oil and battery-powered method instead, provided by a business based in Imperial Square. This reduced the carbon footprint by 98% compared with 2021, and is being shared as an example of best practice with other event organisers.

If approved by Cabinet, the planning committee will need to consider varying the condition on last year's permission to allow the use of this technology again, until electric power is installed in the Gardens. Cabinet is also asked to approve a financial commitment to this year's ice rink, and delegation of responsibility to officers charged with managing the project.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety thanked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing and all those who made it possible for 600 children and young people who would otherwise have been excluded to share in this experience in 2023. She said the council runs the town for the benefit of the people, and hoped this would be repeated this year.

The Cabinet Member for Housing noted that there were no complaints from neighbours about noise from generators, which had been an issue in the past. She said the innovative technology really is a great step forward, resulting in a vast reduction in emissions.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the information about the outputs of the 2023-24 ice rink is noted;**
- 2. in advance of planning permission being considered by the Planning Committee and noting the costs and risks set out in this report, Cabinet**

approves that Cheltenham Borough Council leads the delivery of an ice rink in Cheltenham for the 2024-25 Christmas period;

3. Subject to planning permission, extension to the contract for delivery and management of the Christmas Ice Rink at Imperial Gardens, Cheltenham for 12 months is approved;
4. a total potential financial commitment as set out in section 4 of this report is approved;
5. Cabinet notes that officers are progressing procurement and delegates appointments of contractors to the Director of Communities and Economic Development, as per section 5 of this report.

6 Discretionary Business Rates Relief

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets introduced his report, saying that the government's autumn statement confirmed that relief would continue. It was originally a Covid measure but a lot of businesses still need help – 600 of the 4,000 properties assessed for business rates in Cheltenham are entitled to assistance. He hoped that the long-awaited business rates review would materialise at some point soon.

The Cabinet Member for Housing commented that although it is great that this funding to support businesses is available, it is a huge shame that the businesses still need support and are not fully recovered from the last few years. She hoped that the support would continue for as long as it was needed.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief scheme 2024 as detailed in Appendix 2 is approved.
2. the Head of Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets, is authorised to implement any changes to the reliefs detailed in appendix 2 as required by Government or to ensure the successful operation of the scheme.
3. Due to the volume of cases, decisions relating to the application of these reliefs are delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits and officers in the Business Rates team. In the case of a dispute reconsideration is to be made by the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

7 Discretionary Housing Payments Policy

Introducing his report, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets said this scheme is for recipients of housing benefits or people on universal credit needing additional support. He said it doesn't represent a vast sum of money, and the council is fully compensated through the Department of Work and Pensions. The policy hasn't been updated since 2018, but there are no major changes.

The Cabinet Member for Housing thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets for his report, saying she was shocked at the number of residents struggling with no-fault evictions and having to find alternative affordable accommodation in Cheltenham. Despite the first increase for many years in the local housing allowance, there doesn't appear to be a single property in Cheltenham that is covered by the new rate. Although grateful for the additional funding, she is concerned that it is not enough and her heart goes out to those struggling to find accommodation.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets shared her concerns, saying that the small amount of additional money was welcome, but also indicative of the broken system after decades of housing crisis.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy in Appendix 2 is approved**
- 2. decisions relating to the award of Discretionary Housing Payments, in line with the policy and DWP guidance, are delegated to the Head of Revenues and Benefits and designated officers within the Benefits team, with the final decision in the event of dispute being taken by the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.**
- 3. the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer is authorised to apply to DLUHC for an accounting direction if it appears that the annual allocation will be exceeded in any financial year**

8 Employee and Councillor Domestic Abuse Policy

The Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities introduced her report, which will be shared with key members of staff at the council, and with Councillors Chelin and Harman, who are advocates for safeguarding and domestic abuse. She said assistance will be available not only for staff but also for councillors should they need it, and gave assurance that any matter would be completely confidential under the terms of the policy.

The Leader commented on the importance of this type of policy, supporting staff and councillors, to ensure people feel safe and understand that the council won't tolerate this kind of behaviour.

RESOLVED THAT:

1. **the Employee and Councillor Domestic Abuse policy is adopted.**

9 Physical Activity and Sports Strategy, Phase 2

On behalf of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing, the Leader was happy to introduce his report on the long-awaited Physical Activity and Sports Strategy. She began by saying that sedentary lifestyles pose a huge threat to us all, not only on a personal and physical basis but also through many knock-on effects. The strategy will help the borough decide how to assist people to leave more active and healthy lives.

She said the strategy's phased approach started with a wide range of stakeholder groups defining their needs, then moved to a more technical assessment of facilities available, carried out by expert consultants. This showed that Cheltenham is generally well-served but there are specific pinch points such as all-weather pitches.

Looking at the larger municipal facilities, the long-term renewal of Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales Stadium will be part of the action plan – this will bring challenges, but also opportunities for new facilities and partnerships, not least because the Prince of Wales Stadium is a regional facility, not the sole responsibility for CBC.

The report demonstrates that cost is a barrier to many people's involvement in physical activity and sport, and also highlights the good work already done in partnership with others, such as the Feed Cheltenham Leisure Pass.

She ended by saying that the five recommendations cover a lot of ground, and set in train several major workstreams.

The Cabinet Member for Cyber, Regeneration and Commercial income made the following comments:

- Cheltenham Tigers Rugby Club is a wonderful and inclusive facility for everyone, but unfortunately, boys and girls have to form separate teams from the age of 11, resulting in many girls dropping out of the sport as there are not enough of them to make up teams;
- The newly-formed wheelchair team is doing well and has joined a national league, but sadly struggles to find venues to train and play in Cheltenham, the only option being at Balcarras School, which is indoors and has the right floor surface. We need to do more than we currently do to ensure sport is inclusive for everyone;
- The maps and charts in the report by Max Associates are very difficult to follow, particularly for anyone with a hidden disability. They are not respecting their own barriers and need to be more inclusive in this respect.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency said the strategy dovetails with the work of the climate team, and its focus on aspects of Cheltenham that everyone loves and wants to pass on to future generations. She said Leisure@ is expensive to run and high costs make entry unaffordable for many, but conversations are underway on how to retro-fit, make the site more sustainable, and keep costs down.

The Cabinet Member for Housing thanked everyone who had worked hard in producing such an insightful report. She noted with interest the references to developing relationships with schools to maximise every sporting space, but commented that halls with high ceilings are not needed for some activities such as yoga and Pilates – these activities could be located elsewhere, maximising the use of school sports facilities for activities which do require high ceilings. She also commented that more investment in pitches in North and West Cheltenham is needed, but was looking forward to the next stage of the strategy, this report having provided some excellent material to move forward.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets made the observation that, due to the local authority funding crisis, many towns around the country don't have any facilities or strategy, and regretted the disparity. He was, however, grateful for everything going on in Cheltenham, and in particular the free pass for families who can't afford to access the facilities. This opens the door to a healthier lifestyle, particularly welcome as many health outcomes are related to poverty. He thanked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing and officers for the report.

The Leader welcomed the report and looked forward to the next stage of the journey, using the evidence gathered. She also looked forward to the redevelopment of Leisure@, remembering when it first opened as a flagship venue in 1972, and the opportunity to work with a range of partners.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 2. the findings and recommendations from the Max Associates' Built Leisure and Sports Facilities Report as set out in section 4 and attached as appendix 2 is noted**
- 3. the provisional findings and indicative recommendations from stage C of the Playing Pitch Assessment as set out in section 5 is noted**
- 4. the initial findings from the Physical Activity Survey as set out in section 7 is noted**
- 5. that a report will be brought back to Cabinet to agree and finalise the playing pitch strategy, along with the over-arching physical activity and sports strategy and accompanying action plan that will deliver the Council's vision and outcomes for physical activity and sports as set out in section 3 is noted**

- 6. consultants to undertake an options appraisal of the future provision of Leisure at Cheltenham and the Prince of Wales stadium to include indicative capital costs is commissioned.**

10 Cotswolds Beechwood Mitigation Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services introduced the item as set out in his report, explaining the background and why mitigation measures were being introduced to protect the Cotswold Beechwoods, an extensive area of ancient beech woodland between Birdlip and Cranham. The strategy will take two approaches – Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) to encourage people to find other green places to go, and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) to encourage councils to acquire new areas that can be made accessible as alternatives to the beechwoods.

The cost is quite steep – SAMM £193, SANGS £493, administration £125, totalling £798 per new dwelling – and applies to all new developments, whatever the size, but is significantly cheaper than the charges levied elsewhere.

The second part of the recommendation is for the development of a specific action plan to implement the policy in Cheltenham, looking at sites already owned or managed by CBC and raising awareness of less well-known green spaces in the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets wholly supported the report, but was concerned that all the liability for funding to protect these areas will fall to the developer, in addition to the existing S106, CIL, highways, education and public art contributions, all of which are taken into consideration before affordable housing. He has flagged this as part of the Strategic and Local Plan consultation, and said the point will come when the council has to make some tough choices – we cannot keep putting the burden of supporting what we want to do on developers.

The Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services understood these concerns, and was surprised that the charges would extend to small developers, potentially incentivising them to build fewer, larger dwellings rather than much-needed affordable housing. He said he would ask planning officers to look into a Cheltenham-specific action plan, possibly with a charge per bedroom rather than per dwelling – we do not want a positive environmental impact to result in a negative social impact.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Recreation Mitigation Strategy is adopted**
- 2. Cabinet is committed to bringing forward a detailed action plan for Cheltenham borough that will look to utilise existing parks, gardens, public open spaces, accessible private green spaces and designated Local Green Spaces, including raising awareness of less well known spaces as well as considering new areas in each of**

these categories that may have the potential for enhanced public access and wherever possible deliver benefits for those communities most impacted by development and those with least access to nature in their neighbourhoods

11 UBICO Business Plan, 2024-25

The Leader introduced the report, saying Cheltenham is lucky in what Ubico delivers across the county, and also in its exciting plans for future growth and more recycling. It is the council's biggest contract, costing £10m a year, but does a fantastic job.

The Cabinet Member for Customer and Regulatory Services complimented Ubico for its outstanding record in pushing recycling to record levels and increasingly sophisticated approach to big issues, at the same time as quickly tackling localised problems – a testament to good management.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety also thanked and complimented Ubico for their excellent work. She said they recently helped a number of disabled residents in her ward who were having trouble sorting their recycling, and praised their recycling of food waste to buy food for food banks.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets commented on how much environmental services have changed over the years, and praised Ubico for their excellent work and level of service. He thanked management, but gave special thanks to the frontline operatives who are out working day in day out, whatever the weather.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services commented on the goodwill and can-do attitude of Ubico operatives, particularly in the face of recent challenges of extreme weather conditions and race week – they have shown themselves to be an innovative, well-led and reactive workforce. With their excellent management and exemplary service, it is no surprise that they go from strength to strength and are expanding geographically, and he thanked them from the bottom of his heart.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. the Ubico 2024/2025 Business Plan is noted;**
- 2. the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, will sign the written resolution to approve the Ubico 2024/2025 Business Plan in due course.**

12 Briefing from Cabinet Members

The Leader invited Cabinet Members to present any briefings.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services said work on the refurbishment of Montpellier Toilets had begun today, after two years of planning. This public service is discretionary, and the Changing Places facility will remove barriers and enhance the ability of residents and visitors to participate in what Cheltenham has to offer.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency was excited to report that the council is giving money to a number of businesses and organisations to retro-fit their properties to make them more environmentally friendly. There are many bold ideas from a wide range of businesses, and lessons learnt will be shared with others in due course.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets reported that the 2021-22 accounts have finally been signed off – an important milestone in view of the national backlog.

The Leader reported an exciting visit to the MX, where she welcomed the press to showcase the project so far. She also met tenants, who can't wait to move in, and looked forward to the wider launch in the summer.

As it was the last meeting of Cabinet before the election, she thanked each and every Member for their contributions, saying she was proud of everything the LibDem administration was doing and delivering. She thanked officers, especially the Chief Executive for his support over the last two years, and all staff at CBC. She also thanked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing, who is standing down as a councillor, for his fantastic work – he will be much missed, and she wished him well for the future.

13 Cabinet Member decisions since the last meeting

The Leader invited Members to report on decisions taken since the last meeting of Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services reported two decisions for the purchase of recycling and refuse vehicles, previously agreed as part of the general update and refurbishment of the fleet. He confirmed that contracts were awarded assiduously and carefully to ensure the best value for money.

[Award of contract for refuse collection vehicles](#)

[To award a contract to Romaquip for two kerbside recycling vehicles](#)

He also reported the following appointment, as previously mentioned in his briefing:

[Appointment of Contractor for Montpellier Gardens Toilet Refurbishment](#)

As previously mentioned, the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency reported on the decision to award grants, following a very robust

process. She said there were many more applications than could be funded and making the decisions was tough, but she was happy with the outcomes.

[Cheltenham Zero Business Fund – Award of Grants](#)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets reported the following decision, to retrofit social housing

[To appoint Sero Life Ltd to deliver professional retrofit services](#)

The Leader said that the Deputy Chief Executive Director had come to the end of his tenure as Non-Executive Director of Ubico Ltd, and would be replaced in that role by the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer. She said he had been well-respected and valued and was confident that the new appointee would be equally so.

[To appoint Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer as Non-Executive Director of Ubico Ltd](#)

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 28 May 2024

Updated Climate Emergency Action Plan

Accountable member:

Cllr Alisha Lewis, Cabinet Member

Accountable officer:

Maizy McCann

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key/Significant Decision:

No

Executive summary:

Cheltenham Borough Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, the development of the Climate Emergency Action Plan: Pathway to Net Zero followed this and was approved by Council February 2022. The Action Plan details areas of focus and projects to deliver on, this has been under review and updated.

Working with the service teams across the Council, the document attached provides:

- a) A review of progress against the actions listed in the original plan and
- b) an updated plan looking forwards in order to expedite delivery of the 2030 targets.

Recommendations: That Cabinet:

- **approve and publish the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan.**
-

1. Implications

1.1. Financial, Property and Asset implications

A costed plan with deliverables and milestones to address internal emissions is essential to drive delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. Plans are being developed for each of the Council's key buildings as an essential first step during 2024.

CBH has separately drawn up a costed plan to retrofit existing social housing by 2030. As this exceeds the budget by four times, emission reduction will be brought forward as funding becomes available.

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

Legal implications

The overarching legislative context of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan: Pathway to Net Zero is the Climate Change Act 2008. This Act places a legal duty on central government to set legally binding targets to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.

Where specific projects or actions are required going forward to support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and 'Cheltenham's Green Deal' (the Climate Change Investment Strategy) further legal advice and support should be sought.

The Council must ensure that any decisions taken must be in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Rules, particularly in regard to decision making, implementation of strategy/action plans and any funding requirements.

Signed off by: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

1.2. Environmental and climate change implications

The updated climate action plan is designed to deliver against the Council's net zero commitments.

Signed off by: [Maizy McCann, Climate Emergency Officer,
maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk]

Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham net zero by 2030.
- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity.

1.3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

The updated Climate Action Plan works in tandem with wider equality, diversity and inclusion

objectives. The plan is supported by the Climate Impact Assessment Tool which takes into account wider social value considerations to support a holistic and coherent approach to decision making, beyond simply considering climate ramifications.

Signed off by: Head of communities, wellbeing & partnerships,
richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4. Performance management – monitoring and review

The submitted plan has clear accountabilities across the Council areas for delivering against the specific targets. Climate Programme Board will oversee the plan and ensure key personnel are involved to deliver against identified goals and that a funding plan is put in place to deliver against our targets.

2. Background

- 2.1. Cheltenham Borough Council has set an ambitious 2030 net zero target and has made a good start in terms of addressing emission reduction.
- 2.2. The plan has been reviewed and updated to:
 - focus effort on reducing key emissions internally and
 - to give us a clear focus to address emissions boroughwide in the three key areas: domestic heat emissions, business and industrial emissions and transport emissions.
- 2.3. Looking forwards, a costed plan to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions to almost nothing must be developed and there is a requirement to explore the viability of compensating for the remaining emissions through mechanisms such as carbon-offsetting. Although we will address our Scope 3 emissions head on to reduce them, as far as possible, this may prove to be a longer process.
- 2.4. The plan includes delivery dates and has been devised with key accountabilities across the service areas of the Council to enable progress to be more accurately evaluated.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1. Progress will become more difficult to deliver over time without a costed plan.
- 3.2. Greater prioritisation around key areas of emissions will enable greater progress to be made, given the significant scale of the challenge.

4. Alternative options considered

- 4.1. n/a

5. Consultation and feedback

5.1. The updated action plan was drafted with the various service areas across the Council.

6. Key risks

6.1. See appendix 1.

Report author:

Maizy McCann

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Updated Climate Emergency Action Plan

Background information:

N/A

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Cheltenham Borough Council - Corporate Risk Register - Climate Target Risk

Risk Details	Risk Manager	Current Assessment (unmoderated)	Control Details	Risk Action	Review Date
Scope 1,2 & 3 Emissions					
Scope 1 & 2: CBH integration - carbon footprint for CBH will be integrated with CBC.	Frances Crick	Impact - 4 Probability - 5 Score - 20	There is a need to balance need for social housing volume & quality. Plan in place suggests funding would need to increase fourfold to achieve net zero target. Consider funding sources Ensure new housing stock is highly efficient.	Reduce	Q4 2024
Scope 1 & 2: Property Portfolio (key buildings including the Pool, Pittville Pump Room, Municipal Offices, Stadium etc).	Gemma Bell	Impact - 4 Probability - 4 Score - 16	Clear 10-15 year asset investment strategy in tandem with the Sports Strategy. Costed Proactive Maintenance Plan (incl. energy measures & paybacks) for each key asset Cabinet engagement - budget proposals Identify budget and funding for these works Plan in place for less critical assets	Reduce	Quarterly progress Q2 2024

Scope 1 & 2: Ubico emissions reduction plan incl. depot	Karen Watson	Impact - 3 Probability - 4 Score 12	Clear 10-15 year asset investment strategy required. Costed Proactive Maintenance Plan (incl. energy measures & paybacks) for depot Long term vehicle replacement strategy (beyond HVO) possibly hydrogen. Ubico-wide Long Term waste strategy	Reduce	Formulate plan to address during 2024
Scope 3 Supply Chain Targets	Claire Hughes	Impact -3 Probability - 4 Score - 12	Segmented strategic approach to emission reduction Development of internal procurement function with consideration of emission approach. Effective Offsets Strategy Put in Place Consideration of CBH scope 3 emission approach.	Reduce	30/09/2024
Organisational Resourcing in place to deliver plan	Ann Wolstencroft	Impact - 4 Probability - 3 Score - 12	Recruitment of Climate Change Manager & Provision of Director Level Support Effective Integration of CBH Administrative Support & retention of existing resources	Reduce	22/01/2024
External Borough Wide Emissions					
Domestic heat emissions account for 42% of borough wide emissions and are difficult to address given the high volume of listed buildings across	Climate Change Director (TBC)	Impact -3 Probability - 5	Formulate a clear retrofit strategy that fits alongside boroughwide approach Consider proactive development consent order to make it easier to retrofit historic properties.	Reduce	18/12/2024

Cheltenham and building net zero new houses is expensive. Councils are not encouraged to go beyond national targets to deliver highly efficient new homes.		Score - 15	Develop a local supply chain to deliver retrofit Consider funding/financing options		
Business and industrial emissions account for 32% of borough wide emissions. Although Cheltenham Zero has made a start to establish broad engagement, a segmented approach is needed to address emitters large and small to support emission reduction across the borough.	Climate Change Director (TBC)	Impact - 3 Probability - 4 Score - 12	Work with Key Emitters to address emission reduction barriers Provide support for smaller emitters and community groups to take tangible action around emissions Consider wider sustainability targets Rescope service provision and consider reputational impacts during transition	Reduce	30/06/2024
Golden Valley Development - If the development does not achieve the anticipated emission reduction then the planning permission maybe refused by Councillors or there is reputational risk given the ambitions outlined in the SPD.	Paul Minnis	Impact - 3 Probability - 4 Score - 12	Sessions with Councillors to build awareness around what can be achieved and issues inherent in delivering full net zero development.	Reduce	30/09/2023
Climate Adaptation Risks					
Identify and evaluate adaptation risks internally and borough wide, to ensure that these are taken into account in day to day decision making using the Climate Change Committee Framework	Climate Change Director (TBC)	Too early to say	Identify strategic adaptation risks to inform the SLP. Complete Climate Change Committee/Local Partnerships Framework to identify key risks enable Service Manager's to plan more effectively.	Reduce	30/09/2024

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ZERO ₃₀

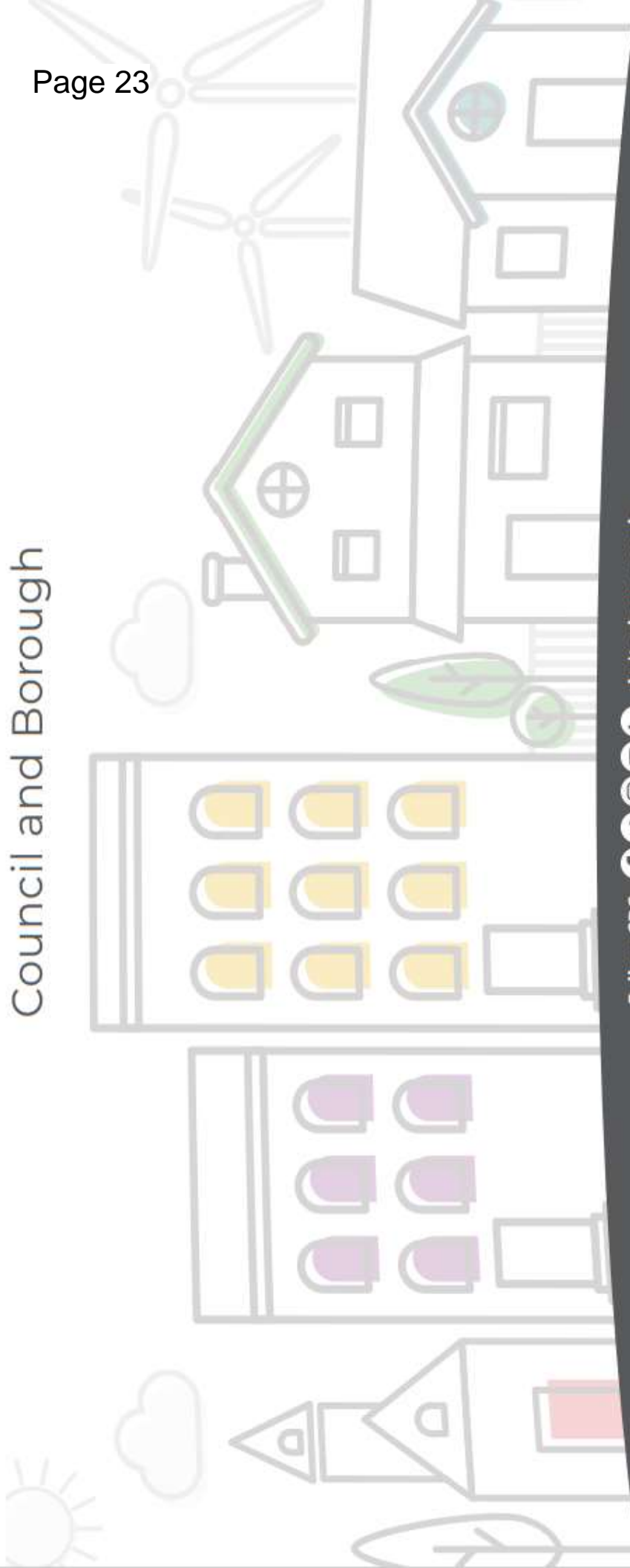


CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S

Climate Emergency Action Plan

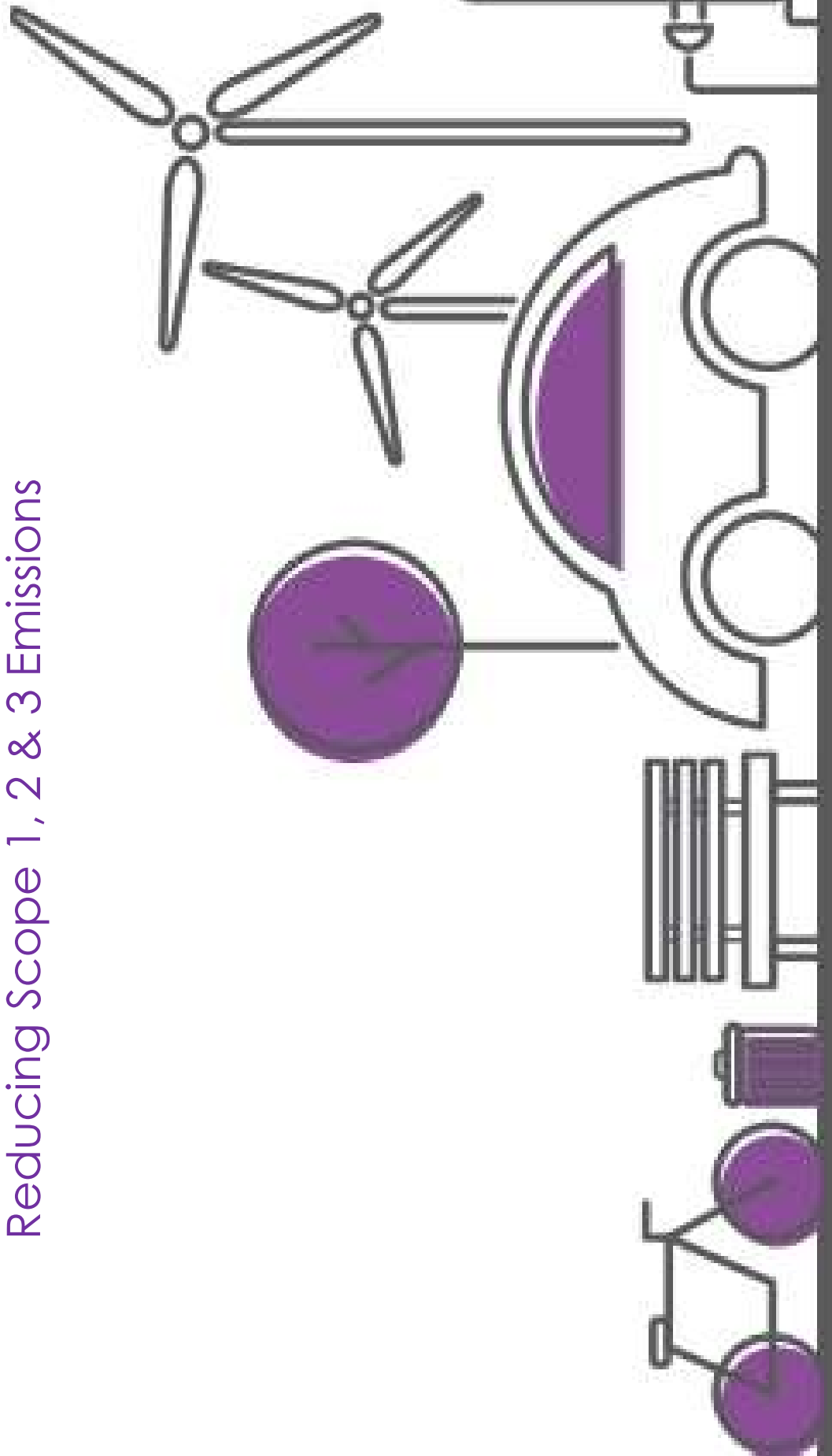
Pathway to Net Zero

Our 2030 action framework to become a net zero
Council and Borough



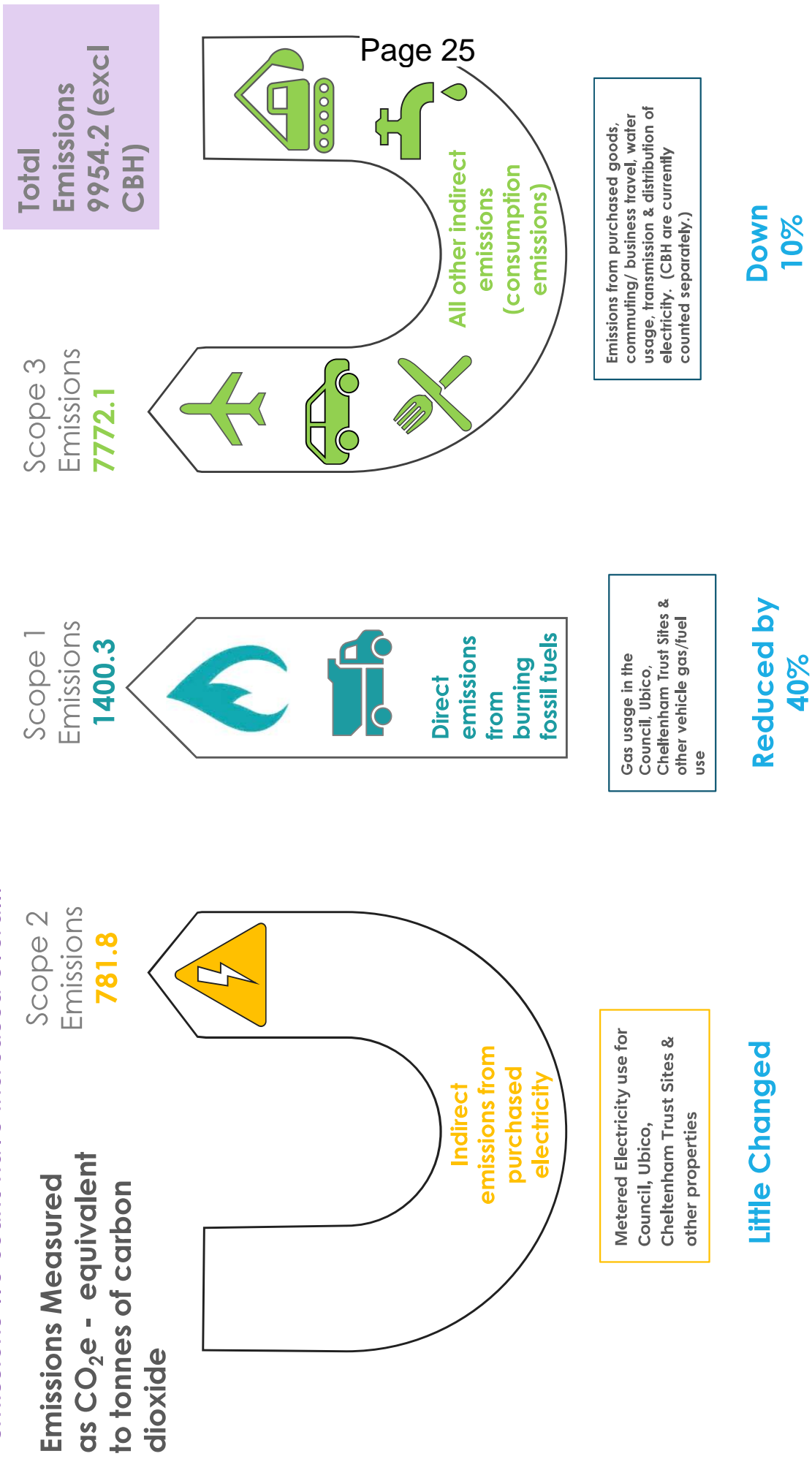
LEADING THE WAY ACROSS OUR OWN OPERATIONS

Reducing Scope 1, 2 & 3 Emissions



CARBON EMISSION REDUCTION PLAN

Our last report published in December, demonstrates that, against our established baseline, we currently remain on track for 2030 target. However, as we increase our precision, we find new areas to include, so the emissions we count have increased overall.



Emission reduction becomes harder to deliver over time, so a costed plan to 2030 and beyond, aligned to proactive maintenance and capital plans is essential. 3

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Action Colour Key
Green – actioned
Yellow – in process
Red – not started

Overview

CBC strongly believes that in order to ask others to make the necessary changes to their organisations and lives, we must be seen to be leading on making these changes ourselves. By seeking to set ever higher standards, we can offer advice and share best practice to make it easier for others to follow, signposting to other leaders along the way.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Report our carbon footprint annually and encourage others to follow suit. Endeavour to be more thorough and precise over time and include more of our impact year on year. (Internal)

Commit to lobbying higher levels of government for stronger climate action and greater support to local authorities to help facilitate them making a difference. (Internal)

Introduce compulsory 'Carbon Literacy Training' to the Council and partners and commit to 100% of the Council's officers, staff and elected members gaining a Carbon Literacy certification. (Internal)

Develop case studies to share our experience in implementing climate initiatives, learnings and success stories, to help others learn from our actions, replicate, or ideally, do better. (Internal)

2024-2026

Leverage our position as 'The Festival Town' to drive change through the development of a more sustainable and carbon friendly events strategy. (External)

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Carbon Footprint & Emission Reduction Pathway

Scope & accuracy continue to improve which has tended to increase the emissions that we count. However, the 2022/23 report demonstrates a continued progress towards our internal targets for scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions against an agreed baseline.

Looking Ahead: Maintaining the current trajectory will become increasingly challenging over time. A costed plan with deliverables and milestones to address internal emissions is essential to drive delivery. Plans are being developed for each of the Council's key buildings as an essential first step during 2024.

Training

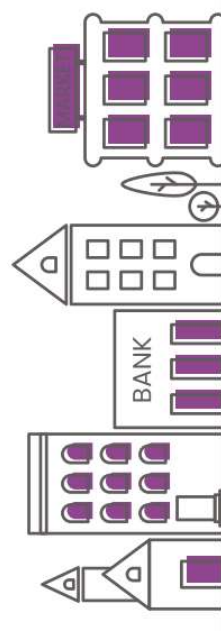
In 2022, Carbon Literacy training was introduced across CBC including Councillors with good attendance. CBC Directors attended a Senior Leaders training event and Learning & Development have delivered a range of training sessions to a cross section of officers.

Looking Ahead: Working with Learning & Development, it is proposed that climate change is included at induction and targeted training interventions/modules are provided to officers and elected members when gaps are identified.

Best Practice Case Studies

Using our own impact assessment to prioritise and focus on sustainability, the CO2e emissions associated with the Ice Rink event were reduced by 98.7%.

Looking Ahead: The Cheltenham Events Strategy is being developed to deliver improved sustainability of festivals and events held across the Borough.





Climate Impact Assessment Tool

In 2022 Cheltenham developed and deployed a Climate Impact Assessment to be used within internal decision-making processes to ensure new projects and policies are aligned with the Council's commitment to climate action. The tool is designed to enable officers and decision-makers to easily evaluate the environmental and social impacts of projects and policies from the very start of decision-making and project development processes¹. To date this has been shared with National Trust 22 other Councils from Bath and Somerset to Northumberland.

Developed from this, Donut Assessment Tool for Events (DATE) was launched in March 2023. It provides local authorities with a free-to-use, simple tool kit to assess an event's community, accessibility and environmental sustainability impact. The DATE model has become a best practice benchmark that sits at the heart of a 12-month pilot with ten local authorities including Cheltenham Festivals, alongside Manchester, Bristol and Reading, to test how the Green Events Code of Practice (GECOP) can be used to embed sustainability within local authority processes.

1. <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/cheltenham-borough-council-climate-impact-assessment-tool>

DECISION MAKING, POLICIES, PLANS & STRATEGIES

Overview

We know there is a need for the climate agenda to be a strong policy thread across the council. Without climate being a focus for all our officers and members, woven through each of our departments, we will fail to embed a Net Zero culture. Thus, we will ensure all our decisions help to meet national and local net zero carbon targets, improve air quality and protect and restore nature.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Identify both a councillor at cabinet level and a lead officer as Climate Champions, who are required to publish an annual public report on progress against meeting the targets set out in the CEAP. (Internal)

Issue a new climate-focused Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to set a new 'Cheltenham Standard' for developers and aid our planners in their decision making. The SPD may include the necessity to develop using Natural Flood Management (NFM) techniques, the requirement to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, installing sustainable energy solutions, driving adoption of the 'Building with Nature' benchmark and the use of Passivhaus standards. (External)

Introduce a tool to ensure that climate implications are adequately considered at the early stages of each project, initiative or decision. This tool should be used to develop initiatives that the lowest possible impact on the environment whilst still meeting the needs of the Council. (Internal)

2024-2026

Annually review the existing and additional workforce needed to deliver the actions set out in this pathway and swiftly prioritise the decisions and investment needed to recruit the necessary capacity and expertise. (Internal)

Align our council statutory and non-statutory plans, policies and guidance with our climate, nature and green economy goals, including corporate areas such as procurement and infrastructure development (Internal)

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Leadership & Accountability

A Councillor at cabinet level has been in place since 2020, with a lead officer in place since 2021.

Looking Ahead: The organisation structure and expertise required to deliver against the emission reduction targets is currently being reviewed. Specific climate objectives will be set across service delivery teams to support delivery.

Climate SPD

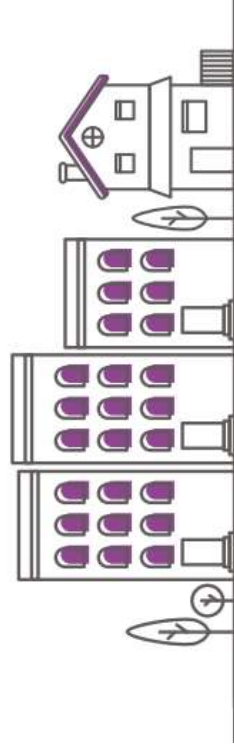
The Climate SPD was implemented in 2022 and has delivered early results. Because of the SPD, an additional 265 houses will be built using low carbon heat technologies, rather than gas boilers.

Looking Ahead: We are reviewing the effectiveness of the Climate SPD to date, to improve effectiveness and support development of effective Net Zero planning policies within the Strategic Local Plan. We are increasingly monitoring Council's own regeneration investment through this lens.

Climate Impact Assessment

The Climate Tool is routinely used to inform major decisions in the Council. It has been used as best practice case study by the Local Government Association.

Looking Ahead: The Climate Impact Assessment is being reviewed to maximise effectiveness and inform further development of the tool.



FINANCE, FUNDING & PROCUREMENT

Overview

Both public and private investment is crucial to the success of reaching our targets for 2030. Our purchasing decisions across the borough can have a significant benefit, both in reducing our own scope 3 supply chain emissions, alongside reducing borough wide emissions.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Develop a Climate Investment Strategy known as 'Cheltenham's Green Deal' that approves and enables money to be raised for investment in green projects, using various means such as grants, bonds, or Community Municipal Investments (CMI's) to speed up carbon emission reductions and increase resilience to climate change and to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). (Internal & External)

Introduce an annual 'Climate Community Fund' that helps to finance smaller scale, community climate initiatives and projects, which can be used as best practice exemplars to encourage the take up of similar schemes. (External)

Ensure all future investment decisions take into account our climate emergency objectives. As the Council recovers from the impact from the pandemic, we will look at the earliest opportunity to review our modest investment portfolio, as part of our commitment of divestment from funds which support the burning or extraction of fossil fuels. (Internal)

2024-2026

Encourage suppliers to measure and report on their Scope 1 and 2 emissions, to help improve the level of detail of our Scope 3 emissions reporting, focusing first on the highest expenditure areas of repair and construction. (External)

Review our Procurement Policy to ensure all purchases properly consider climate-related impacts and add greater weight to purchasing from sustainable local businesses and those which add social value. (Internal)

Look to invest in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure that reap multiple environmental benefits wherever possible. This may range from small Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and rain gardens, to solar farms and green roofs. (External)

2027-2030

Work with other authorities and organisations in Gloucestershire to rapidly grow the green economy, by investing in economic activities that promote reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy efficiency and prevention of the loss of biodiversity. (External)

Use legal and planning mechanisms, such as Section 106 agreements, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and others to help fund climate actions and nature restoration projects. (External)

While acknowledging that the County Council is the lead transport authority, explore opportunities to introduce economic nudge mechanisms to help disincentivise car use, particularly for shorter journeys. Further encourage the County Council to use such mechanisms to enable and encourage sustainable transport, particularly measures that allow people to use active and collective forms of transport to travel to work, such as segregated cycle ways and public transport. (External).

FINANCE, FUNDING & PROCUREMENT

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Cheltenham's Green Deal

We published our Climate Change Investment Strategy, known as Cheltenham's Green Deal, in the summer of 2022. The Green Deal enables the Council to invest up to £10m climate related projects providing they meet certain investment criteria. Officers have used the Strategy to deliver £170k investment to drive emission reduction. The Green Deal ensures the Council is well placed to take forward the decarbonisation opportunities that are identified and provides a vital tool in supporting the wider objective for a clean and green borough.

Looking Ahead: Plans are being developed for each of the Council's key buildings as an essential first step during Q1 2024 and these will likely use the Green Deal to deliver emission reduction.

Climate Community Fund

The Climate Community Fund has made £100,000 available to support decarbonisation across the borough over 2 financial years.

Looking Ahead: During 2024 we will continue to make funds available to support Community decarbonisation projects.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects

Funding has been provided for climate related projects through the community CIL board, including new planting in Pittville,

an air quality project in Benhall and a project to include some honey on the Honeybourne Line.

Procurement & Scope 3 Emissions

We have worked with colleagues in Finance and Procurement to analyse our expenditure to address scope 3 emissions and inform a proposed procurement strategy for the future.

Looking ahead: During 2024 we will analyse our top 10 areas of expenditure and seek to work with our key suppliers of infrastructure, goods and services to identify opportunities to reduce the emissions associated with our expenditure to inform our approach to inform our strategy.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Rain Gardens

Our Climate SPD requires developers to include these as part of their plans, to balance rainfall. Alongside providing flood risk management, they have amenity and biodiversity value.

Looking ahead: We will monitor planning applications to ensure that these sustainable flood management measures are being implemented.

Working with Gloucestershire County Council Climate Co-ordinators

Working closely with our fellow districts across Gloucestershire will be key to enabling us to reach shared carbon reduction targets. To enable a shared programme of work to be delivered, an ongoing financial contribution has been made by CBC to support provision of the County-wide Climate Change Coordinators.

Looking ahead: CBC is supporting the workgroups and plans that have been developed alongside all of the Councils across Gloucestershire. During 2024, we will build on these plans to deliver our own borough wide emission goals.



BUILDING & ENERGY

Overview

Heating for homes and workspaces currently makes up almost a third of all UK carbon emissions and 42% of borough wide emissions, according to the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Improvements drastically need to be made on improving the energy efficiency of housing and non-domestic properties, ensuring they require less energy to heat, making them cheaper to run and more comfortable to live and work in, whilst reducing our dependence on imported energy. This needs to apply to both new and existing housing stock. We aim to tackle fuel poverty and thereby improve the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly during the winter months.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Measure the energy usage of CBC owned properties and develop a heating and energy efficiency strategy to set out actions needed to actively reduce energy consumption and move away from the use of fossil fuels. Introduce behaviour change programmes to reduce energy consumption in council owned buildings. Support businesses and residents to similarly reduce their consumption. (Internal)

Retrofit council-owned social housing, focusing first on the homes most at risk of fuel poverty. (Internal in future)

Develop a new 'Sustainability Design Code' for the Golden Valley Development, as a vision for integrated living in West Cheltenham that promotes a low carbon lifestyle. Our aspiration is for this thinking to then be replicated across the town, or within other districts and regions. (External)

Explore the viability of a shared low-carbon heat network, to help reduce borough-wide emissions. (External)

2024-2026

Retrofit council-owned properties with sustainable, energy-efficient solutions where feasible. (Internal)

Help owner-occupiers to create more energy efficient homes. For example, by supporting energy companies to provide fuel-poor or vulnerable households with insulation, or by helping influence the retrofit market to ensure there is effective demand for energy efficient measures by those that are classified as "able to pay". This may include supporting the provision of skills-training for local workers, actively encouraging applications for new installations, and facilitating the applications of funding bids from home owners. (External)

Seek to invest in renewable energy generation by identifying suitable areas in the future Planning Policy documents, such as the Cheltenham Plan and Joint Core Strategy. Review the feasibility of alternative energy sources, new technologies and innovations and the potential to be a net contributor. (External)

Commit to using 100% renewable electricity across council owned assets, including those operated by key partners. (Internal)
Support businesses and residents to do the same. Encourage developers to commit to renewable energy by stipulating requirements in a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). (External)

2027-2030

Engage with landlords to improve energy efficiency of homes in the private rented sector and commercial properties and encourage them to achieve good insulation. (External)

Look for potential to align Conservation Area policies with climate emergency goals. (External)

BUILDING & ENERGY

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Energy Strategy & Emission Reduction Internally We have spent £130k across our own key buildings alongside a wider programme of measures to improve efficient energy use.

Looking ahead: During 2024, we are putting together a costed emission reduction plan for key buildings and assets across CBC

Social Housing Retrofit

Retrofit is challenging, requiring long term planning. CBH already has a costed programme of planned investment to deliver and exceed governmental efficiency targets by 2030. During 2023, £800k Wave 1 funding delivered fabric improvements to 34 homes and fabric improvements together with installation of ground source heat pumps (GSHP) for space heating at a 25 unit sheltered scheme. Wave 2.1 will deliver £2.2m grant funding over 2 years between 2023/24 towards the fabric improvement of 175 homes with a further 12 homes identified to receive ASHPs.

Looking ahead: An outline decarbonisation plan has been drawn up but delivering Net Zero retrofit across the 4,500 houses will cost approximately 4 times the available funding, so retrofit will be accelerated as funding becomes available.

New Build Social Housing

CBC is working towards the delivery of Net Zero across its development portfolio, where technically and economically feasible.

Sustainability Design Code for Golden Valley

The Golden Valley SPD was also put in place to deliver high levels of sustainability.

Looking ahead: The development of the project against these stringent goals will continue to be reviewed alongside the regeneration team as the project is developed.

Supporting Retrofit for Homes Across Cheltenham

This year, CBC is planning a pilot project to deliver information and support around energy saving and retrofit in Cheltenham, empowering and enabling residents across 50 homes to act to future-proof their homes.

Looking ahead: This project will support development of the council's wider strategy around homes retrofit alongside the development of green skills.

Low Carbon Heat Network Development

CBC took part in governments heat networks zone pilot during 2023 to identify suitable locations for heating zones within Cheltenham, due for implementation in 2025.

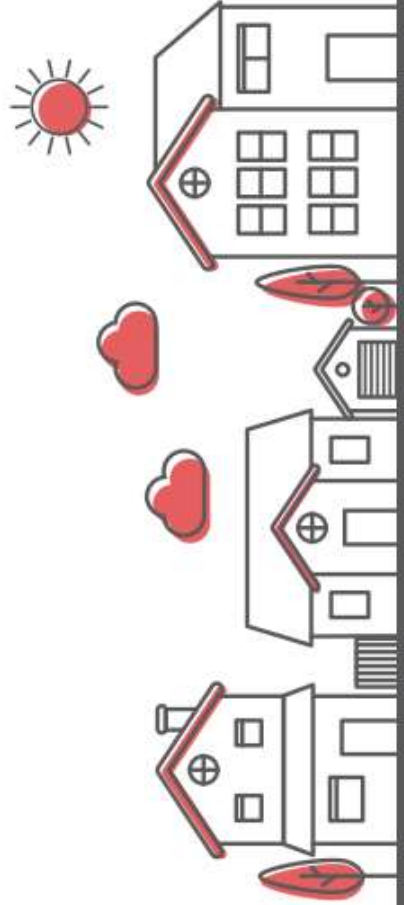
Looking ahead: The Council is undertaking a detailed Heat Network feasibility study during 2024. Legislation is being put in place via Energy Act that will require connection to a network unless developers are able to demonstrate an alternative net zero option or exemptions apply.

Energy Generation:

The first of two studies has been produced for the Strategic Local Plan to identify suitable locations for renewable development.

The Council purchases 100% renewable energy across its key assets. The Climate SPD provides a signal to developers to commit to renewable energy.

Looking ahead: To consider recruitment of an Energy Officer to support local area energy strategy and delivery.



TRANSPORT, TRAVEL & AIR QUALITY

Overview

A modal shift to more active transport can reduce emissions from privately owned vehicles. An estimated 70% of car journeys within Cheltenham are under 2km; many of these journeys could be made on foot or by bicycle. For those unable to make these journeys without a vehicle, public transport needs to become a more attractive option. Policies such as this will help to improve Cheltenham's air quality with positive health impacts

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Work with GCC to prioritise transport investment in cycling and walking, with a priority of installing segregated cycleways, increasing space for pedestrians and introducing a 20mph speed limit in urban areas. Seek to safeguard routes for a future mass transport system to enhance and improve the sustainability of Cheltenham's public transport offering. (External)

Introduce new 'safe cycle hubs' across the town, working with businesses to help facilitate these, as well as installing more cycle racks, wherever it is suitable and safe to do so. (External)

Enable a shift to electric vehicles by installing electric vehicle charging points within Council owned car parks and support GCC with the delivery of their Local Transport Plan (LTP). (External)

Deliver a policy that will require all taxis to be electric, or another form of zero carbon as technology evolves, and support the provision of required infrastructure. (External)

2024-2027

Transition the council's own fleet to electric vehicles. Explore interim measures such as the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel in place of traditional diesel in instances where electrification is not yet a viable option, particularly for the Council's heavy goods vehicles delivering environmental services across the borough. (Internal)

Reduce the use of private vehicles used for commuting by council officers through a reinvigorated green staff travel strategy, including progressive flexible and home-working options. (Internal)

Reduce car use through measures available to the Borough such as promoting car-sharing schemes, supporting the continuation of the county e-scooter trial, introducing staff incentive schemes such as 'Cycle to Work' and reducing or removing direct car parking benefits. (Internal & External)

Work with GCC to develop and implement a "last mile" strategy that encourages greener deliveries across the area by setting up an area-wide distribution centre. This will help remove large delivery vehicles from the central road network and facilitate the introduction of efficient cargo bikes to Cheltenham, whilst creating new jobs and economic growth. (External)

Review our existing car parking strategy. We will continue to explore ways to ensure alternative travel options to car use are viable and seen to be more favourable than driving. Town centre parking charges will need to reflect this policy choice. Repurposing some car parking spaces (i.e. by creating urban gardens or for car share schemes) will be necessary to demonstrate the council's ambition to remove priority for privately-owned vehicles and to amplify services and support for active travellers. (External)

2028-2030

Reduce the need to own and use a car by requiring that the location and design of new developments means they are demonstrably accessible by safe cycling, walking routes and good quality public transport and situated close to essential services.

TRANSPORT, TRAVEL & AIR QUALITY

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Safe Cycle Hubs

£100k funding has been secured to invest in creating a safe and secure cycle hub within the town centre during 2024.

Electric Car Charging

We are currently working through the implementation of phase 1 of the Council's own EV Charging plan to install approximately 40 chargers across 5 car parks during 2024.

Looking ahead: The aim would be to deliver over 200 chargers by 2029, within an incremental annual programme.

Taxi Policy

In April 2023, a policy was put in place implementing the ambition of the authority to operate a fully net zero carbon fleet by 2030 in stages, focusing on phasing out the most polluting vehicles as an essential first step.

Vehicle Decarbonisation Transition Plan

Starting with Ubico, the Council is working towards replacing all vehicles in its fleet under 3.5 tonnes with electric over time, subject to the charging infrastructure being available. The grounds maintenance team and the facilities cleaning team have been using 2 electric vehicles for over 18 months.

See the waste section for further detail on Ubico vehicle decarbonisation.

Sustainable Work and Travel Policies Internally

Alongside the Cycle to Work Scheme and Car Sharing Initiative, the Council has a fully flexible home working policy and provides bicycles that officers can use, where practical to carry out their roles.
Looking ahead: The number of electric bikes will be increased.

GCC and Countywide Action

Alongside continuation of the E-scooter trial to 2026, in January 2023 all seven Gloucestershire authorities signing a Statement of Shared Intent (SoSI) to work together to reduce Gloucestershire transport related carbon emissions. As the lead authority, GCC is co-ordinating efforts enable sustainable neighbourhoods, deliver a modal shift and reduce road related emissions.

Planning Policy and Enabling Sustainable Transport

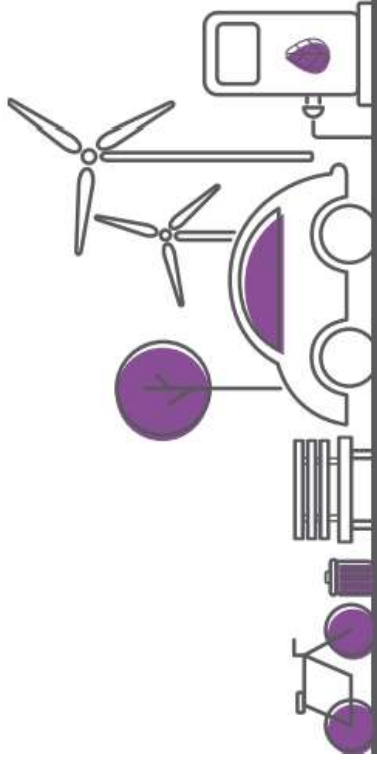
The Climate SPD includes measures to ensure that new developments consider and enable active transport and provide secure bike storage for residents.

Looking ahead: SLP provides an opportunity to support this approach more widely and has within its core objectives 'Prioritising sustainable transport and active travel.'

Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)

The link between air quality and health is clear. There is simply no safe level of pollution. As part of our responsibilities under local air quality management we developed a AQAP consisting of a comprehensive set of measures to improve local air quality. The plan was accepted by Defra in Feb 2024.

Looking ahead: CBC will strive to meet the actions outlined in its Action Plan by 2030, working closely with GCC in their role as lead Transport Authority.



NATURE & BIODIVERSITY

Overview

We are experiencing an ecological crisis, alongside climate change. Our wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems are at risk if action is not taken. Planting more trees to provide shade, protecting and extending wild spaces for nature, increasing biodiversity, restoring our land to sequester carbon and building our resilience to flooding, will all contribute to mitigating climate change impacts. There are also health and wellbeing benefits derived from improving the quality of our natural spaces across the borough.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Update local planning strategies and work closely with other authorities, including GCC, to significantly increase tree cover across the borough and ensure existing trees are properly protected, in order to store carbon, support nature, aid flood protection and deliver health and wellbeing benefits. Increased canopy cover can also provide shade for people and buildings, cooling the air and ground temperatures in extreme heat. (External)

Manage council-owned land to increase biodiversity and reduce carbon pollution, i.e. through reduced pesticide use and mowing and increased planting of wildflowers and perennials. (Internal)

2024-2027

Focus on nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation. For example, work with a range of partners to develop opportunities for Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes across the borough to help mitigate flooding and adapt to climate change, using nature to hold and slow water run-off. (External)

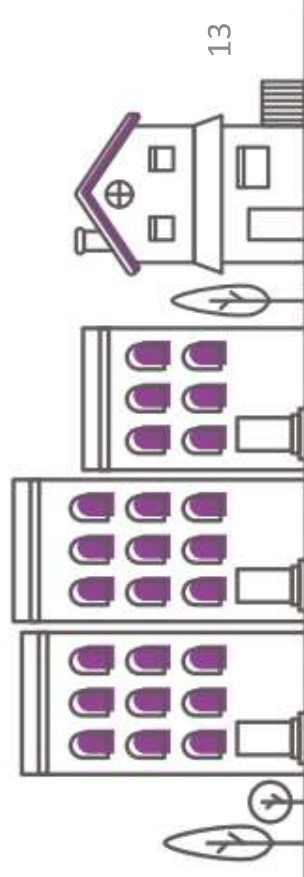
Seek to actively restore and expand ecosystems in line with the Environment Act 2021, with a focus on enhancing biodiversity and natural carbon sinks. This could be through market based mechanisms that improve and safeguard our natural environment, for example the development of a habitat bank for biodiversity net gain credits. (Internal & External)

Work with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership and their Natural Capital Mapping project to help identify nature and ecosystem restoration opportunities across Cheltenham, to reverse and restore habitats, support species and promote ecosystem quality and function. (External)

2028-2030

Encourage and influence the uptake of green roofs on roof-top with green roof potential to help support urban greening in the community. (External)

Identify demand for allotments with a view to increasing allotment utilisation and developing land for community spaces and provide opportunities for those that may not have access to their own garden. (External)



NATURE & BIODIVERSITY

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Increasing Treecover

1000 trees were planted during 2023 and support has been secured from GCC to plant a further 600 looking forwards. These were a mix of native and non-native species, large and small, short- and long-lived, with both insect and wind pollinated species. Increasing the diversity of tree species grown in Cheltenham is a key adaptation strategy for building resilience to climate change-related threats.

Looking ahead: we will evaluate the contribution our tree-planting makes to offsetting our carbon emissions in a robust and rigorous way.

Managing Council Owned Land to Increase Biodiversity

The Green spaces team provide a comprehensive annual summary to pick out the wide range of activities undertaken to improve biodiversity across the borough during 2023, this has included the implementation of no-mow May policy across a range of site, alongside perennials/ wildflower planting and work to reduce invasive Himalayan balsam.

A seedbank of local wildflower species has been collected from North-facing grassland on Leckhampton Hill, to support wider replanting schemes across the borough.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership (GLNP)

The Council worked with GLNP on their natural capital mapping project and are developing CBC's approach to BNG.

Looking ahead: CBC has appointed an ecologist to support the development of the Council's approach to BNG, alongside its inclusion within the Strategic Local Plan and work being undertaken to develop habitat banks

Natural Flood Management (NFM)

Cheltenham Borough Council are working collaboratively with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to implement Natural Flood Management at Naunton Park (Swale completed and now operational). The GWT are also undertaking a scheme at Warden Hill (roof and roadside raingardens in design phase). These devices will slow the flow of surface water runoff and alleviate overloading of drainage networks and rivers downstream. The devices also improve water quality by allowing contaminants to breakdown naturally before they enter watercourses and improve biodiversity.

Looking ahead: Cheltenham Borough Council are also working with Gloucestershire County Council on their scheme to install roadside raingardens in Oakley and are part of the new Gloucestershire delivery group, which is envisaged will enable more opportunities to deliver rural NFM schemes upstream of the urban area.

Allotments & Community Green Spaces

Existing allotments are being actively managed to ensure that these are being utilised. Additional sites have been identified in new developments such as Elms Park and in the West of Cheltenham.

Looking ahead: The team will actively identify new sites and ensure that greenspace commitments are honoured through the planning process.

Urban Greening

The EU funding secured in 2019 was spent on a range of urban greening projects. The green space team have built on these projects across the borough to improve the quality of urban spaces.

Looking ahead: The development of SLP policies will provide further opportunity to encourage urban greening.



Weavers Field Orchard

With the help of the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust and the local community, work has commenced on the restoration of an old orchard at Weavers Field in Warden Hill. The site which has largely naturalised over many years, has been brought back to life and supplemented with new trees, becoming a focal point for community activity and a hot spot for local biodiversity. Fruit trees are particularly good habitats for wildlife because they are “early senescent”. This means they get old relatively quickly and develop veteran features such as hollow trunks, rot holes, dead wood and sap runs. These features are important for over 400 species of saproxylic invertebrates that live on decaying wood.

Water & Waste

Overview

Water is often a forgotten limited resource in the UK, with easy access via our taps for a seemingly endless supply as and when we need it. However, climate change affects water management in multiple ways, including changes to seasonal and annual patterns of floods and droughts which can affect water quality and availability. This can have related impacts on our health, economic activities and on freshwater dependent ecosystems. Discarded plastic and other pollutants, along with an over-use of herbicides and pesticides, are also damaging the environment and reducing biodiversity across land and sea. The Environment Act 2021 is driving new business behaviour for waste and recycling. CBC will continue to work with the business community and residents to move towards a circular economy and improved resource efficiency.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Continue to work with communities and businesses to promote food waste reduction, local food sourcing, sharing of unwanted good to eat food within the community. Continue to promote home composting and sustainable food waste. (External)

Promote community sharing and reuse to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption, including water. (External)

Develop an incentive strategy for all staff, including our partners, to help drive down energy consumption and waste across our buildings. (Internal)

Reduce the use of single-use plastic in council offices and premises and work with local businesses to help influence reduction in their plastic use and waste. (Internal)

Encourage businesses and other organisations within the borough to seek waste and recycling solutions which send zero waste to landfill. (External)

2024-2027

Following the new requirements set out within the Environment Act 2021, ensure adequate recycling and food waste facilities are provided across all Council-owned and operated buildings and community centres. Support small businesses to recycle, as well as seeking to expand the 'on the go' recycling bin provision across our public realm. (External)

Reduce water consumption at CBC owned sites. (Internal)

Leverage the new climate-focused Supplementary Planning Document to encourage the provision of better waste and recycling facilities in developments. Continue to look to the future for innovative ways of dealing with our waste collections such as underground bins to maximise land use and provide more opportunities for biodiversity. (External)

2028-2030

Adopt circular-economy waste policies in relevant plans and contracts. (Internal)

Work with Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to increase the uptake of water butts and grey water recycling in new and existing homes and non-domestic properties as well as continue to promote sustainable food waste disposal across the county as part of Gloucestershire County Council's contract arrangement for anaerobic digestion. (External)

WASTE & WATER

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Food Waste

Home composting is promoted on CBC's website and the Council has continued to promote food waste reduction on vehicles, and across its communication with residents, alongside working with the BID and the Chamber of Commerce to encourage food waste reduction in businesses. The new material sales contract donates food item to food banks in Cheltenham linked to our recycling rate and continues to promote food banks. Food waste is disposed of sustainably via GCC contract with Andigestion locally.

Looking ahead: We are exploring the case to roll out communal food waste scheme to communal properties alongside Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH).

Community Reuse and sharing

Freegle is active in the area alongside Vision 21 Reclaim and Reuse initiatives.

Looking ahead: greater promotion of reuse planned for 24/25 in conjunction with CBH.

Enacting Environment Act Provisions For Recycling

Council offices, including CBH, have improved the range of recycling available and food waste will be home composted by a hot bin at the Swindon Road depot for the Council itself, CBH and Ubico staff by April 2024.

Looking ahead: The potential to expand on the go recycling with the replacement of existing town centre litter bins is being explored.

Leveraging Supplementary Planning Documents Around Waste

Both the Golden Valley SPD and the Climate SPD do cover waste and planning proposals are assessed against these benchmarks, though they don't provide the requisite level of detail.

Looking ahead: Potential for a separate Waste SPD is being explored.

Ubico Vehicle Decarbonisation and Swindon Road Infrastructure

Alternative fuels for the heavy goods vehicles have been put in place. As a transitional option, the majority of HGV's within Ubico have now been operating on HVO for over a year with significant emission benefits. A long-term fuel solution is required, as technology develops. Our 3.5T and under fleet is gradually being replaced by electric vehicles, where operationally and financially viable.

Looking ahead: A long term decarbonisation costed plan is needed both to support vehicle transition and essential enabling infrastructure within the depot for CBH and Ubico particularly. A new depot, operated by Ubico, to enable this infrastructure is likely a key enabler to this transition and GCC, CBC and TBC are currently working closely together to deliver this within available resources.



Collective Action

Overview

The council knows it cannot achieve the 2030 target alone. By working in partnership with organisations and residents across the borough, we can have greater power to bring about the necessary changes and action needed to achieve our collective global goal.

Proposed Actions

2020-2023

Drive the wider adoption of the CheltenhamZero Partnership across businesses, communities and residents, influencing behaviour change, collaboration and the sharing information and best practice.

Establish 'Climate Champions' among our communities, schools and businesses – building capacity for local people to be involved in helping meet our climate targets, inspiring communities and enterprises to find and implement solutions. Climate Champions will also be established within CBC and our key partner organisations to drive change from within.

Through mechanisms such as the CheltenhamZero Partnership, provide support to small and medium-sized enterprises, working closely with partners such as GFirst LEP, to access funds and expertise, so that they are able to contribute to carbon reduction and nature restoration plans.

Explore partnership opportunities for setting up 'zero carbon hubs' – decentralised futureproof centres promoting zero emission lifestyles, that help to educate, inform and advise on 'all things climate' for individuals and communities.

Regularly update the council's web content to ensure the most relevant and up to date information is available to the public.

Create or signpost to toolkits available for businesses, community groups, individuals and families, relating to topics such as energy, transport, waste reduction and children's climate education activities.

Work closely with the University of Gloucestershire to help support local climate-based research, which not only helps to identify opportunities for the Council and the Borough, but also develops the skills needed for our future workforce, enhancing student experience and employability.

Use influence with others, such as schools and other private businesses and organisations, to help ensure their buildings are zero-carbon, purchasing is green and the environment they supports nature wherever possible.

2026-2028

Work with businesses to seek to introduce local incentive schemes that may help enable more sustainable lifestyles, such as walking and cycling, reduced waste and healthier eating.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Delivery Update & Future Areas of Focus

Cheltenham Zero

The Cheltenham Zero initiative is our main vehicle for addressing borough wide business and community group emissions. It now has 164 members and over 60 active carbon reduction plans included on the zellar platform designed to support businesses in calculating emissions and putting in place plans to reduce these. Further practical energy efficiency and emission reduction support is available via the Growth Hub.

We have made £100k available to support emission reduction across community groups since 2021, supporting a range of projects to decarbonise.

Looking ahead: During 2024, we are focusing on delivering £100,000 of grant funding alongside practical support and tools to help business across the borough to reduce their emissions via the Cheltenham Zero initiative, working with Vision 21. We are using this programme of support to inform our strategy to deliver improve energy efficiency and drive down carbon emissions to meet our 2030 target.

Climate Champions

Working with Planet Cheltenham, our local zero carbon hub, we provided funding and support for the Climate Change Makers, bringing together 11 residents from across the town on a peer-led learning journey around Climate Change and local solutions with an aspiration to empower and enable people to act in their communities.

Looking ahead: We will work within our communities to support decarbonisation, particularly focused around driving down emissions associated with domestic heat and energy use to maximise the impact on borough wide emissions

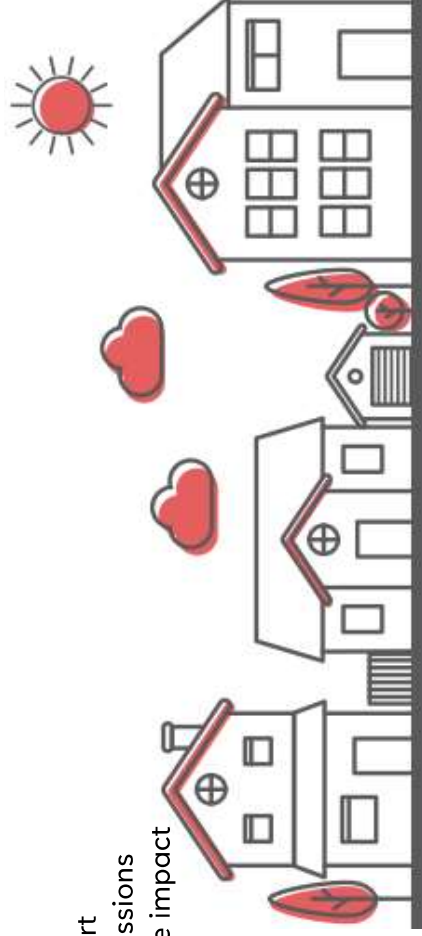
Communication and Toolkits

Alongside the practical support we provide for businesses via Cheltenham Zero initiative, we have made toolkits available on our website for community groups, individuals and families and the actions they can take at a personal level to drive down energy bills, reduce waste, foster nature recovery and support emission reduction.

Wider Engagement & Education

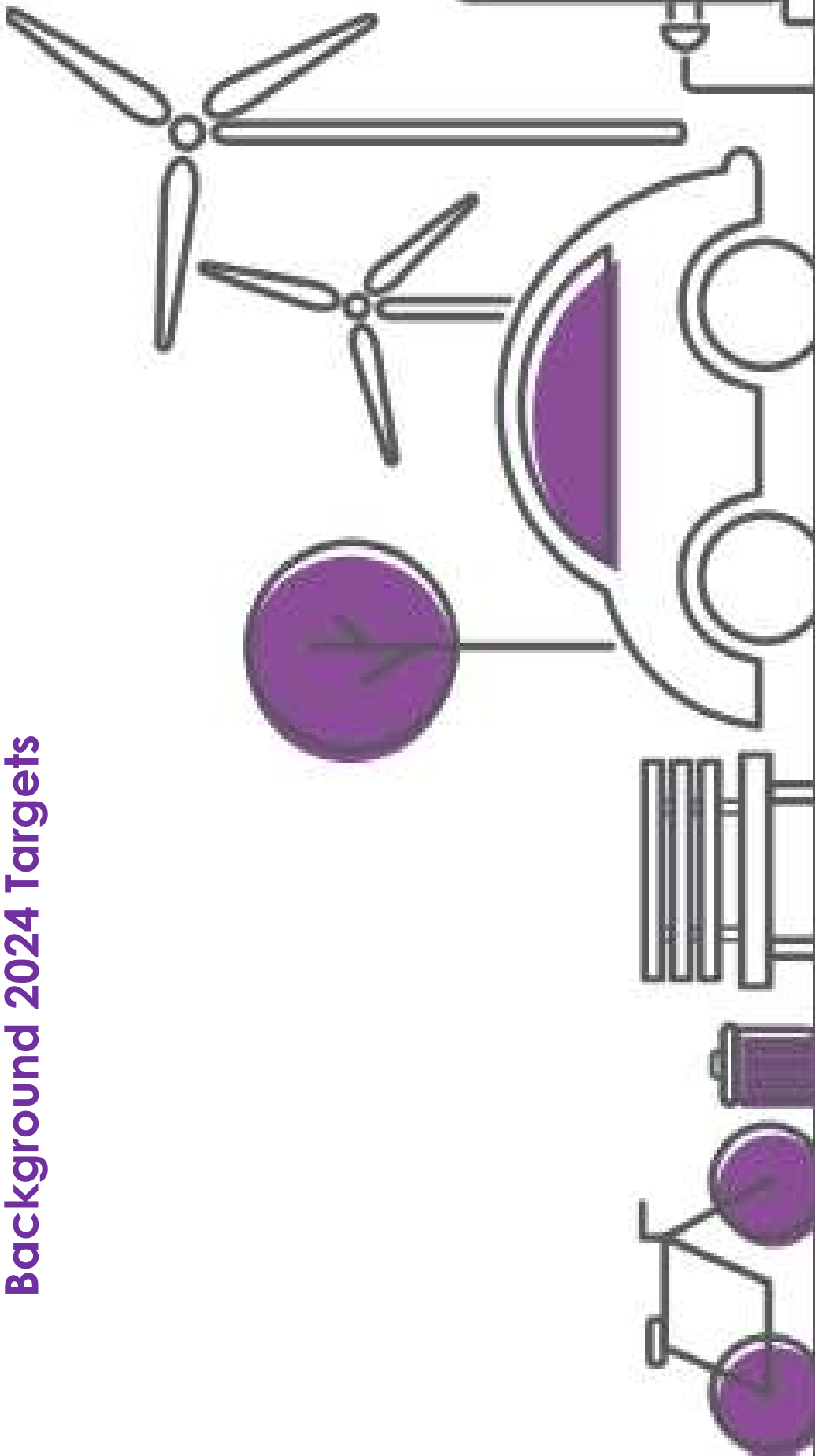
Working with partners like Planet Cheltenham, we provide outreach into schools and community groups to build understanding and insight around climate change and sustainability.

Looking ahead: As a festival town, we will use our events strategy to foster greater sustainability for the events in our borough.



LEADING THE WAY ACROSS OUR OWN OPERATIONS

Background 2024 Targets



Developing a Costed Plan To Address Emissions Across CBC Operations



Cheltenham Borough Council has set an ambitious 2030 net zero target. This requires development of a costed plan to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions to almost nothing and to explore the viability of compensating for the remaining emissions through mechanisms such as carbon-offsetting¹.

Although we will address our Scope 3 emissions head on to reduce them, as far as possible, this may prove to be a longer process.

Scope 1 & 2 Emissions

- During first half of 2024 we will develop a costed plan for our most carbon intensive buildings, aligned to maintenance and capital plans, using the Green Deal amongst other funding strategies to support delivery of our plans.
- Over time, we will develop a costed, delivery plan and timeline to reduce emissions across all service areas, informed by our emission data, including a plan for our services from UBICO and Cheltenham Borough Homes.
- We will identify robust carbon-offsetting mechanisms to address residual emissions.

Scope 3 Emissions

To inform our procurement strategy to improve accuracy of our reporting and to address supply chain emissions, ensuring suppliers measure and report on their Scope 1 and 2 emissions, focusing first on the highest expenditure areas of expenditure.

- During 2024 we will analyse our top 10 areas of expenditure to inform our approach.
- We will encourage key developers to provide embodied carbon and lifetime carbon analysis to enable us to quantify Scope 3 emission impacts more accurately.
- We will continue to hone our Climate Impact Assessment to ensure we consider sustainability effectively within our decision-making across the Council.

¹. Currently Cheltenham Borough Homes emissions are counted separately. A decision will be required about how they will be incorporated moving into the CBC carbon footprint looking forward.

Organisation Design & Governance to Deliver The Action Plan



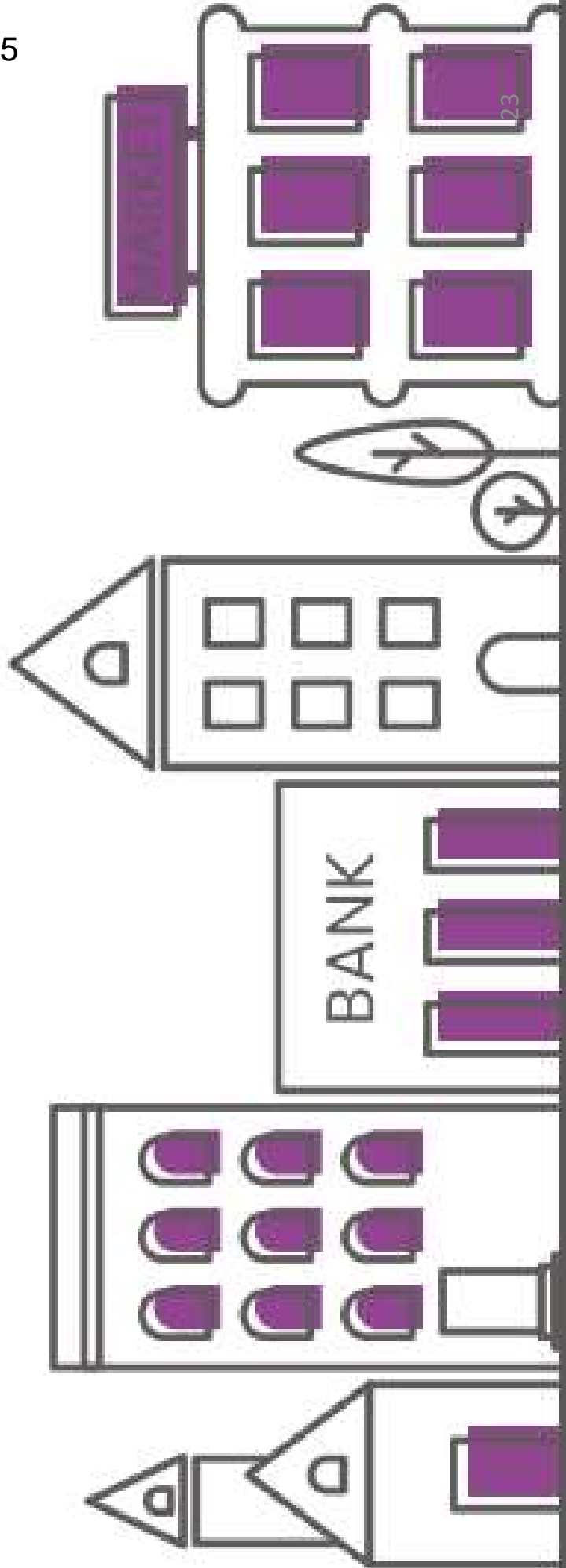
Cheltenham Borough Council developed a Climate Team to meet its action plan and appointed a Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency.

The organisation structure and expertise required to deliver against the emission reduction targets will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the organisation has the skills and capabilities it requires and is structured to deliver against key targets.

However, success doesn't rest in the hands of the climate team, but across the organisation. To this end during 2024:

- 1. Organisation Design:** The Climate Team will be reviewed to ensure it has the skills and capabilities to deliver against key targets and is well placed within the organisation structure to enable it to deliver its action plan.
- 2. Climate Programme Board Review:** Leadership, membership and terms of reference will be reviewed to ensure key personnel are involved to deliver against identified goals and we put in place a funding plan to deliver against our targets.
- 3. Developing Climate Targets:** Specific climate objectives will be set across CBC's departments and teams to support delivery of the action plan.
- 4. Training & Development:** Working with the Learning & Development team, alongside our induction programme, key topics will identified around which training interventions are provided to officers and elected members.
- 5. Develop a Risk Framework:** this is required to cover risks against meeting our action plan alongside a more informed view of our own climate resilience and adaptation risks.

REVISED ACTION PLAN TARGETS (Internal Emissions)

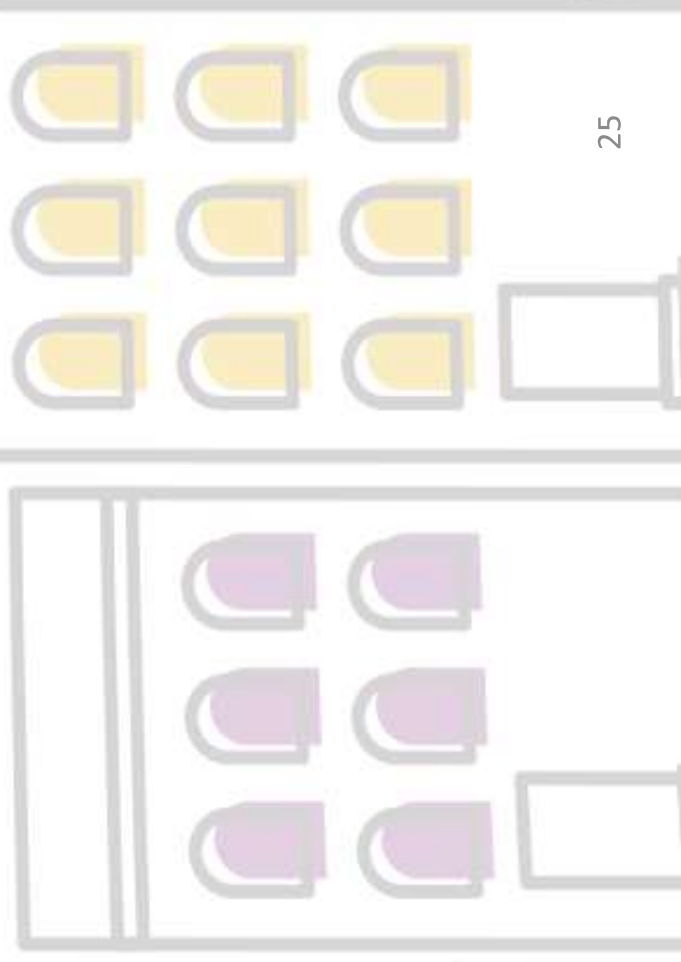


INTERNAL TARGETS - Scope 1 & 2 (Direct & Indirect Energy Emissions) & Scope 3 (Supply Chain Emissions)

Scope 1 & 2 Emissions (Direct & Indirect Energy & Fuel Emissions)		Scope 3 (Supply Chain Emissions)	
To devise costed plan for our most carbon intensive buildings, aligned to maintenance and capital plans, using the Green Deal amongst other funding strategies to support delivery of our plans.	Mid 2024	Inform our procurement strategy to improve accuracy of our reporting and to address supply chain emissions and meet our 2030 target, alongside wider social value considerations, ensuring suppliers measure and report on their Scope 1 and 2 emissions, focusing first on the highest expenditure areas of expenditure.	2024 for scope 3 analysis. 2025 for roll out
To create a costed, delivery plan and timeline to reduce emissions across all service areas, informed by our emission data, including a plan for our services from UBICO and Cheltenham Borough Homes.	End 2024		
Our full asset portfolio	2025	To analyse our top 10 areas of expenditure and seek to work with our key suppliers of infrastructure, goods and services to identify opportunities to reduce the emissions associated with our expenditure to inform our strategic approach across various segments.	2024
Social Housing (retrofit)	Plan in place. Bring forward as funding is available.		
Development	Ongoing	Define Strategic Approach and Consider Implementation plan	2025
Ubico building, vehicles and operations	2024		
Green Spaces	2024	To encourage key developers to provide embodied carbon and lifetime carbon analysis to enable us to quantify Scope 3 emission impacts more accurately.	Ongoing (inclusion in Scope 3)
To identify and implement robust carbon-offsetting mechanisms to address residual emissions by 2030.	Approach identified 2025 & implemented to 2030		
Review and deliver a green staff travel strategy to reduce the use of private vehicles used for commuting by council officers, including home-working options, car sharing incentives & cycle to work scheme. To reduce work vehicle electrification and reduced vehicle use during work hours through provision of bikes/ebikes.	Ongoing	To hone our Climate Impact Assessment to ensure we consider sustainability effectively within our decision-making across the Council.	Review complete Q2 2024 24

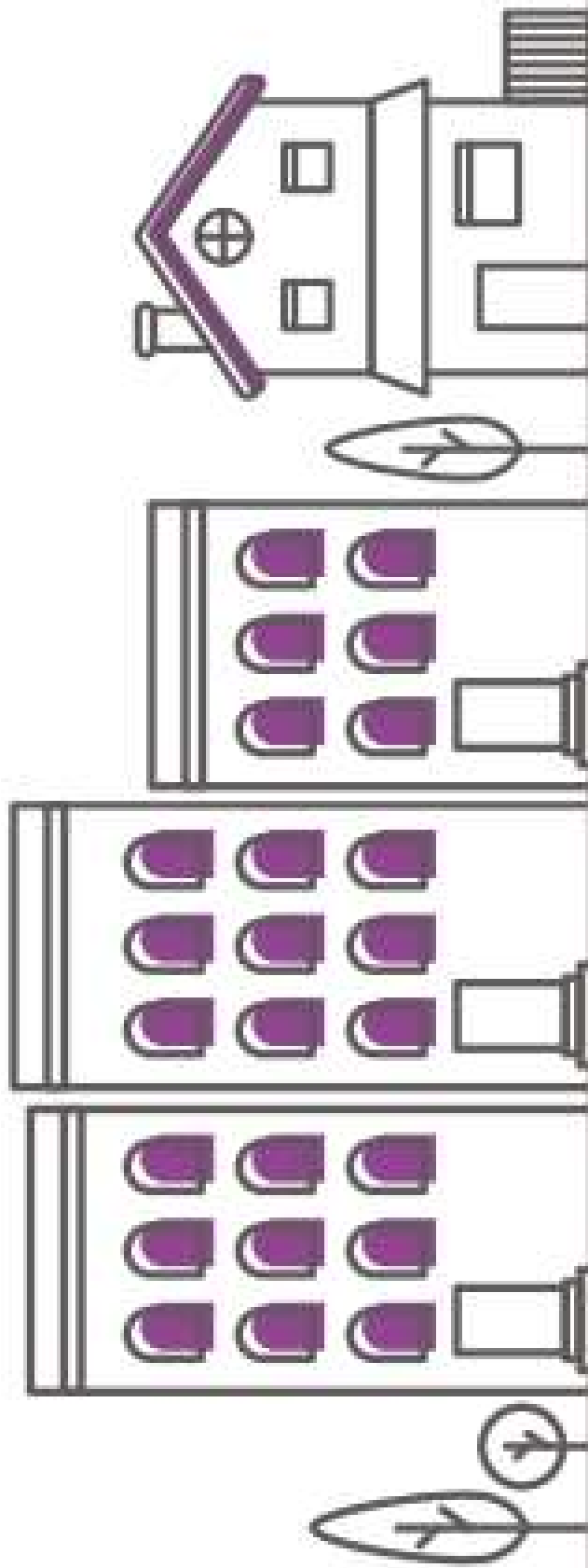
INTERNAL TARGETS - Governance

<p>Organisation and Governance</p>	<p>Organisation Design: The Climate Team will be reviewed to ensure it has the skills and capabilities to deliver against key targets and is well placed within the organisation structure to enable it to deliver its action plan.</p>	<p>Q1 2024</p>
<p>Climate Programme Board Review: Leadership, membership and terms of reference will be reviewed to ensure key personnel are involved to deliver against identified goals and we put in place a funding plan to deliver against our targets.</p>	<p>Q2 2024</p>	<p>Q1 2024</p>
<p>Developing Climate Targets: Specific climate objectives will be set across CBC's departments and teams to support delivery of the action plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Training & Development: Working with Learning & Development, key topics will be identified around which training interventions are provided to officers and elected members.</p>	<p>Q2 2024</p>	<p>Q2 2024</p>
<p>Develop a Risk Framework: Identify risks associated with meeting our action plan</p>	<p>Create report to identify resilience and adaptation risks and incorporate these into the risk framework, alongside an action plan to address them.</p>	<p>End 2024 Report, Q1 2025 for Risk Review and Action Plan</p>

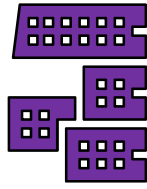


Addressing Borough Wide Emissions

2024-2026 Targets

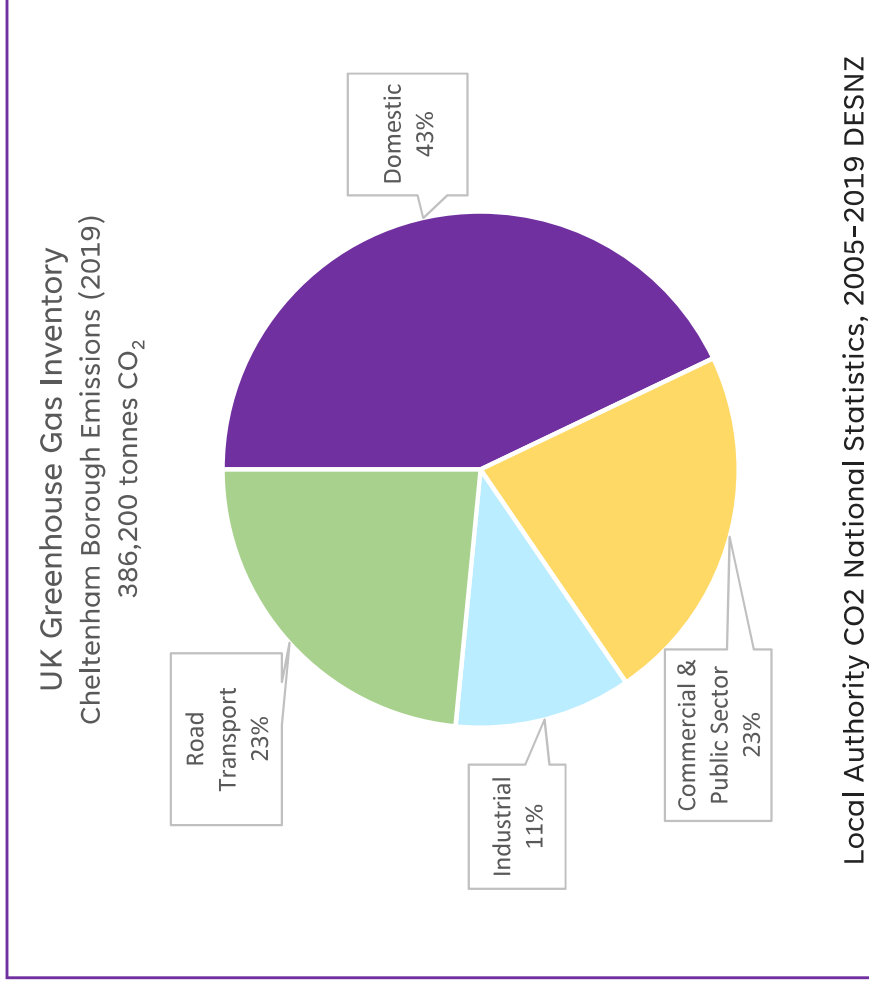


Developing Our Strategic Approach to Borough Wide Emissions



National figures from Greenhouse Gas Inventory estimated over 386kt CO2 emissions across Cheltenham in 2019. Whilst the Council has a range of levers to address borough wide emissions, it doesn't have the same level of control to deliver against these targets as it does within its own internal operations. Swift and focused action is needed for us to ensure we don't exceed our share of the overall UK carbon budget. (see Appendix 1).

There are a number of areas where we have taken proactive action. However, in priority areas of emission reduction, we remain at an early stage. We are learning from our early round of projects to inform development of our wider strategic approach and to enable development of a more tangible emission reduction plan and timeline.



To drive down emissions we have to prioritise effort in 3 key strategic areas

- Housing
- Business & Industrial Emissions
- Transport

A critical enabler to driving down borough wide emissions in these three areas will be local area energy planning.

As Gloucestershire County Council are the Transport Authority, we will need to work closely with them alongside our neighbours in this key area.

To this end we are implementing climate change adaptation measures across the borough.

Evolving our Strategy to address Business & Industrial Emissions



CBC has taken a leading-edge approach and developed early action in this area. To date, the Cheltenham Zero initiative, delivered with Vision 21, has resulted in 164 businesses signing up to the Council's 2030 net zero targets, with 64 of these businesses having an active decarbonisation plan on the Zellar platform we have made available to them to use. In addition, further practical support to formulate decarbonisation plans specifically focused in the commercial sector is being delivered via the Growth Hub.

- **Delivery:** During 2024 we move into the delivery phase. £100k grant funding alongside additional practical support has been made available to deliver tangible energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects in place for SMEs by CBC.
- **Strategic Approach:** Looking forwards, our strategy will provide a segmented approach to support institutions, businesses and community groups across Cheltenham.
- **Impact & Focus:** Our next step is to identify and engage with our most substantial emitters across the borough to better understand their own carbon reduction journey, alongside their barriers and enablers to inform the support we can provide to help them drive down energy use and decarbonise operations, (such as via renewable energy generation or low carbon heat networks for example) alongside understanding any green skills & growth opportunities they may have.

Developing a strategy to address housing emissions



Domestic emissions currently account for up to 42% of borough wide emissions. High quality, energy efficient homes are important to ensure we have properties that are fit for the future as the net zero energy mix evolves.

Property retrofit is extremely challenging, as it has to be approached on a property by property basis. Within Cheltenham, we have a higher number of listed and historic properties which provide additional challenge and require particular focus.

We have a strategy that encompasses our approach to new build homes and a plan for our social housing, we should develop an approach to retrofit of existing homes including historic properties.

- **New Build:** The Climate SPD has provided a clear net zero benchmark for developers. We are evaluating how it has been utilised during the first 18 months to improve its effectiveness and inform development of policies to support the Strategic Local Plan.
- **Social Housing Retrofit:** Retrofit is challenging, requiring long term planning. Cheltenham Borough Homes has a costed programme of planned investment that is being used to deliver and exceed governmental efficiency targets by 2030. However, delivering Net Zero retrofit across the 4,500 houses will cost approximately x4 the available funding, so retrofit will be accelerated as funding becomes available. For new build social housing, CBC is working towards the delivery of Net Zero across its development portfolio, where technically and economically feasible.
- **Property Retrofit:** Commencing in April, the neighbourhood community trial will deliver information and support around energy saving and retrofit, empowering and enabling residents across 50 homes to take action to future-proof their homes. Alongside best practice examples from other parts of the UK, this will be used to inform our strategic approach to domestic retrofit and green skills.
- Our approach to historic property retrofit will require specific focus to provide practical guidance, leveraging best practice approaches across other parts of the UK.

Transport



Cheltenham are responsible for parking and development planning whilst Gloucestershire County Council are the Transport Authority and hold the funding and decision-making power for transport planning, roads and public transport. During 2023, CBC have implemented an Air Quality Action Plan to 2030. As GCC are the lead authority regarding transport, we will also need to work very closely with them to address key actions, improve air quality and bring down transport emissions.

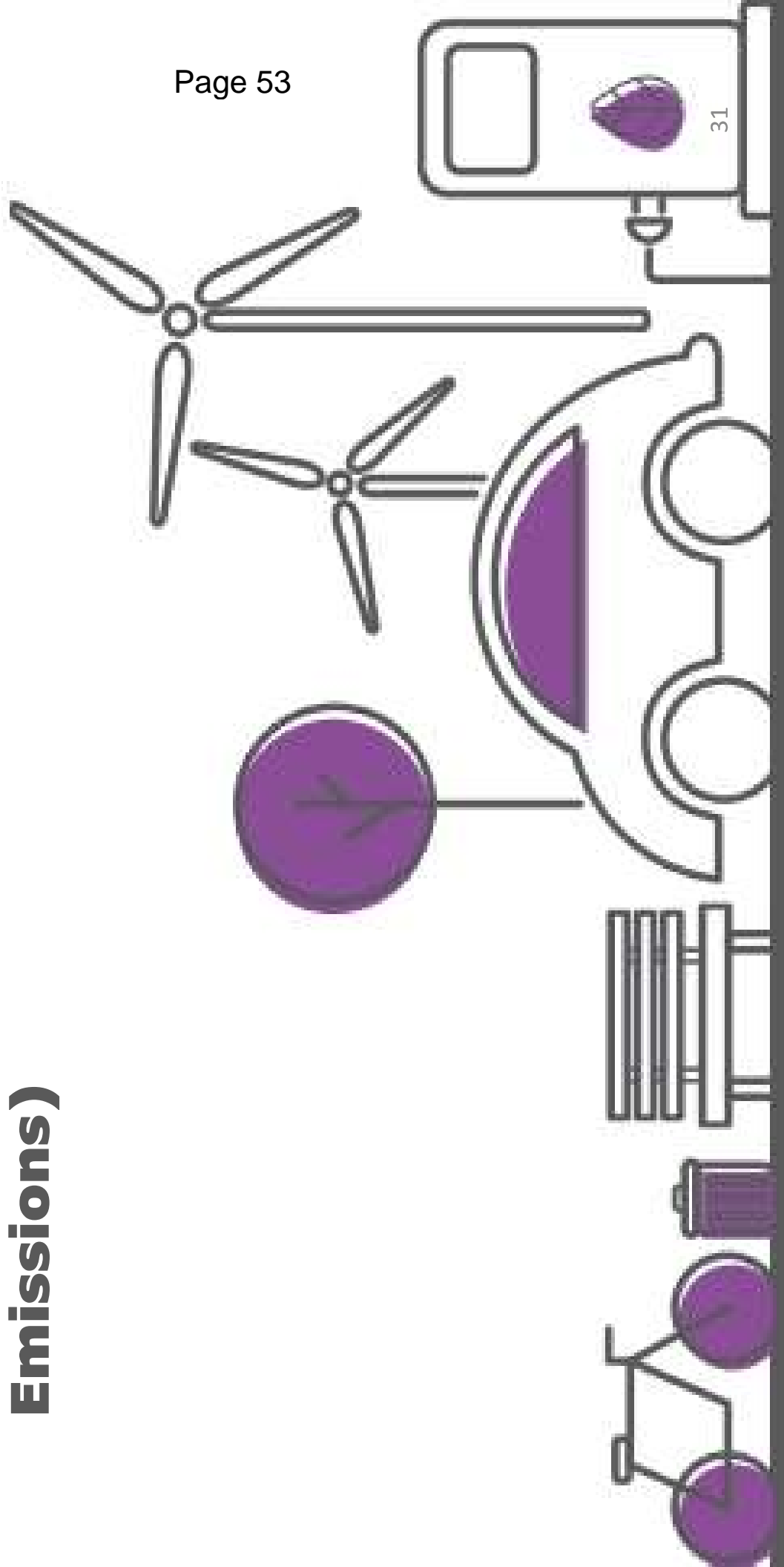
Borough Wide Action: £100k funding has been secured to invest in creating a **safe and secure cycle hub** within the town centre during 2024. CBC's **EV Charging plan** aims to deliver over 200 EV chargers by 2029, within an incremental annual plan. Phase 1 will install approximately 40 chargers across 5 CBC car parks during 2024.

Strategic Local Plan (SLP) : SLP provides an opportunity to enable sustainable transport and active travel opportunities across the borough by:

- enabling real options for healthy, accessible and walkable neighbourhoods;
- improving existing and providing new frequent public transport links and safe walking and cycling routes in all new developments;
- improving access to services in rural and urban areas through new development, improved integrated transport links and support to community led transport initiatives;
- integrating new development with existing networks and enhancing them where possible

Countywide Action - A groundbreaking agreement, signed by all 7 Councils, has been reached to work together on a Gloucestershire project to tackle transport decarbonisation and achieve net zero emissions by 2030. We will work closely with our neighbours to enable sustainable neighbourhoods, deliver a modal shift and reduce road related emissions

REVISED ACTION PLAN TARGETS (Borough Wide Emissions)



EXTERNAL TARGETS – Business & Housing Emissions

Housing Emissions	Business, Industrial, Institutional & Community Emissions
<p>New Build: The Climate SPD has provided a clear net zero benchmark for developers. We are evaluating how it has been utilised during the first 18 months.</p>	<p>Successfully Deliver £100k grant funding alongside additional practical support, to reduce carbon reduction for SME's across the successful projects.</p> <p>Q1 2024 (Evaluation)</p>
<p>SLP Policy Development to enable Cheltenham to deliver against its 2030 net zero targets.</p>	<p>Revise and tender for revised contract to deliver a segmented strategy to supporting institutions, businesses and community groups across Cheltenham to reduce their emissions in line with the 2030 target.</p> <p>2024-25</p>
<p>New Build Social Housing: CBC is working towards the delivery of Net Zero across its development portfolio, where technically and economically feasible.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Social Housing Retrofit: CBH has a costed programme of planned investment that is being used to deliver and exceed governmental efficiency targets by 2030. However, delivering Net Zero retrofit across the 4,500 houses will cost approximately x4 the available funding, so retrofit will be accelerated as funding becomes available.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Property Retrofit: Commencing in April, the neighbourhood community trial will deliver information and support around energy saving and retrofit, empowering and enabling residents across 50 homes to take action to future-proof their homes.</p>	<p>To March 2025</p>
<p>Alongside best practice examples from other parts of the UK, this will be used to inform our strategic approach to domestic retrofit and green skills.</p>	<p>Q4 2024</p>
<p>Our approach to historic property retrofit will require specific focus to provide practical guidance, leveraging best practice approaches across other parts of the UK.</p>	<p>2024-25</p>
<p>Page 54</p>	
<p>Use influence with others, such as schools and other private businesses and organisations, to help ensure their emission reduction plans are aligned with Cheltenham's targets, procurement is sustainable and nature recovery is considered where relevant.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>The development of Golden Valley will continue to be evaluated against the stringent goals with the SPD alongside the regeneration team as the project is developed.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

EXTERNAL TARGETS – Nature, Waste & Water

Nature and Biodiversity	Waste & Water	
<p>Update local planning strategies and work closely with other authorities, including GCC, to significantly increase tree cover across the borough and ensure existing trees are properly protected, in order to store carbon, support nature, aid flood protection and to provide shade for people and buildings, cooling the air and ground temperatures in extreme heat.</p>	<p>Work with partner councils to provide a decarbonise future-proofed strategic waste site locally including depot and waste transfer facilities.</p>	2024 onwards
<p>Evaluate programme impact on greenhouse gas emissions against robust offsetting criteria.</p>	<p>Implement the requirements within the Environment Act 2021, to ensure adequate recycling and food waste facilities are provided across all Council-owned and operated buildings and at kerbside, including carbons and flexible plastic packaing.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Develop opportunities for Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes across the borough to help mitigate flooding and adapt to climate change, using nature to hold and slow water run-off.</p>	<p>Signpost advice and support for support for small businesses/ community centres to recycle.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Seek to actively restore and expand ecosystems, with a focus on enhancing biodiversity and natural carbon sinks, including through market based mechanisms that improve and safeguard our natural environment, such as the development of a habitat bank for biodiversity net gain credits.</p>	<p>Review and where appropriate expand the on the go recycling bin provision across the borough.</p>	2024
<p>To work with neighbours via the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, ensuring nature and ecosystem restoration opportunities in Cheltenham are developed in tandem with broader regional strategies.</p>	<p>Continue to promote reuse, alongside food and residual waste reduction.</p> <p>Leverage the new climate-focused Supplementary Planning Document to encourage the provision of better waste and recycling facilities in developments. Consider the need for more detailed waste supplementary planning document including innovative ways of dealing with our future waste collections such as underground bins to maximise land use and provide more opportunities for biodiversity.</p>	2024
	<p>Adopt circular-economy waste policies in relevant plans and contracts.</p>	2028-2030
	<p>Work with Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to increase the uptake of water butts and grey water recycling in new and existing homes and non-domestic properties.</p>	2028-2030

EXTERNAL TARGETS – Energy & Investment

Energy		
<p>Low Carbon Heat Network Development: Complete Heat Network feasibility study to establish feasibility of networks in Golden Valley and in the centre of Cheltenham.</p>	Q3 2024	2024-2026
<p>Prepare for Heat Network zoning requirements that will require connection to a network unless developers are able to demonstrate an alternative net zero option or exemptions apply, including potential Heat Network Co-ordinator role (see below).</p>	2024- 2025	
<p>Renewables Plan: The Climate SPD provides a signal to developers to commit to renewable energy. Ensure future SLP policies build on existing policy to ensure the potential for renewable energy is adequately covered within the Strategic Local Plan, including developing policies for renewable energy generation, heat networks, demand flexibility and battery storage; setting specific targets and location for renewable energy linked to the technical potential identified.</p>	2024-2025	Ongoing
<p>Recruit an Energy Officer to support development of the local area energy strategy and delivery, including Heat Network Zoning requirements.</p>	Q2 2024	Ongoing
Funding and Investment in Green Infrastructure/Green Growth		
<p>Green Investment: Look to invest in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure that reaps multiple environmental benefits wherever possible, developing a portfolio of green investment opportunities (aligned to the Strategic Local Plan where relevant).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Net Gains • SUDS • Solar Farms, Energy Generation & Heat Networks • Battery Storage • Charging infrastructure 		
<p>Green Growth: Work with Gloucestershire County Council Economic Development Team and other authorities and organisations to rapidly grow the green economy, by investing in economic activities that promote reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy efficiency and prevention of the loss of biodiversity within the CLG. Understand local business community to better identify borough wide opportunities.</p>		Ongoing
<p>Green Funding: Unlock legal and planning mechanisms, BNG, such as Section 106 agreements, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and others to help fund climate actions and nature restoration projects.</p> <p>Use Green Investment Deal where appropriate to fund projects beyond CBC.</p> <p>Identify sources of external funding and collaborate around these.</p>		2024-2025
		Ongoing

EXTERNAL TARGETS –Transport & Collective Action

Transport		Collective Action	
<p>Borough Wide Action: Create a safe and secure cycle hub within the town centre by March 2025.</p>	<p>By March 2025</p>	<p>Work with ‘Climate Champions’ among our communities, schools and businesses – building capacity for local people to be involved in helping meet our climate targets, inspiring communities and enterprises to find and implement solutions to key challenges.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Implement CBC’s EV Charging plan aims to deliver over 200 EV chargers by 2029, within an incremental annual plan. Phase 1 will install approximately 40 chargers across 5 CBC car parks during 2024.</p>	<p>2024 - 2030</p>		
<p>Strategic Local Plan (SLP) : Ensure the SLP delivers on its objectives to enable sustainable transport and active travel opportunities across the borough by: enabling real options for healthy, accessible and walkable neighbourhoods with local amenities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improving existing and providing new frequent public transport links and safe walking and cycling routes in all new developments; - improving access to services in rural and urban areas through new development, improved integrated transport links and support to community led transport initiatives; - integrating new development with existing networks and enhancing them where possible. 	<p>to 2026</p>	<p>Explore partnership opportunities for setting up ‘zero carbon hubs’ – decentralised futureproof centres that help to educate, inform and advise on ‘all things climate’ for individuals and communities.</p>	<p>Page 57 Ongoing</p>
<p>Countywide Action - Implement the agreement to work together on a Gloucestershire project to tackle transport decarbonisation and achieve net zero emissions by 2030 via GCC workgroup to enable sustainable neighbourhoods, deliver a modal shift and reduce road related emissions</p>	<p>2024-2030</p>	<p>Work closely with the University of Gloucestershire to help support local climate-based research, which not only helps to identify opportunities for the Borough, but also develops the skills needed for our future workforce, enhancing student experience and employability.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 28 May 2024

Award of rent support grants to voluntary sector organisations

Accountable member:

Cabinet Member Finance and Assets, Cllr Peter Jeffries

Accountable officer:

Deputy Chief Executive, Paul Jones

Ward(s) affected:

All Saints

Key Decision: No**Executive summary:**

As part of Cheltenham Borough Council's wider ambitions to support a thriving voluntary and community sector (VCS), the council enables VCS groups to rent its properties through offering a rent support grant scheme.

The current policy was adopted in December 2016 which permits VCS groups to apply for a rent support grant either at the start of a lease or at the time of a rent review. Applications are scored against four criteria with the amount of subsidy awarded being proportionate to the degree to which the applicant meets the criteria.

An application for a rent support grant has been received from Open Door for 39 Grosvenor Street. This report sets out the proposed level of rent support grant to be awarded.

Recommendations:

- 1. Cabinet agrees to a rent support grant of 72% of current market rent to Open Door for 39 Grosvenor Street.**
 - 2. Cabinet delegates authority to the Participation and Engagement Team Leader, in consultation with One Legal to agree the terms of a rent support grant agreement with the applicant.**
-

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

Open Door was previously in receipt of a rent support grant of 80%. Following the review of their lease terms, cabinet agrees to a new rent support grant of 72% which will mean an uplift of £1180 per annum to the general fund. Please see appendix 3 for more details.

All usual terms and conditions will be contained within the lease in respect of rent reviews, insurance, repairs, compliance, etc, and will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance.

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets,
gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

Under S123 Local Government Act 1972, leases for a term greater than 7 years must be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable. The only exception to this is where the letting at less than best consideration contributes to the 'social, economic or environmental well-being' of the council's area or residents. Whilst leases for a term of less than 7 years do not have to be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable, the council must still have regard to its general fiduciary duty.

Granting a lease at market rent, whilst implementing a policy of grant support, means that if the tenant at any time fails to meet the grant criteria, there is no complicated legal mechanism for ensuring that the rent is uplifted to market value: the grant is simply suspended. Accordingly, the Policy for Property Lettings and Disposals to the Third Sector, Voluntary and Community Groups was adopted by Cabinet on 13 December 2016.

When considering the giving of financial assistance, the council must ensure that it is not giving an unlawful subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the Act). The subsidy control regime has replaced state aid which applied before the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

One of the requirements for a subsidy to be present is for financial assistance being given to an 'enterprise' which is defined in the Act as a person (including all legal entities) who is engaged in an economic activity that entails offering goods or services on a market. Open Door does not carry out such economic activity so there will be no subsidy present when providing the proposed rent support grant.

Signed off by: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report, but Open Door has detailed the measures being taken to respond to climate change and promote sustainability in its application. Please see appendix 3 for more details.

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Emergency Officer,
maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity
- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

There are no direct equality implications arising from the recommendations, though the organisation will continue to promote equality and diversity in line with their own policy.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

The council will put in place a monitoring process whereby recipients of a rent support grant will submit a monitoring form to explain the activities that have been delivered from the premises.

The quality and timeliness of previous monitoring information will be taken into account, if the applicant wishes to re-apply for a rent support grant at the end of the four-year period.

2 Background

2.1 As part of Cheltenham Borough Council's wider ambitions to support a thriving voluntary and community sector, the council enables VCS groups to rent its properties through offering a rent support grant scheme.

2.2 We know that appropriate rent support to community-based organisations and services can support the viability of such organisations and the services they provide to the benefit of the social and economic well-being of the town. However, the Council will continue to encourage voluntary and community sector organisations to become more self-sufficient and less reliant upon financial support from the Council.

2.3 A revised rent support grant process was adopted by the council in December 2016. This is based on assessing an application against the following four

outcomes:

- Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced
- Sustain and grow Cheltenham's economic and cultural vitality
- People live in strong and safe communities
- We will work to strengthen the emotional and physical wellbeing of all Cheltenham residents

2.4 The maximum rent support grant that any organisation will be able to apply for will be 80% of their current market rent and that the assessment process will determine the level of grant to be offered up to this maximum and will be staggered incrementally, as follows:

Meeting one outcome	–up to 20% grant
Meeting two outcomes	–up to 40% grant
Meeting three outcomes	–up to 60% grant
Meeting four outcomes	–up to 80% grant

2.5 Each outcome is subject to a stepped discount between 0 and 20% depending upon the impact of the defined sub-elements of each outcome.

2.6 Cabinet retains the discretion to award a further grant of 10%, bringing the maximum rent support grant that any organisation could receive to 90%. This will only be in exceptional cases and any such decision will only be taken after detailed consideration of the organisation's financial and business case for the rent support.

2.7 In addition, the council will scrutinise the applicant's financial standing and make an assessment of the following:

- That the reason for applying for the rent support grant is backed up by the organisation's financial health in that the grant award will support the financial viability of the operation of the building
- That the organisation has reasonable longer-term plans in place to be able to sustain activities being delivered from the building beyond the term of the grant.

2.8 The offer of a grant will be for a maximum of four years that will be reviewed at the end of each 12 month period to ensure that the applicant continues to deliver the activities set out in the original application. The council reserves the right to either review the grant amount awarded or withdraw it completely if there are changes to the activities being delivered. In addition, if the organisation is in debt arrears to the council; the grant will be withdrawn.

3 Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The submission from Open Door has been assessed against the criteria detailed in 2.3.

3.2 Open Door demonstrated strong evidence of their contribution to the themes assessed against, particularly in terms of strengthening the emotional and physical wellbeing of all Cheltenham residents, through the support, opportunities and signposting offered to their guests. They also make a significant contribution in supporting people to live in strong and safe communities through creating a sense of community, often acting as a safety net for individuals for whom all other support has failed and involving numerous volunteers in their work.

3.3 The recommendation of a rent support grant of 72% is made up of 62% as recommended by the assessment panel (please see appendix 3 for the assessment of the submission), plus the discretionary additional 10% awarded by Cabinet as per paragraph 1.6, given that Open Door provides vital support to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

4 Alternative options considered

4.1 None

5 Consultation and feedback

5.1 None

6 Key risks

6.1 If the Council is overly generous in subsidising tenancies with grants, this will result in reduced income from assets and cumulative impacts on the Council's medium term financial strategy.

6.2 If appropriate and transparent grant agreements are not put in place, tenants may be more difficult to remove if they fail to meet the terms of any subsidised letting arrangement, with the potential for associated adverse publicity for the Council.

6.3 If prospective tenants cannot demonstrate a robust business plan when taking on property commitments from the Council, there is an increased risk of failure and associated financial and reputation impacts for the authority.

Report author:

Helen Down, Participation and Engagement Team Leader,
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Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening –(to be included in all Cabinet and Council reports)
- iii. Open Door Rent Support Assessment

Background information:

Report to Cabinet 13 December 2016 “Award of rent support grants to Cheltenham’s Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations”.

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	If appropriate and transparent grant agreements are not put in place, tenants may not understand the consequences if they fail to meet the terms of any subsidised letting arrangement.	Helen Down	2	2	4	Accept	Rent support grant agreement to be put in place, in conjunction with One Legal	Helen Down	July 2024
	If prospective tenants cannot demonstrate a robust business plan when taking on property commitments from the Council, there is an increased risk of failure and associated financial and reputation impacts for the authority.	Gemma Bell	2	3	6	Accept			
	If the grant expires or is terminated, tenants will remain responsible for payment of rent at market value. This may result in an increase in arrears.	Gemma Bell	2	2	4	Accept			

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Helen Down	Service Area: Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
Title: Participation and Engagement Team Leader	Date of assessment: 2.5.24
Signature: H Down	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Function

If other, please specify:

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Award of a rent support grant to a voluntary sector organisation

Is this new or existing?

Already exists and is being reviewed

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

The rent has been reviewed and the level of rent support provided needs to be reviewed in line with it.

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

To support a thriving voluntary and community sector (VCS), by enabling VCS groups to rent council owned properties through offering a rent support grant scheme.

Objectives:

Provision of a rent support grant.

Outcomes:	An affordable level of actual rent paid by a voluntary sector organisation to maintain their viability in delivering their services to the community.
Benefits:	Guests who use the services provided by Open Door.

e. What are the expected impacts?

Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	No
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	Choose an item.
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
<p>The level of rent support grant recommended means the actual rent paid is manageable for the organisation, while meeting the objective of also encouraging voluntary and community sector organisations to become less reliant upon financial support from the Council.</p>	

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate

Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	

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