

Cheltenham Borough Council

Full Council –20th March 2023

Carbon Report: Financial Year 2021/22

Accountable member:

Cllr Alisha Lewis, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

Accountable officer:

Mike Redman, Director for Climate Change and Place Services

Accountable scrutiny committee:

Overview and Scrutiny

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key/Significant Decision:

No

[if answering 'yes' to this question, please complete a [climate change impact assessment](#)]

Executive summary:

Carbon emissions are a direct result of organisational consumption activities. Therefore, any reduction in carbon emissions not only supports Cheltenham Borough Council's (CBC's) commitments to net zero and climate change adaptation, but also reduces its demand in energy, water, fuel and more. In terms of the current rise in cost of related emission sources this could be a significant co-benefit to reducing the Council's operations running costs.

This Carbon Report (Appendix 1) calculates carbon emissions for the financial year 2021-22, illustrating the annual emission trends and analysing emissions, through comparison with previous years. This analysis provides a key part of the evidence base showing the progress the Council is making to towards its in-house net zero targets and project trajectories to achieve this.

The report details how total assessed carbon emissions have decreased 16% compared to the year 2020/21. The current trend is in line with the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan Pathway to Net Zero, as an average 14% annual decrease in total emissions is needed to reach net zero by 2030.

However, it should be noted that total assessed emissions have increased when compared to the baseline. This is largely due to a more thorough and accurate calculation for procurement activities for the years 2020/21 and 2021/22. Other increases can be attributed to the methodology for gathering data which is now more specific to CBC and its partner organisations, and less reliant on national averages.

Even though carbon emissions are currently reducing in line with the Council's net zero target, this report shows the scale of the challenge. It identifies our highest emissions sources as Ubico fleet diesel usage for scope 1, the Cheltenham Trust's electricity consumption for scope 2, and purchasing goods and services for scope 3. Consequently, these are the most significant areas that must be tackled for the Council to deliver net zero carbon, pointing out the co-benefit that reducing consumption in these areas has on the operational running costs of the Council in the current high priced energy market.

Underpinning the current carbon emission trends, the report summarises recommendations for further work to address the Council's decarbonisation actions. There are current, ongoing projects which should reflect emission decrease for the year 2022/23.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council:

1. Notes reported progress and the average annual emission reduction necessary to reach the agreed and published 'net zero by 2030' commitment in future decision making;
2. Agrees to publish the 2021-22 Carbon Report (attached as Appendix i).

1. Implications

1.1. Financial implications

Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions arise as a direct result of energy consumption. In the current volatile and rising energy market, efforts should be focused on driving down consumption. This in turn saves carbon emissions at the same time as reducing our revenue costs.

The procuring of goods and services was the highest source of CBC emissions for the years 2020/21 and 2021/22. This assessment is based on the total monetary value of goods and services procured and does not account for individual contactor emissions. Therefore, the only way to report a reduction in emissions, would be to reduce the total annual spend.

For the most part, working towards reducing carbon emissions will mean financial savings for the Council, but may require some investment on "an invest to save" basis. Funding bids will be supported by robust business cases detailing the anticipated investment payback time, based on an annual reduction in utility costs.

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

1.2. Legal implications

None arising directly from the report. Where specific projects or actions are required going forward to implement the agreed and published 'net zero by 2030' commitment further legal advice and support may be required.

Signed off by: Hayley Sims, Head of Law (Commercial and Property),

Hayley.sims@onelegal.org.uk

1.3. Environmental and climate change implications

This report is fundamental to ensuring that the authority is effectively and transparently monitoring and reporting on organisational progress towards the achievement of our net zero carbon by 2030 target.

Signed off by: Laura Tapping, Climate Emergency Programme Lead,
Laura.Tapping@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4. Property/asset implications

All of the Council's operational buildings have an associated annual carbon footprint which mainly relates to energy and water consumption. In future years, it is intended that the carbon report will provide additional analysis, illustrating individual property emissions, which will allow for targeted reductions for each asset.

Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) has calculated and will report on its carbon emissions, which will include CBC's housing stock, 1.20% of the Municipal Offices, 9.52% of the Depot and 56.11% of Oakley Community Centre.

For CBC's operational properties to reach net zero emissions, on-site renewable energy, building energy usage and wider environmental impacts will need significant analysis and investment.

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

1.5. Corporate policy framework implications

This report links directly to Key Priority 2 – Net zero Cheltenham in the corporate plan 2023-27. It monitors CBC's in-house efforts towards the 'net zero by 2030' target and shows that as an organisation we are taking a lead on making these changes ourselves, through calculating and publishing our progress in reducing emissions.

Signed off by: Ann Wolstencroft, Program Manager, HR, Payroll and Health & Safety,
Ann.Wolstencroft@cheltenham.gov.uk

2. Promoting equality and reducing discrimination

There will be no direct implications from the reporting of the carbon footprint on equality or discrimination, although we recognise that climate change is likely to have a disproportionate impact on those with protected characteristics, so this needs to be borne in mind when framing our responsive and mitigating actions.

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

3. Performance management – monitoring and review

Each financial year the annual carbon footprint will be calculated and reported. Analysis of the results will underpin CBC's progress towards its net zero target and any required changes to our action planning.

Review of data collection and carbon calculating methods will occur to ensure that the most accurate and best available estimates are reported.

4. Background

4.1. Cheltenham Borough Council has a key leadership role to play in tackling climate change by reducing carbon emissions from its in-house services, those which CBC directly control, and by working with others in the borough to lower district-wide carbon emissions. The council has set out clear and transparent aspirations and a commitment to help tackle climate change by:

- Declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and committing to strive to reduce both in-house and borough-wide emissions to net-zero by 2030;
- Publishing the Carbon Neutral Cheltenham report in 2019;
- Publishing a full Climate Emergency Action Plan, detailing an associated framework to becoming a net zero Council and Borough by 2030;
- Launching a Climate Impact Assessment Tool for ensuring all proposals and projects the Council undertakes consider their social and environmental impacts.

5. Reasons for recommendations

5.1. These recommendations will ensure that the findings of this report are utilised to help reach the Council's ambition of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

6. Alternative options considered

6.1. There are no other reasonable options which are aligned to the Council's corporate priorities.

7. Consultation and feedback

7.1. This report has been written with internal consultation with Alex Wells, Laura Tapping, Mike Redman and Councillor Alisha Lewis.

7.2. No public consultation required.

8. Key risks

8.1. If the Council does not effectively take account of these results and the analysis of carbon emissions in decision making and planning, then it is at risk of:

- Failing to meet its net zero by 2030 target, which may lead to reputational damage and public scrutiny for not taking adequate action;
 - Progressing in a manner which does not align with central government's legally binding 2050 net zero target;
 - Contributing to climatic warming which will endanger quality of life through extreme weather events, an uninhabitable planet and species extinction.
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Report author:

Climate Emergency Support Officer, Maizy McCann, maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

- i. Cheltenham Borough Council Greenhouse Gas Emission Report: Financial Year 2021/22
- ii. Risk Assessment
- iii. Climate Change Impact Assessment (*if needed*)
- iv. Equality Impact Assessment (*if needed*)

Background information:

- [The Carbon Neutral Cheltenham report](#)
- [Climate Emergency Action Plan – pathway to net zero](#)
- [Corporate Plan – 2023 to 2027](#)

Appendix 2: 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
1.1	The financial implications of the numerous ensuing carbon reduction projects are considerable and an approach to resourcing needs to be developed further and approved. If insufficient capital and revenue funding is secured to progress with carbon reduction activities, progress will be slowed and the council's 2030 net zero ambitions will be put at risk.	Mike Redman	3	4	12	Reduce	Develop a funding strategy to enable growth of the climate team to help address the range of carbon reduction actions for which CBC will accept responsibility. Identify and bid for external funding opportunities to support the delivery of actions within the climate pathway.	Mike Redman	30/10/2024
1.2	If the average annual emission reduction necessary to reach the agreed and published 'net zero by 2030' commitment is not taken into account in future decision making, then the likelihood of achieving that commitment will reduce.	Mike Redman	5	5	25	Reduce	Increase use of the Council's Climate Impact Assessment Tool to assess all decisions and ensure carbon emissions are kept to a minimum.	Mike Redman	30/10/2024
1.3	If the authority is unable to show effective leadership in relation to carbon reduction, there is a risk that local businesses, the voluntary sector and the	Mike Redman	5	5	25	Reduce	Publish our carbon footprint report and progress identified mitigation actions within the climate pathway to move the council and	Mike Redman	30/10/2024

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	general public will do less to reduce their own emissions, impacting negatively on local energy demand in an uncertain future supply environment.						the borough towards a net zero carbon emission future by 2030.		