

Report subject	Climate Action Annual Report 2023/24
Meeting date	5 March 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report presents the fifth annual update to Cabinet on progress towards commitments made in the BCP Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration, made on the 16th of July 2019.</p> <p>2023-24 progress against the main commitments is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make BCP Council and its operations carbon neutral by 2030 - scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions reduced by 8.7% from the 2019 baseline • Work with the wider community to make the region carbon neutral before 2045 – according to data released in 2024, total area-wide emissions for 2022 had reduced by 12% from the 2019 baseline. <p>The report also introduces new emissions dashboards to make progress transparent and presents draft Roadmaps that identify key decisions for consideration if targets are to be achieved.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet notes the Climate Progress Report 2023-24, and the introduction of emissions dashboards Cabinet notes the draft Roadmap of climate actions to take the Council to its 2030 target, which will be approved within 12 months Cabinet notes that a companion Roadmap to address the area-wide 2045 target is in preparation as part of the Local Area Energy Plan and will be presented for approval at Cabinet on 16 July 2025.
Reason for recommendations	<p>This report informs on progress made to date and proposes a draft Roadmap of climate actions that the Council can consider in order to deliver on the ambitions of a carbon neutral Council by 2030. These are clear and achievable but require resources and timely decision-making if significant emissions reductions are to be made. A similar roadmap to achieve a carbon neutral region by 2045 is in preparation as part of the Local Area Energy Plan project and will</p>

	be presented to Cabinet in July 2025.
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. On 16th July 2019, BCP Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral across Council operations by 2030 and to work with partners to set a target date for when the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole region can be made carbon neutral, ahead of the UK target of 2050. An annual report is required to update on progress towards achieving these targets. This is provided at Appendix 1, with an Action Plan update at Appendix 2.

Progress Report 2023-24 Summary

2. The Council has continued its progress to meet the commitment for a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 in reducing scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions by 8.7% since 2019 and the Council remains committed to making further reductions. Disappointingly, the reduction is slightly less than last year's figure of 9.9%, but this reflects that although some sectors (e.g. gas use) are progressing well, there are unavoidable increases in others (e.g. electricity use) where some of the increase is due to an increased reliance on this form of energy for charging electric vehicles, new traffic signals and a small number of heat pumps in buildings. Additionally, data is becoming more readily available, which allows calculation of increasingly accurate emission totals, as in the case of the leased-out buildings sector of the Council's Scope 3.
3. The commitment for a carbon neutral area before 2045 (revised from 2050 due to the Council's adoption of the UK100 Pledge) has seen further steady progress made. Latest data shows a 12% reduction since 2019, improving on the previous year's 8.3%. As before, whilst the trend is in the desired direction, the pace needs to be accelerated if the Council and wider area are going to meet their ambitions. The main gains area-wide have been a 13.7% drop in emissions from gas and electricity use in homes. This will be due to a range of interventions and pressures including improving energy efficiency (helped by national and local grant schemes, such as the Home Upgrade Grant and Healthy Homes Dorset),

continued decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, increased energy-efficiency of household items, the move away from gas central heating boilers to heat pumps and other alternatives, greater awareness of the effects of climate change and the rise in energy costs forcing households to limit their energy use.

4. Our ability to track discreet projects within BCP through to these figures is in some cases limited by available localised data or national tracking. Sharing good practice, and encouraging collaboration is important in making progress.
5. The recommendations in the last annual report agreed by Cabinet have been actioned as follows:
 - The Council joined the UK100 initiative, and in doing so adopted the Net Zero by 2045 pledge as our area-wide target
 - The Annual Report document at Appendix 1 contains interim reduction targets for elements of the Council owned estate, specifically the priority emission sources of Council buildings and energy supply. In addition, the Local Area Energy Plan for the wider Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area, to be published in 2025, will include similarly detailed targets for energy use in homes and road transport reduction
 - A £1m reserve has been established for energy improvements in Council-owned buildings, emissions-reduction activities and ecological projects, and funding from other sources has been successfully obtained for low-carbon projects
 - A Carbon Neutral Steering Group has been established and is bringing services together to actively find solutions to carbon reduction challenges across the corporate estate
 - The Council renewed work with external partners towards the area-wide commitment to Net Zero with a stakeholder meeting in Summer 2024, and activity will continue in 2025
 - Interactive web-based dashboards have been created to replace the traditional Annual Report format. These allow instant access to Council and area-wide emissions data, highlight targets and progress towards the internal and area-wide goals
 - Funded carbon literacy training for officers, members and the business community has commenced, which will empower decision making to meet carbon neutral targets.
6. As a result of the introduction of the emission dashboards, the Climate Action Annual Report document presented at Appendix 1 is greatly reduced in size from previous reports and serves largely as an introduction to the new emissions dashboards. The interactive dashboards will be publicly available on the Council website to allow emissions data to be accessible and downloadable, and the Council and area-wide progress to be visible at all times.
7. The Annual Report introduces new 'Roadmaps to 2030', which set out key choices the Council can make between now and 2030 to reduce emissions. These are presented in draft and serve to illustrate how individual decisions could shape progress. All technologies included are currently available and emission reductions are based on methodologies used by recognised bodies, such as APSE, or Council data. Some decisions are already in the process of being brought before Cabinet, while others must be further investigated to assess operational and financial suitability.

Options Appraisal

8. Option 1: Cabinet notes the Climate Progress Report, emissions dashboards and agrees the draft Roadmaps for approval within 12 months, in line with the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel resolution of 10 December 2024, to take forward the Council's climate activity.
9. Option 2: Cabinet rejects the Climate Progress Report and the proposals, which will impact the momentum of the Climate Programme and risk the Council not meeting its 2030 carbon neutral target.

Summary of financial implications

10. There will be financial implications to the individual proposals contained within this report and appendix. These will be identified as projects are developed and considered on a case-by-case basis in the decision-making process. Early engagement with the Council's Financial Services will be sought. The Council's 2025/26 Budget Report states: 'The budget continues to protect the staffing resources associated with climate change and ecological emergency activity. In addition, as at the 31 March 2024 £1.239m was available in an earmarked reserve to support project activity.'
11. An Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Budget Working Group in the Autumn of 2024 set out that based on current understanding that £64m may be required to meet the council's net zero targets by 2030 although a proportion of this would be delivered through strategic partnerships and securing external funding. The ongoing challenge to the council will be bridging the gap between the resources needed and the £1.239m available in the earmarked reserve.
12. In addition to the environmental and social impacts of climate change, there is also a risk to BCP Council of significant financial consequences if it fails to meet its declared climate targets. Council has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 as an organisation and lead the area to become net zero carbon ahead of the 2045 UK100 target. Based on forecasts from the London School of Economics the council would have to incur costs of over £3m per annum to purchase the necessary offsetting carbon credits to meet the carbon neutral pledge in 2030. Clearly this cost will act as an incentive to the council to prioritise the activity and investment necessary to meet this priority.'

Summary of legal implications

13. Legal implications in delivery of any projects referenced within this report or appendix will be considered on a case-by-case basis and early engagement with the Council's Legal Team will be sought.

Summary of human resources implications

14. The human resources implications of any projects developed as a result of this report or appendix will be considered on a case-by-case basis when individual projects are assessed for approval.

Summary of sustainability impact

15. To establish impact on sustainability and other Corporate Plan objectives, Decision Impact Assessment ref. 702 has been completed and the report

proposals have achieved a low carbon footprint, as they support the climate agenda.

Summary of public health implications

16. Climate change will result in increasing heatwaves, extreme weather events, floods, disease, and increased cancer risk. The measures proposed to reduce climate change will help to mitigate against these dangers and additional benefits from those actions can also have a direct positive health effect (e.g., increased fitness from walking or cycling and better air quality from reducing car journeys).

Summary of equality implications

17. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed. It concludes that the Annual Report itself has no negative equalities implications but potentially some positive outcomes, for example addressing health inequalities or protecting older people from extreme temperatures. Resulting actions may require individual assessments to be carried out before commencement.

Summary of risk assessment

18. We must further our and public knowledge of Climate Vulnerability and Risk of the possible effects of climate change on our area. Failing to achieve the Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration commitments will contribute to an increasingly hostile global and local environment. Not achieving targets will result in the Council failing to meet its commitments under the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration and therefore not helping global efforts to keep climate warming below 1.5°C to avoid further environmental damage, population displacement, biodiversity loss and risk to life.
19. The Council could also face reputational damage from negative publicity (locally, nationally, and internationally). However, if we act in a timely manner, many of the actions to tackle climate change will contribute to social, economic, and environmental benefits, reducing the likelihood of actual and perceived risks. Risk assessments will be carried out for individual Climate Action projects as required, on a case-by-case basis.

Background papers

BCP Council Emissions Dashboards – these are publicly accessible here: [BCP Emissions Dashboard](https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/emissions-dashboards) and on the Council website at: <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/environment/sustainability-and-carbon-reduction/our-climate-actions-and-achievements-so-far>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Climate Action Annual Report 2023/24

Appendix 2: Progress Update on Interim Climate Action Plan 2023-25