

Report subject	Climate Action Annual Report
Meeting date	4 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents the sixth annual update to Cabinet on progress towards commitments made in the BCP Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration, made on the 16 of July 2019. In the 2024-2025 year, progress against the main commitments is: • Make BCP Council and its operations carbon neutral by 2030 - scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions reduced by 20.9% from the 2019 baseline • Work with the wider community to make the region carbon neutral before 2045 – according to data released in 2025, total area-wide emissions for 2024 had reduced by 17.7% from the 2019 baseline. Overall, both the Council and the wider BCP area have made progress since 2019, supported by clearer roadmaps, better data, strengthened governance and growing collaboration across sectors. Continued acceleration, investment and partnership working will be essential to stay on track for the 2030 and 2045 targets.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: a) Cabinet notes the Climate Progress Report 2024-25
Reason for recommendations	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.

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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. On 16 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

Progress Report 2024-25 Summary

BCP Council emission reduction

2. Since declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019, BCP Council has made measurable progress in cutting carbon emissions from its own operations and across the wider Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area. The 2024–25 Annual Report shows clear, sustained reductions in emissions and a strengthening of the governance, planning and evidence base required to reach the Council's 2030 carbon neutral target and the area-wide 2045 ambition.
3. Since the 2019 baseline year, total Council emissions have reduced by **20.9%**, up from 8.7% in 2023/24, reflecting progress across buildings, transport, streetlighting and the goods and services the Council procures.
4. By 2024/25, organisational emissions had fallen from 49,389 tCO₂e in 2019/20 to 39,070 tCO₂e. The strongest reductions have come from:
 - Gas use in buildings, supported by energy-efficiency improvements.
 - Adjustments in service operations leading to lower fuel consumption in some areas.
5. At the same time, electricity use increased due to the growth of EV charging, heat pumps and new traffic signal infrastructure—necessary changes that support long-term emissions decline as the national grid continues to decarbonise.
6. Scope 3 emissions remain the largest share of the Council's footprint, with leased-out buildings (mainly housing) making up 61% of all emissions. Retrofit

programmes continue to improve energy performance in Council-owned homes, but tenant behaviour and energy supply choices limit the Council's direct influence.

7. To support faster progress, the Council has introduced:
 - New Roadmaps with interim milestones for 2027 and 2029.
 - A dedicated £1 million climate and ecological reserve.
 - A Carbon Neutral Steering Group to coordinate delivery.
 - Improved emissions dashboards and stronger energy management practices.

Area-wide emissions reduction

8. The Council is committed to supporting a carbon-neutral BCP area before 2045. The latest government data (published 2023) shows that area-wide emissions have **reduced by 17.7%** since 2019, compared to last year's reduction of 12% since 2019, demonstrating steady but insufficient progress without further acceleration.
9. The biggest reductions have come from homes, where emissions from gas and electricity use have fallen by 13.7%. Key drivers include:
 - Higher energy-efficiency standards supported by national/local schemes.
 - Rapid decarbonisation of the electricity grid.
 - Increasing adoption of low-carbon heating (e.g., heat pumps).
 - Behaviour change due to climate awareness and higher energy prices.
10. Transport emissions, previously rising, have now stabilised, helped by investment through the Transforming Cities Fund, improvements to walking and cycling networks, and growth in the use of Beryl bikes and e-scooters.
11. The Council has strengthened area-wide planning through the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), published in 2025, which sets out 15 major actions required to reach the 2045 target. These actions require joint delivery by partners across the public, private and community sectors.

Building momentum

12. Across both the Council and the wider area, 2024/25 saw the introduction of key tools and enablers for accelerating progress:
 - Climate Vulnerability Tool to support risk-informed decisions.
 - A new solar framework and identification of 25 priority sites.
 - Commissioning of a heat network and geothermal study.
 - Expansion of Carbon Literacy training across officers, councillors and local businesses.
 - The launch of the Local Area Energy Plan
 - More transparent publishing of emissions data.
13. Latest data shows a 12% reduction since 2019, improving on the previous year's 8.3% reduction.

14. As before, whilst the trend is in the right direction, the pace needs to be accelerated if the Council and wider area are going to meet their ambitions.
15. The main gains area-wide have been a 13.7% drop in emissions from gas and electricity use in homes. This is 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), 240

Options Appraisal

16. Option 1: Cabinet notes the Climate Progress Report.
17. Option 2: Cabinet rejects the Climate Progress Report which will impact the momentum of the Climate Programme and risk the Council not meeting its 2030 carbon neutral target.

Summary of financial implications

18. 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 2025 £962,000 was available in an earmarked reserve to support project activity.'
19. 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.
20. 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.'
21. It is worth noting that BCP Council's Local Area Energy Plan, when analysing the cost of a 'do nothing' approach compared to a balanced approach to carbon emission reductions, forecast that doing nothing would cost £5.3bn compared to £5.8bn of reasonable efforts to reduce emissions. This illustrates that not taking action to proactively reduce energy use or generate energy sustainably also incurs cost.

Summary of legal implications

22. 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

23. 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

24. [The Council has signed up to the climate change emergency and as such it is critical that decision makers consider the sustainability impact of their decision. Overtyping this section with a summary of the sustainability impact of the decision being sought.]

Summary of public health implications

25. 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

26. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed. It concludes that the Annual Report itself has no negative equality 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

27. 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.
28. 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 and on the Council website at:

<https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/environment/sustainability-and-carbon-reduction/our-climate-actions-and-achievements-so-far>

[BCP Council Local Area Energy Plan](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Climate Action Annual Report 2023/24

