



Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Corporate Carbon Descent Plan: Year 1 Progress Report

22 September 2022



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Progress Report

The Corporate Carbon Descent Plan (CCDP) is a crucial strategic policy outlining the Council's pathway to achieving its 2030 net zero target for both its operations and services. This update report highlights progress by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on delivering against its CCDP Year 1 Action Plan.

This progress report covers the period 01/04/2021 – 31/03/2022.

Rag Rating

Limited Progress	Partial Progress	Good Progress

1. Corporate Governance

Ref:	Activity Description	Outline	Year 1 Progress Update
1.1	Carbon Footprint & Emissions Trajectory Updates	<p>Update the carbon footprint and trajectory pathway.</p> <p>Annual review of carbon emissions – inhouse requiring all departments to collect and collate all relevant information and record in a relevant format.</p>	<p>The greenhouse gas report has been updated up to and including 2021/22.</p> <p>An understanding of the emissions pathway is critical to enable progress to be monitored and establish if the Council is on track in meeting its target.</p>

		Detailed analysis every three years to monitor reduction pathway and reassess trajectory.	
1.2	Develop a climate change impact assessment toolkit. Every project to include low carbon opportunities and solutions.	<p>Develop a guide and reporting template to enable the potential environmental effects, climate change impacts of projects/options to be understood and demonstrates how project proposal minimises or mitigates climate change impacts and maximises any potential environmental opportunities.</p> <p>All projects will require an assessment and includes all Cabinet/committee reports, inc. portfolio holder decision making.</p> <p>New toolkit will also update the 'cross cutting' issues.</p>	A climate change impact assessment tool has been developed which included input from and testing by report writers. A climate impact assessment will need to be completed for each project, procurement, commissioning, and service to understand how these align with the Council's carbon reduction targets and aid in informed decision making.
1.3	Communications plan to promote the Council's carbon reduction work to the wider public & organisations	Develop communications strategy including webpages. Link communications activity to citizen engagement. Review communications and webpages quarterly	A brand-new website to inform and promote climate action within the council and across the borough has been created. The 'TWBC climate action' website, which can be accessed via the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council home page, hosts relevant climate emergency information, with the aim to work with all our communities to inspire,

			<p>enable and support sustainable lifestyle changes and carbon reduction. The website also includes the 'Talk point' platform to progress interaction and consultations with our communities. The website has been designed to be easily expanded and added to enable additional pages and information to be developed. Various pages including a community page are currently being developed.</p> <p>With regards to community interaction a community 'green champion' features quarterly in Local to inspire and showcase individuals/communities that are taking action to reduce their carbon footprint. Similarly, carbon reduction articles are included in each Local magazine. Sustainability 'Stand – Ups', with the aim to enable community groups to get together and network with each other, to share good practices across the Borough, is being reviewed as to best options and will be linked to the development of the Borough strategy.</p> <p>Climate events have been organised to take place during 'The Great Big Green Week'. Which is the UK's celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature and this year will take place between 24th September and 2 October. Grant funding of £550 was awarded by the Great Big Green Week organisers to support our Climate talks – Women in Sustainability. The planned events are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Engagement- 'Eco' Art competition • Women in Sustainability – panel event (29th September) • SME – low carbon business networking event (30th September)
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1.4	Adopt the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission Strategy (ELES)	Submit a report to cabinet recommending the adoption of the ELES.	<p>Local authorities have significant influence in driving action across their areas. Developing a 'Borough wide Climate Emergency Strategy', will be essential to support carbon reduction across our wider area and will be a key activity as part of the year 2 action plan. This will include recommendations for incorporating/endorsing the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission Strategy.</p> <p>An initial draft plan is currently being developed and will be progressed throughout 2022/23. Extensive consultation with our communities, residents and businesses will help to inform the developing Borough strategy.</p>
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2.TWBC Property

Ref:	Activity Description	Outline	Year 1 Progress Update
2.1	Determine the estates future by encourage the Council to undertake a review of its property portfolio and carry out an audit to assess the estate and Council assets with regards to opportunities for energy efficiency and renewable generation e.g., solar PV.	<p>Identify key properties in terms of carbon reduction opportunities.</p> <p>Develop an effective programme of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - retrofit to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and - renewable energy opportunities <p>Focus on: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fabric of the building - LED lighting - Rooftop solar 	<p>Property services were successful in obtaining grant funding from the 'Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme', (PSDS).</p> <p>Phase two, 'Low Carbon Skills Fund', £70K was awarded for costs associated with developing decarbonisation plans for "top 10 buildings". This funding was only provided in December 2021 but with the expected deadline of completion by March 2022. The assessments identify where heat sources can be replaced moving away from gas to air source heat pumps etc. Including the use of renewable technologies taking a 'whole house' approach ensuring other energy efficiency measures are incorporated where possible.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Street lighting Low carbon heating solutions 	<p>Phase three scheme just under £1.5m was awarded for heat decarbonisation works to the North Farm depot and The Weald sports centre.</p> <p>Property has also applied for capital funding for the non - grant funded elements of the works. Both projects have a completion date end March 2023.</p> <p>The scheme will grant money at a maximum rate of £325 per tonne of CO2 saved, the exact amount received will depend on the designed carbon saved. This is currently in design, with proposed work commencing in the 2022 -2023 financial year with a completion deadline of end of March 2023.</p> <p>In terms of the top 10 buildings for carbon emissions North Farm depot accounts for 3% and The Weald 12% respectively for overall building emissions. Indicative calculations on the amount of carbon that will be saved yearly from the current annual emissions of 3473.4 tCO2e dropping to 3239 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.</p> <p>Property also applied for funding via the PSDS Phase 3 scheme but where unsuccessful for the Tunbridge Wells sports centre, due to over subscription of this scheme.</p> <p>This application had the potential to reduce carbon emissions dramatically, as the Tunbridge Wells sports centre is one of the council's biggest carbon emitters. Unfortunately, the government funded scheme is focused mainly on 'one year' projects, with only a very limited number being available to accommodate multi -year project which this sports centre would need for completion. Property is hopeful that new schemes are more generous going forward as</p>
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			feedback has been provided to Salix regarding the importance of decarbonising these larger sites over a longer timeframe.
2.2	Review opportunities for the implementation of ISO 50001: Energy Management Systems	Assess options and possible benefits to implement the ISO50001: Energy Management Systems standard over the next 2 years covering all significant energy uses at the Council. Assess active energy management – monitoring and targeting opportunities across the Council estate.	No action at present, for a future review to assess necessity. However, ensuring we accurately record and monitor our energy use is vital. Appropriate energy management will be included as part of improved data gathering and reporting

3. Procurement

Ref:	Activity Description	Outline	Year 1 Progress Update
3.1	Develop and adopt a suitable Sustainable Procurement Policy All contracts to be carbon neutral by 2030	Identify opportunities to improve the Council's policy to ensure that all new contracts include ambitious sustainability commitments and drive down carbon emissions in the supply chain. Write to all our existing partners and suppliers to make them aware of our	A procurement policy which will include sustainability targets supporting the aims of being carbon neutral has been developed and will be taken to Cabinet by the procurement team as part of updates to numerous other procurement guides. Anticipated Dec22/Jan23.

		<p>commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030. Support our partners and suppliers to provide data to enable us to continue to measure our footprint.</p>	
3.2	<p>Procure 'green' energy for the estate. Develop a procurement strategy for renewable electricity by seeking a step change from green energy to the green basket approach leading to longer term PPA opportunities.</p>	<p>In the interim continue to procure green energy. Review opportunities for a 'green basket' of energy purchase leading to eventual PPA's in 3 years' time. To understand the costs/implications for the council Energy – income and opportunities to add additionality.</p>	<p>100% energy supported by REGO backed certificates, continues to be procured. With REGO certificates whilst linked to renewable generation, it is not traceable to a specific source. Energy procurement with REGO backed certificates continues.</p> <p>Opportunities to ensure the electricity supplied comes from a 'known' renewable sources is being reviewed. This next step would be to consider a 'green basket approach' by procuring a set amount of green electricity tied back to an existing renewable energy generation. Currently, costs implications for a green basket approach in comparison with REGO backed certificates is being explored. Green basket approach provides additional benefits in terms of transparency and traceability as to a known existing renewable source.</p> <p>In terms of 'Power Purchase Agreements', PPA's, this requires the authority to sign up for long term contract normally 10yrs + as a minimum and supports 'additionality', which basically provides funding for the development of a new renewable generation source. Whilst we are in a state of flux with works to make our buildings more efficient, it is much more difficult to anticipate future energy demands and to 'lock' a set amount of electricity purchase into a long-term contract, could be problematic. In addition, our electrical energy needs are not sufficient and requires a partnership approach with other energy users to procure a joint PPA.</p>

			<p>Continuing with REGO certificates is a good option, whilst exploring the 'green basket' approach.</p> <p>PPA's kept under ongoing review for any possible opportunities that may arise and will be reported on separately.</p>
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4. Offsetting

Ref:	Activity Description	Outline	Year 1 Progress Update
4.1	Develop a suitable and effective offsetting strategy	<p>Define the principles and priorities for the use of offsetting to achieve the carbon neutral target.</p> <p>Identify possible carbon sequestration opportunities from Council land and Borough wide.</p> <p>Protect and enhance the Councils natural assets, biodiversity and ecosystems.</p>	<p>Whilst reducing emissions remains the priority, the ability to achieve Net Zero by 2030 will be extremely difficult without some offsetting due to the scale of technology and investment required.</p> <p>'Traditional' offsetting can be problematic, lack clarity and standards. This is also an area under development both at a national and international level. It is anticipated that a "high integrity" carbon offset market will in due course be available. Future average anticipated offsetting costs are included in modelling assessments and need to be considered as part of any project development and to avoid locking the Council into long term carbon emissions. (Carbon costs implications forms part of developing the carbon impact assessment toolkit further). Offsetting impacts and opportunities to be considered in years 3-5.</p> <p>In the interim: -</p> <p>Review opportunities for local offsetting, including enhancement to borough wide natural habitats to support carbon sequestration, including regenerating and improving all types of existing habitats.</p>

			<p>Opportunities for new sites, green corridors, green infrastructure and street trees.</p> <p>Review opportunities to draw in private investment in carbon -saving projects locally, including local renewable energy generation and how to better quantify and report the associated carbon impacts in a robust and consistent manner</p>
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5. Communications

Ref:	Activity Description	Outline	Year 1 Progress Update
5.1	Carbon literacy training for all staff and members; to include energy reduction activities.	<p>Develop a staff campaign to raise awareness of progress to reduce the council's footprint and the role staff and members can play in reducing energy consumption. As a minimum to include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Induction training - Workshops - Develop literature inc. digital guidance. - Promote green champions. 	<p>Behaviour change' and training for staff has been progressed; Informative intranet page developed including a link to an e-learning platform.</p> <p>Induction training for all new starters.</p> <p>A monthly staff green champion is celebrated in staff communications, as well as a monthly staff newsletter.</p> <p>A staff green ambassador's group has been set up which focuses on behaviour change across the organisation by enabling good practice and information to be disseminated to their service areas.</p> <p>Carbon literacy training provided by the Centre for Alternative Technology has also been delivered, with 17 staff (6% of all staff), attending. With the aim to help drive the culture change needed to deliver on the climate goals by educating, informing and empowering people. Training will be an ongoing action, with an additional 2 staff</p>

			<p>being able to attend a free carbon literacy course by an alternative provider.</p> <p>A Member's climate emergency information pack has been developed and distributed. Several Member information sessions have been held during the past 18 months. Ongoing updates and information sessions will continue. Specific carbon literacy training for Members is kept under review.</p>
5.2	Continue to lobby central government to provide additional resources and to grant the necessary freedoms to enable the Council to act on the climate emergency.	<p>Deliver on the Councils commitment to engage with their communities through citizen's assembly.</p> <p>Develop a Borough wide Carbon Reduction Plan to complement the Councils other plans such as Local Plan, Transport Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan and recognising the cross overs and co-benefits.</p>	<p>It is recognised that to support local government in providing leadership in their areas to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and make its own operations and services carbon neutral requires support and fundamental action from central government. This includes the funding structure for local government and to drive the wider system changes required, that is beyond local government control. On both these issues the Council has lobbied central government for change.</p>

6. Transport & Fleet Emissions

Ref:	Activity Description	Outline	Year 1 Progress Update
6.1	Only ultra- low emission vehicles to be leased or purchased	<p>Ensure all departments aware of this requirement.</p> <p>Review EV charging opportunities on the</p>	<p>Ongoing, as vehicles are due for replacement EV opportunities are explored. The council owned fleet is very small with 8 owned vehicles,</p>

		Council estate and implement suitable and effective charging.	two of which are EV's and 2 hybrids. The aim is to upgrade 1 or 2 vehicles to fully electric in due course.
6.2	Reduce supplier/service providers transport emissions including use of low emission vehicles	Engage with suppliers on fleet mileage and encourage support for mileage and emission reduction and support route optimisation. All new contracts to incorporate the use of ultra-low emission vehicles and demonstrate appropriate fleet mileage optimisation.	Ongoing as part of the contract discussions.
6.3	Review opportunities to reduce staff business mileage and enable sustainable travel for work journeys. Update the Council's Travel Plan	Staff business mileage to be reviewed and identify opportunities for emission reduction and route optimisation. Identify opportunities to increase the use of bikes, public transport and walking for work journeys. Recognise the cross-over between working from home, improved IT technology to reduce travel to meetings and changes to working patterns due to Covid-19.	<p>With Covid-19, staff travel patterns have changed significantly, with staff post Covid-19 opting for hybrid working. Equally, with the future of the Town Hall and the workspace review, the Council Staff Travel Plan has been reviewed but not yet updated.</p> <p>Service managers have met to consider business mileage and ensuring optimised journey planning, with ad hoc ongoing reminders.</p> <p>However, further action is required in terms of ongoing behaviour change and keeping commuter journeys and business travel at the forefront of discussions and will form part of the staff ambassador's interaction and feedback to their departments.</p>