

Environment Scrutiny Committee	
Report Title:	GLOUCESTERSHIRE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY, PROGRESS REPORT
Meeting Date:	29 November 2021
Chair:	Cllr Dominic Morris
Presenting Officers:	Peter Wiggins, Outcome Manager – Sustainability; Economy, Environment & Infrastructure Afriqnmun Lovejoy, Strategic Climate Change Coordinator; hosted by Gloucester City Council for Leadership Gloucestershire
Purpose of Report:	To report on whether Gloucestershire is on track to meet its commitments and if the plans are ambitious enough to address the crisis at hand.
Planned Dates	13 December 2021, Cabinet – ‘ <i>Climate Change Strategy annual report and action plan, 2022 – 2027/28</i> ’; for approval.
Background documents:	Cabinet (December 2020), Item 8: 'Leading the response to the Climate Emergency: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy Annual Report & action plan, 2021/02 – 2026/27' , Gloucestershire County Council
Annexes	Annex 1 : Gloucestershire County Council Emissions Performance, to 2020/21. Annex 2 : Gloucestershire emissions performance, to 2019. Annex 3 : Actions Progress 2020/21 and 2021/22 to date.
Recommendations	To note the report, for discussion at the meeting.

Background

1. Cabinet approved the council's current Climate Change Strategy and action plan in December 2019. In December 2020, Cabinet approved the first annual progress report and 5-year action plan. The strategy's Vision is that:
By 2045¹ we will create a carbon neutral county that provides quality of life now and for future generations, having improved the quality of our natural environment. By 2030 we will have reduced our carbon emissions by 80%.
2. Key targets include:
 - **Reduce our carbon emissions** (buildings, street lighting, fleet, business travel) **by 80% by 2030, aiming for 100% ('Net Zero') by 2030** through carbon offsetting. This applies to the Council as an organisation.
 - **Gloucestershire to be Net Zero by 2045, with a reduction in carbon emissions by 80% by 2030** on 2005. This applies to the whole county.
3. In March 2020 the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic took hold in England. In response, councils had to stop and wind down service delivery in non-critical areas. This has slowed progress in implementing the action plan.
4. The UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) 26, hosted by the UK in November this year, was postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic.
5. At its meeting on 22 December 2021, Cabinet will consider the second annual report and a refreshed action plan for 2022/3 to 2027/8. This will consider feedback from this meeting of Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Is Gloucestershire on track to meet its commitments?

6. This question is as much for the county council, as a community leader and business, to answer as it is for our partner organisations in Leadership Gloucestershire. The Gloucestershire Climate Change Coordinator will be attending this meeting to review how we are collectively performing. Significant progress in delivering the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan is detailed in Annex 1 however a few key successes are summarised below:
7. Council emissions
 - Good progress continues in reducing carbon emissions under the Council's direct control, as shown in [Annex 2](#). Gross emissions to 2020/21 fell by 77% on the 2006/07 baseline and look set to reach Net Zero ahead of target. Investment in renewable generation has enabled the council to be a net generator of electricity.
8. School buildings
 - We are investing £1 million to make new school buildings carbon neutral
9. Tree planting
 - We are on target to meet commitments under the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission grants to plant over 41,000 trees this season. Our Highways team has exceeded its target for replacing ash dieback on a 2 for 1 basis.
10. Staff recruitment
 - We have appointed a Climate Change & Air Quality Officer and two Sustainability & Engagement Officers (1.5FTE) for local engagement on climate change and waste management.

¹ This was originally 2050 but Cabinet agreed to bring this forward to 2045 on joining the UK:100 local authorities initiative.

- Tree Project Officer recruitment is underway, to be appointed before the end of this month on an initial 2-year fixed term. This work is being taken forward by the team in the meantime.
- Together these appointments have more than doubled the Council's capacity to develop, manage, support and track initiatives under the Strategy, and our ability to effect wider change.

11. UK emissions² are published by government annually, 2 years in arrears. Emissions for Gloucestershire 2005-2019 are illustrated in [Annex 3](#). Total emissions have reduced in line with both England and the South West, as have per capita (per resident) emissions and emissions by sector, suggesting reductions continue to be largely due to national and/or international factors.

Are the plans ambitious enough to address the crisis at hand?

12. It can be seen from the emissions graphs that where the Council has direct control, progress is ahead or on target. However, 'Local authorities are directly responsible for between 2 - 5% of their area's emissions but have direct powers or influence over more than 30%.' As such, the Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy target of being Net Zero by 2050 with an 80% reduction by 2030 remains extremely challenging to achieve. Success will be dependent on effective partnership working, prioritisation, support from government and a step change in the scale of capacity and resources to deliver.
13. To date this challenge has been recognised with the appointment of the Countywide Climate Coordinator and the first meeting of the Gloucestershire Climate Leadership group which agreed the need for strategic coordination across an initial set of priority themes. As the local transport authority and highway authority for Gloucestershire the County Council will lead on bringing together relevant partners in the sector to discuss Transport decarbonisation early in 2022.
14. A recent public survey³ by the Local Government Association (LGA) found 40 per cent of residents trusted their council most to address the climate emergency, followed by the Government (28 per cent) and world leaders (15 per cent).
15. However, local authorities do not have the resources and powers to deliver this change, requiring action by the wider Gloucestershire community and by government to make the required changes and resources available. The Council continues to seek to secure from government more powers and resources for councils to take action on climate change and nature restoration, and to build back better from Covid-19.

Proposed Priority Actions

16. The Annual Report & Action Plan to December's Cabinet meeting will propose a refreshed action plan to 2027/28 addressing a range of issues, including:

(1) Putting Climate Change at the heart of decision making

- Developing carbon emission reduction pathways for all the main sectors to reach Net Zero by 2045

² UK "territorial" emissions, meaning emissions that occur within the UK's borders, allocated on an "end user" basis according to the point of energy consumption (or point of emission if not energy-related). Except for the energy industry, emissions from the production of goods are assigned to where the production takes place. Emissions from the production of goods which are exported will be included, and emissions from the production of goods which are imported are excluded.

³ [The LGA polled 1,000 people as part of its latest Residents Satisfaction Polling](#). It asked: Thinking specifically about the environment, who do you trust most to take action on climate change, such as on transport, housing and education, and make a difference in your local area? 403 (40 per cent) said their local council, 275 (28 per cent) said the Government, 151 (15 per cent) said world leaders, 154 (15 per cent) said none of above, 17 (2 per cent) said don't know.

- Transport decarbonisation
- Developing a Council-wide adaptation plan, linked to the Council's Business Continuity Management process
- Developing and supporting the Youth Climate Panel

(2) Buildings – the Council, residents, businesses and partners

- Incorporating appropriate carbon reduction and renewable energy generation measures into new and existing developments

(3) Transport – carbon busting options for all

- Rolling out electric vehicle (EV) onstreet charging infrastructure
- Switching the Council's fleet over to ultralow emission alternatives
- Creating high quality public transport and cycle networks

(4) Power – helping everyone convert to green power

- Exploring scope for decarbonising heating including district heating opportunities

(5) Waste – reducing and dealing with

- Ongoing waste reduction campaigns

(6) Influencing others – getting everyone to do their bit

- Developing an awards scheme

(7) Land use

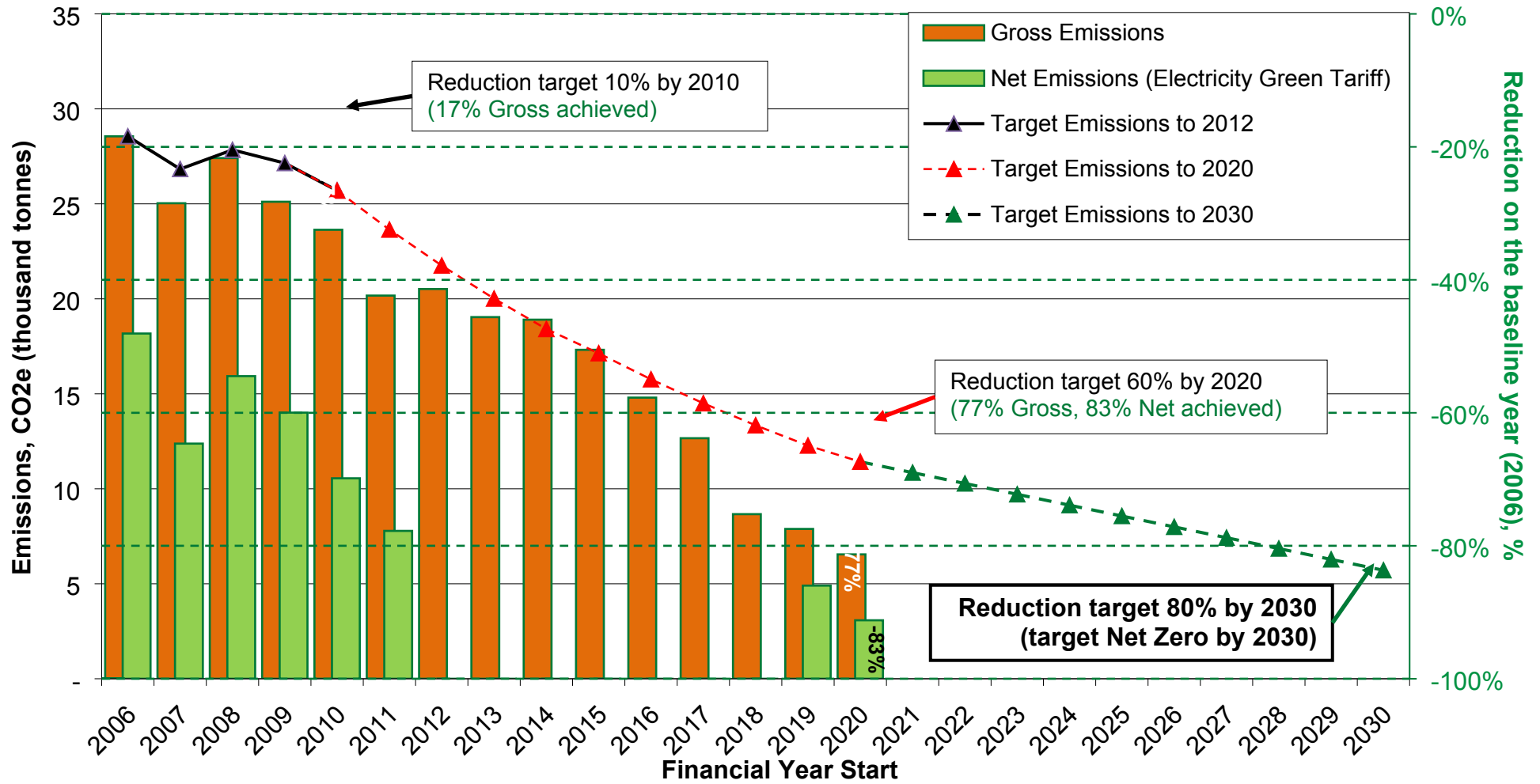
- Putting strategic housing allocations in sustainable locations
- Delivering flood risk management schemes
- Million Trees Challenge
- Development of a Gloucestershire carbon offsetting scheme

(8) Campaigning

- Develop and implement with partners to encourage low carbon behaviours

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† Emissions Scope: GCC premises; Street Lighting, Signs, Signals, Bollards; Fleet; Staff & Member Business Travel

Figure 1 shows the overall emissions for Gloucestershire as a whole and for each of the districts, all of which follow a similar trajectory. Cotswold having the highest emissions is likely to be a combination of its rurality, the availability of alternative transport modes and the proportion of older, solid-walled housing. Conversely Cheltenham having the lowest emissions is likely to be a combination of it being urban and so more compact, the associated availability of alternative transport modes, and having less solid-walled housing.

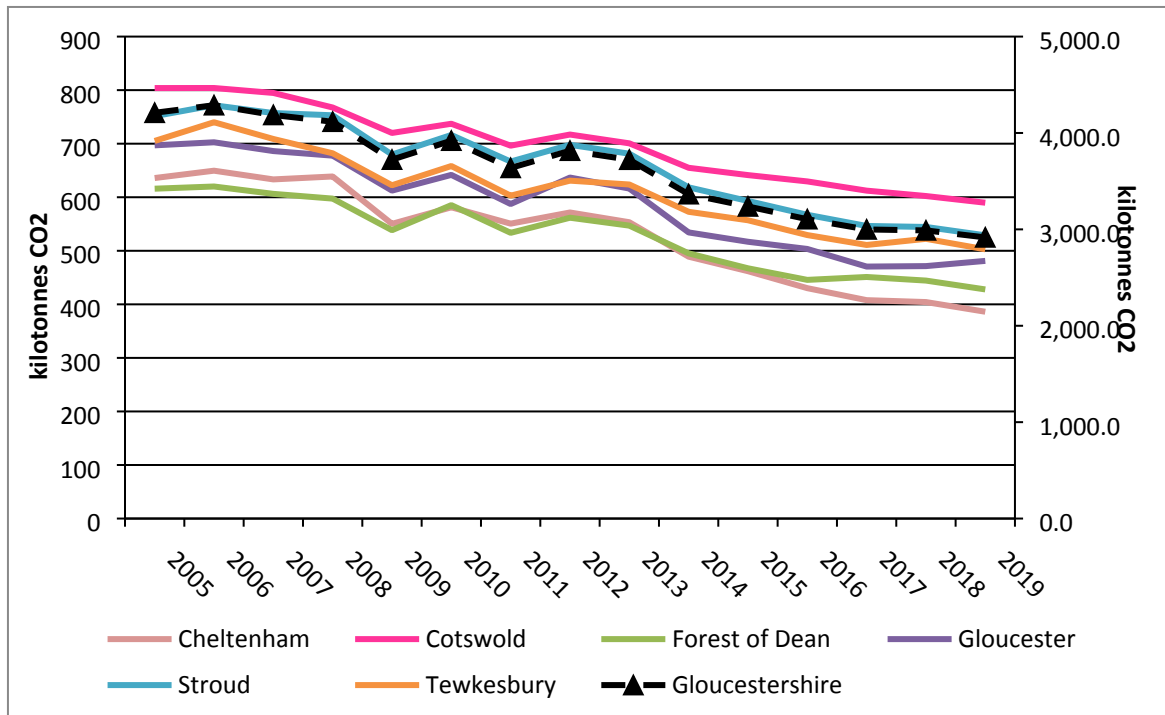


Figure 1: Total emissions, Gloucestershire and districts

Figure 2 compares Gloucestershire’s overall emissions with the South West, both showing a similar trajectory suggesting that reduction is a result of national/ international factors.

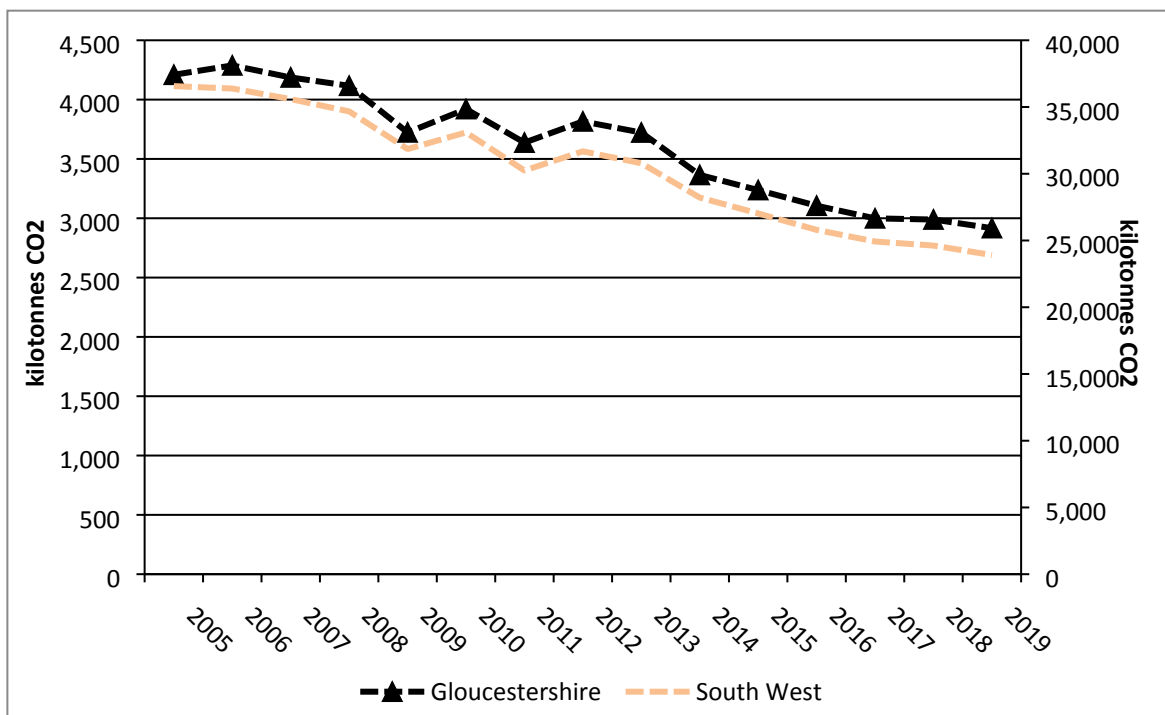


Figure 2: Total emissions, Gloucestershire and the South West

Figure 3 compares Gloucestershire’s overall emissions with England, again both showing a similar trajectory suggesting that reduction is a result of national/ international factors.

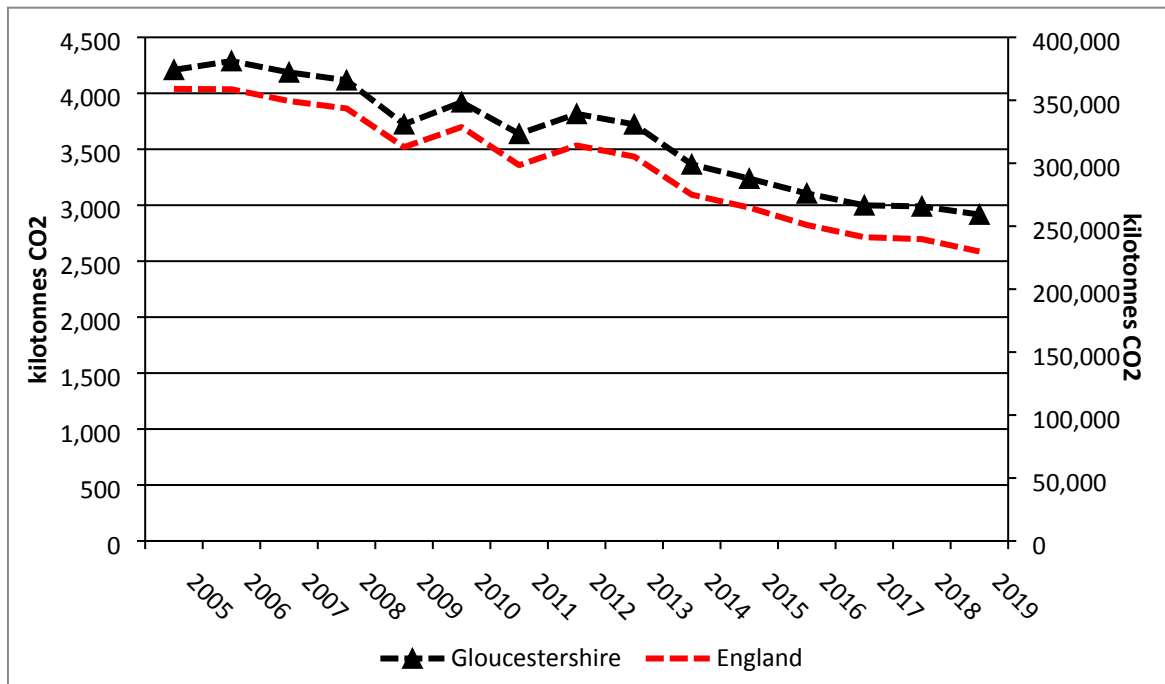


Figure 3: Total emissions, Gloucestershire and England

Figure 4 compares Gloucestershire’s per capita (resident) emissions with each of the districts, the South West and England. These again all show a similar trajectory, suggesting that reduction is a result of national/ international factors. Cotswold having the highest and Cheltenham the lowest per capita emissions will likely be for the same reasons as for Figure 1, together with Cheltenham having a higher population than Cotswold (estimated 2019 population 116,300 and 89,900 respectively). Gloucestershire 2019 per capita emissions fell by 2.1% on 2018 (from 4.7 to 4.6 kgCO₂ per capita); this is as a result of a 0.6% increase in estimated population combined with the 2.4% decrease in total emissions.

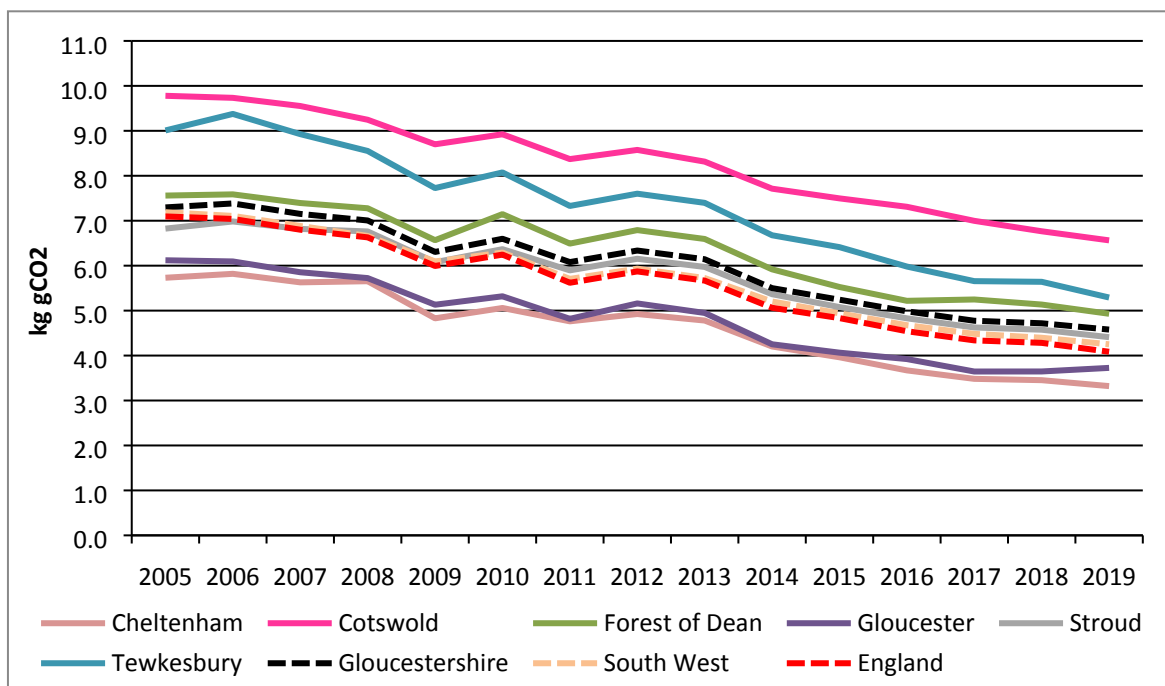


Figure 4: Per capita emissions for Gloucestershire, districts, South West and England

Key: **Green** complete; **Amber** in progress; **Red** not yet underway

1. Putting Climate Change at the heart of decision making

Seek to agree with Leadership Gloucestershire and other partners how we will work together to bring about a co-ordinated approach and action plan in response to the climate emergency.

Countywide Climate Change Coordinator in post, hosted by Gloucester City. Climate Leadership Group established to coordinate the countywide approach across all partners. First meeting Nov 2021, partner organisations agreed to lead on themes.

Establish a £1m 'Action Fund', in 2020/21 to develop and incentivise the adoption of low carbon initiatives and improved resilience to climate change.

£1 million committed.

£1m energy efficiency invest to save fund ('Salix Fund') extend to all Gloucestershire public sector organisations to reduce their corporate carbon footprints, committing at least £250k.

Complete, although projects have yet to come forward for funding.

Gloucestershire Youth Climate Panel, ongoing commitment to work with to develop a plan to challenge and influence actions taken by individuals, communities, organisations and business.

The Gloucestershire Youth Climate Panel is currently being revived in the wake of the disruption experienced with the Pandemic. A coordinator and new panel members are being recruited.

Recruit staff to develop/ monitor a five-year rolling action plan to ensure ongoing delivery of the Strategy.

Climate Change & Air Quality Officer and 2 Sustainability & Engagement Officers (1.5 FTE) in post. Tree Project Officer recruitment in progress, expect to appoint in December.

Stress test public sector assets and services against climate change

Business Continuity Management plans are being updated; annual testing and evaluation to start Summer 2022, inc climate change scenarios. Council adaptation action plan to be developed in 2022/23.

Establish an Expert Advisory Panel and Climate Emergency Response Group

Governance arrangements and countywide stakeholder engagement now lies with the Climate Leadership Group; the Council will continue to support and seek agreement to address this.

Establish baseline carbon emissions for Gloucestershire

Transport – work is underway to develop the baseline and outline potential to deliver, by summer 2022; UK:100 bid submitted for engagement resource to support this in 2022. The Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Board is also looking into transport carbon reduction pathways.

Implement climate change impact assessments into the Council's decision-making process

Cabinet reports are required to set out climate change implications of the proposed decision; the Sustainability Team advises authors on areas to consider. The Strategic risk register includes climate change, with performance reported quarterly to the Corporate Leadership Team.

2. Buildings – the Council, residents, businesses and partners

Work with our partners to ensure that all new public buildings and residential and commercial developments support the move to zero carbon and improve resilience

The Council aims to reduce its carbon footprint when commissioning new buildings; 2 examples:

- Quayside, foundations from the old building were reused, meaning less construction waste, quarrying and lorry trips. Environmental features include solar panels and electric vehicle (EV) charging points.
- Shire Hall solar panels and highly insulated cladding significantly reduce its carbon footprint and heating bills, meaning it is self-sufficient for electricity over the summer months.

Work with our partners to aim for all new development sites to deliver high quality green infrastructure in line with the 'Building with Nature' (BWN) standards, developed by Glos Wildlife Trust.

'Manual for Gloucestershire Streets' updated in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan; and developed wildflower meadow specification and maintenance schedule for some of the new highway schemes. Action plan to incorporate BWN, 2022/23

Look to be an early adopter of innovative commercial energy recovery technology

Work to secure this innovative approach had to be put on hold and will be revisited in 2022.

Key: **Green** complete; **Amber** in progress; **Red** not yet underway

3. Transport – carbon busting options for all

Review the **Local Transport Plan (LTP)** in view of the climate change emergency and consult on the revised LTP in January 2020. This will include policies for all transport modes.

Refreshed LTP adopted with a target of zero per capita transport carbon emissions by 2045.

Tender a contract to install over 200 new electric vehicle charging points by 2023, as part of a county-wide **Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy**.

Contract to install 1,000 onstreet charge points expected to be awarded Dec 2021. Bid planned to government for funding towards eligible installations. Phase 1, Gloucester and Cheltenham residential areas with little or no off-street parking, starts April 2022. We continue to work with districts to coordinate our overall approach, with contract prices available to all public sector organisations in Gloucestershire.

Identify ways to reduce carbon emissions in our **highways investment**

- **M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme** – includes package of measures to deliver biodiversity net gain, improve air quality and safety, and meet climate change requirements, applying a carbon reduction hierarchy of avoid/prevent, reduce and remediate. **Arle Court Transport Hub** planning application underway. This will provide access to a wide range of sustainable transport options including over 100 EV charging spaces.
- **Cycling** – £3m GCC funding secured and phase 1 of the B4063 Gloucester to Cheltenham Cycle Route is under construction; A key element of our £12.8m Levelling Up funding is to extend this through Gloucester city centre to the Docks and build segregated cycling provision within the Llanthony Road Gloucester SW Bypass scheme.
- **Thinktravel officers leading on School Streets pilots and engaging on all new travel plans.** Using DfT ‘Modeshift Stars’ to develop school travel plans with relevant targets.
- **Cycling infrastructure** – £230k secured from DfT Local Authority Capacity Fund to develop and implement Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans including business engagement and public engagement platform. **A419 Highway Improvements, Stroud to M5 J13**, with improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists. **West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme** – includes walking and cycling improvements from Arle Court to Benhall Roundabouts; and linking the A40 and Cheltenham Station.

Agree targets and funding for cleaner **public and school transport services**

Public transport strategy – Bus use has fallen by 30% during Covid so we have published a Bus Service Improvement Plan and are developing an Enhanced Partnership Agreement with bus operators. Bid submitted to DfT to fund a 3-year programme to increase patronage by 40% above 2021 levels by 2025.

Expand **Green Staff Travel Plan** and develop **Clean Fleet Replacement Plan**

Green Staff Travel Plan – Thinktravel leading on the walking and cycling aspects; Working with Liftshare on baseline carbon emissions from commuting including plans to analyse travel patterns as staff transition back to offices. Two new staff e-bikes now available.

Clean Fleet Replacement Plan – 2 EV pilots held for frontline services; EV being procured for first; second pilot is ongoing. A corporate fleet review is underway, due to conclude in spring 2022.

4. Power – helping everyone convert to green power

Buy only 100 per cent renewable electricity for our buildings, street lighting and council schools

Cabinet approval being sought to procure new energy consumption and selling contracts (Dec 2021), which includes for 100% renewable energy. Existing contract runs to Sep 2022.

Identify the potential for **renewable energy generation** on public sector land in Glos and set 2025 target

A bid to government’s Low Carbon Skills Fund was unsuccessful, which included to assess sites for renewable energy generation opportunities. The Council has since funded the assessment of 12 council buildings and communal utility blocks across 4 Gypsy & Traveller sites for heat decarbonisation measures, to develop bids in 2022/23, when new funding is expected to be announced.

Key: **Green** complete; **Amber** in progress; **Red** not yet underway

4. Power – helping everyone convert to green power (continued)

Investigate the feasibility of **District Heating Networks**, (Gloucestershire Royal Hospital; The Docks; Javelin Park), to deliver at least one by 2025

The bid to government's Heat Network Delivery Unit had to be postponed due to the pandemic, which will be revisited in 2022/23, when new funding is expected to be announced.

5. Waste – reducing and dealing with

Generate electricity from the Javelin Park Energy from Waste facility to power around 25,000 homes a year.

The facility continues to generate 50% renewable electricity, meaning the council continues to be a net generator of renewable energy. For Council emissions reporting 2021/22 it is intended to include carbon emissions from the processing of Glos residual household waste arisings (Council 'Scope 3' emissions).

Joint Waste Partnership ongoing campaigns and initiatives

Quarterly campaigns, with Christmas, repair and recycle campaigns underway. Real Nappies Project visits and packs distributed. Community Composting talks and volunteers trained.

6. Influencing others – getting everyone to do their bit

Libraries Green Zones

Action Fund for new stock focused on climate change and sustainability, and to run green events inc drop-in Q&A sessions during COP26.. Staff Green Champions network promoting sustainable activities and events, inc investigating ways to make corporate activities more sustainable.

7. Land use

Launch the **Million Trees Challenge**, working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, The Woodland Trust, public and private landowners to plant a million additional trees across the county by 2030.

Grants secured from the Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Fund £300k and Forestry Commission Treescape £282k in addition to funding in the Council's Action Fund for tree planting, maintenance, identifying land and enabling local projects by partners. Funding secured for Tree Project Officer post and recruitment underway.

Look into developing a Gloucestershire carbon offsetting scheme

Glos Nature & Climate Fund body established to direct funds from developers for Biodiversity Net Gain and donors wanting to offset their carbon emissions in the county, enabling nature recovery through carbon sequestration. Project Manager appointed. Biodiversity Off-site Scheme being developed first in line with the new Environment Act, delivering schemes by March 2023, with the carbon offsetting scheme close to being developed by then. £100k bid to Environment Agency planned for early 2022.

8. Campaigning

Launch a targeted communications (culture change) campaign

Greener Gloucestershire launched in conjunction with public sector partners in Sep 2021 in the run up to COP26. Across Facebook and Twitter, the 62 social media posts reached 1.2 million unique individuals, with 306 likes, 141 shares/retweets and 570 clicks to further information and 1,399 newsletter subscribers. The 'Greener Christmas' waste campaign is running under this umbrella to 9th January.

Launch an awards programme for projects tackling climate change

The Council is looking into planning an awards ceremony in Autumn/ Winter 2022, with the possibility of an accreditation or badging scheme for local businesses.