



REPORT TITLE: GLOUCESTERSHIRE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 3RD ANNUAL REPORT & 5 YEAR ACTION PLAN 2023/24 – 2027/28

Cabinet Date	25 January 2023
Cabinet Member	Cllr David Gray, Environment and Planning
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	To provide an annual update of progress with the Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy and to seek approval of the action plan 2023-2028.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Notes the overall emissions for the County Council and for Gloucestershire outlined in this report and in Annex 1;2. Notes the progress and planned key actions outlined in this report and in Annex 1; and3. Approves the outline five-year Action Plan (Annex 1, Appendix 2), to be reported to Leadership Gloucestershire's Climate Leadership Group.
Reasons for Recommendations	When Cabinet endorsed the Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy in 2019 it agreed that an outline 5-year action plan be developed annually for Cabinet approval, approval and developed into a detailed plan in agreement with Climate Leadership Gloucestershire for the following year.
Resource Implications	<p>The resourcing of actions outlined in this report will be met in the near term from a combination of existing resources and/or with external grant funding as detailed in the report.</p> <p>Delivery of some actions including investment in greener vehicles and decarbonising heat use in Council properties will be subject to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and external grants including third party resources as detailed in the report.</p> <p>Core Funding is now in place for a small team of staff and a £1m annual Climate Emergency Fund. Increasingly evidence highlights the need for a significant scaling up of activity over the next five years if we are to meet our climate change targets. It follows that further funding bids will need to be secured either internally or from external grant sources and from partnership working in the forthcoming years.</p>

Background Documents	<p>Environment Scrutiny Committee (November 2022), Item 8: 'Annual Climate Change Strategy Review', Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>Cabinet (December 2021), Item 9: 'Leading the response to the Climate Emergency: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy Annual Report & action plan, 2021/02 – 2026/27', Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>Pensions Committee (December 2022), Item 7: 'Gloucestershire Pension Fund Update - Part 1 - Appendix 3 - Response to consultation on Governance and Reporting of Climate Related Risks', Gloucestershire County Council.</p>
Statutory Authority	<p>Overarching statutory powers in relation to Education, Environment, Highways, Lead Local Flood, Public Health, Strategic Planning, Transport, Waste Disposal and section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011.</p>
Divisional Councillor(s)	<p>All</p>
Officer	<p>Name: Peter Wiggins, Outcome Manager – Sustainability Tel. no: 01452 328536 Email: peter.wiggins@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
Timeline	<p>Ongoing</p>

Background

1. Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) Cabinet approved the current Climate Change Strategy and 5-year rolling Action Plan in December 2019 and committed to reporting annually on progress against that plan.
2. This report summarises the progress that has been made in 2021-22, and our proposed actions over the next 5 years. More detailed information is included in the appendices.

Our Vision and Targets

3. Our Vision for Gloucestershire remains unchanged:
 - By 2045 a carbon neutral county that provides quality of life now and for future generations, having improved the quality of our natural environment.
 - By 2030 to have reduced the county's carbon emissions by 80% on 2005¹.
4. Such countywide targets cannot be achieved by any single organisation and will require extensive partnership working not only with district councils, businesses and other organisations (Health, Police, etc) but also **everyone** who lives, works and visits the county.
5. GCC is committed to lead by example. Our corporate targets are:
 - **to reduce our carbon emissions** (buildings, street lighting, fleet, business travel) **by 80% by 2030** on 2006/07²; and
 - **to aim for 100% ('Net Zero') by 2030** through carbon offsetting.

Carbon Emissions Performance – Gloucestershire

6. The effect of the Covid Pandemic on all aspects of life, including business and community, was significant, so care must be taken in how we understand reported data on emissions. In 2020, Gloucestershire emitted 3,950 kilotonnes of carbon (ktCO₂e³), 5.4 kgCO₂e per person. 12% less than in 2019, ahead of the 10% reduction for the South West and England. The main differences were slightly higher reductions in Gloucestershire emissions from Industry (5%), Commercial (1%), Public Sector (1%) and Transport (1%). The overall drop of 12% in 2020 is much higher than the 1% drop in 2019, no doubt principally a result of the lockdowns during the Covid pandemic, but our outperformance against national and local comparators is encouraging.

Carbon Emissions Performance – Gloucestershire County Council

7. Our gross emissions⁴ for 2021/22 were 6,339 tonnes of carbon (tCO₂e), a reduction of 78% against the baseline, shown below. Our net emissions⁵ were 3,225 tCO₂e, a reduction 85% when accounting for renewable electricity supply⁶.

¹ 2005 is the earliest date emissions data is available for local authority areas ([UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2020](#)).

² GCC's baseline year is the earliest date robust consumption data was available.

³ CO₂e = 'carbon dioxide equivalent', where different greenhouse gases are expressed as the amount of CO₂ required to give the same warming potential ([Government emission conversion factors for greenhouse gas company reporting](#)).

⁴ Gross emissions, i.e., what we cause to be emitted – our carbon footprint.

⁵ Net emissions are the Gross emissions less any renewable energy generation exported to the grid, carbon offsets and green electricity purchased.

⁶ The Council's electricity supply is backed by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) purchased from 100% renewable, UK based solar, wind or hydro/wave generators.

8. However, 95% of the Council's entire carbon footprint is estimated to be from emissions from the supply of goods and services ('Scope 3' emissions⁷), of which we have a limited understanding – we are working to improve our understanding and reporting, in line with the Council's climate emergency declaration in 2019, and to work with key providers to help them reduce their emissions.
9. The Javelin Park Energy from Waste Facility in processing Gloucestershire's residual household waste emitted 2,713 tCO₂e in 2021/22 (part of GCC's scope 3 emissions), compared to 56,861 tCO₂e had the waste gone to landfill. The renewable electricity generated offset 13,743 tCO₂e compared to grid electricity; giving a net reduction of 11,030 tCO₂e.
10. A summary of key achievements and proposed actions are set out in Annex 1, with detailed information included in Appendix 1 and 2 of Annex 1.

Options

11. Do nothing – the UK government is a signatory to international climate change agreements and there is a clear expectation that local government will play a key role in community leadership and delivery to help us reach net zero. Increasingly this is underpinned by regulations and supported by government funding. Having declared a Climate Emergency and committed to refresh the action plan annually, doing nothing would be a change of policy that would attract considerable negative publicity for the Council as the climate change challenge remains and the need for action is more pressing now than it was a year ago.
12. Implement the proposed Action Plan (**recommended**) – doing the best we possibly can within the resources available to bring about the required changes, working with others to secure additional resources, delivering the strategy and an ongoing five-year rolling programme.

Risks

13. Some actions are dependent on securing additional budget and/or grant funding. Should these be unsuccessful, alternative funds and/or actions will need to be developed.
14. Where the Council has direct control, emissions reduction 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 2045 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.

⁷ Emissions are categorised into three groups:

- **Scope 1 (Direct emissions):** Activities owned or controlled by GCC that release emissions straight into the atmosphere. These are direct emissions. Examples include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, furnaces, and from fleet vehicles.
- **Scope 2 (Energy indirect):** Emissions released into the atmosphere associated with the consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam, and cooling. These are indirect emissions that are a consequence of GCC activities, but which occur at sources we do not own or control.
- **Scope 3 (Other indirect/ supply chain):** Emissions that are a consequence of GCC actions, which occur at sources we do not own or control and which are not classed as Scope 2 emissions. Examples are business travel by private car, waste disposal, or purchased materials or fuels.

15. This challenge has been recognised with the appointment of the Countywide Climate Coordinator and establishment of the Gloucestershire Climate Leadership Group (CLG), which works to provide strategic coordination across a set of priority themes. CLG membership comprises the county and district councils, the NHS, Gloucestershire Constabulary, and other local stakeholders such as the Local Nature Partnership. As the local transport authority and highway authority for Gloucestershire, the County Council leads on the transport theme. GCC also takes an active role within each of the other priority themes identified by CLG.
16. Local authorities do not have the resources and or powers to address the climate emergency alone, 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 and greener from Covid-19.

Financial implications

17. The strategy is expected to have significant resource implications in the short, medium and long term. The £1m Climate Change & Air Quality 'Action Fund' is being used to begin delivering against the objectives set out in the climate change strategy. Core Funding is now in place for a small team of staff and a £1m annual Climate Emergency Fund. Increasingly evidence highlights the need for a significant scaling up of activity over the next five years if we are to meet our climate change targets. It follows that further funding bids will need to be secured either internally or from external grant sources and from partnership working in the forthcoming years.
18. The Council will continue to lobby government for appropriate resources to respond to the challenge of climate change, including through our membership of the Local Government Association and UK100 Countryside Climate Network.
19. Local Government Pension Scheme – the Council has two separate roles, as 1 of 200 employers, and as the Administering Authority of the Gloucestershire Pension Fund, which function is fulfilled by the Council's Pension Committee. The Pension Committee has responded to the consultation launched by the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on Governance and Reporting of Climate Related Risks⁸. The consultation is based on the recommendations of the Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). The response was published with the papers for the Committee meeting held on 8 December 2022. In summary, it is broadly in favour with the requirements of the consultation, which will build on the Committee's existing reporting and includes proposals:
 - To use Weighted Average Carbon Intensity (WACI) as a measure of investment impact.
 - That climate change risk assessments be embedded in investment and funding strategies, including scenario analysis to consider the potential impact on the Fund.

⁸ [Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities \(September 2022\), "Local Government Pension Scheme \(England and Wales\): Governance and reporting of climate change risks", HMG.](#)

Climate change implications

20. This report sets out positive progress and actions to reduce the Council's and Gloucestershire's contribution to climate change and their vulnerability to its impacts.

Equality implications

21. Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? Yes

22. Climate change has the potential for significant negative implications for people's health, wellbeing and safety; its impact is expected to be greater for those on low incomes, vulnerable people especially the young and the elderly, and people with additional learning, physical and mental needs. Also, as climate change is expected to get more extreme with time, if unaddressed it will have a greater impact on young people. It follows that, whilst delivering the strategy will therefore have an overall positive impact, the distributional impacts of policies and actions on disadvantaged groups (who may be more exposed to increased costs of heating, transport and housing) need to be considered and carefully managed. This highlights the importance of climate change being an integral part of the Council's decision-making process, and of our engagement activity with communities and across all demographic groups.

23. The strategy and actions are expected to have a positive impact on many of the protected characteristics amongst service users and the Council's workforce:

- Age, Sex, Disability, Pregnancy & maternity, Race – for service users through improving access to and the resilience of services, infrastructure and communities to the impacts of extreme weather events.
- Disability, Pregnancy & maternity – for the workforce through improving the energy efficiency and resilience of premises and services, including staff being able to work from home.
- Religion and/or belief – for service users and the workforce in that addressing climate-related issues is in keeping with the philosophy of many religions.

24. Planned actions to improve outcomes for these protected characteristics include:

- Further integration of climate change into the Council's decision-making process, with a focus on services for protected characteristics more at risk of a disproportionate impact – those on low incomes, young people, vulnerable people especially the young and the elderly, and people with additional learning, physical and mental needs.
- Continued engagement with and support of the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Panel, to make sure that they can have their say on these issues.
- Reviewing the Engagement Strategy seeking to monitor and improve engagement with residents and staff.
- Championing improved outcomes for all protected characteristics through the work of Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.
- Revising the strategy in 2024/25 which will include a consultation and an equalities impact assessment.

25. Monitoring and review of the 5-year rolling action plan for implications for protected characteristics will be undertaken annually as part of the annual report to Cabinet,

including an annual review by Environment Scrutiny Committee and the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group.

26. No significant impacts were identified for Gender reassignment, Marriage & civil partnership or Sexual orientation.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

27. A DPIA is not required for this decision.

Social value implications

28. The actions outlined in this report seek to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits to the local area by reducing our collective contribution to climate change and improving our resilience to its impacts.

Consultation feedback

29. **Environment Scrutiny Committee**, at its meeting 22 November 2022, considered a report on the Climate Change Annual Review, including a presentation from members of the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group. Scrutiny Committee members made the following points:
- Local members can help implement the strategy – engaging young people and promoting local action on climate change generally.
 - Involving young people in council decision making should be encouraged (including Environment Scrutiny Committee, which is being reviewed by Democratic Services, and through Climate Leadership Gloucestershire (CLG), which is being considered by the CLG Coordinator).
 - Clarification is needed on some of the actions not yet underway, which have been reflected in Annex 1, Appendix 1 (actions shown as red).
30. The Council funds external independent support of **Gloucestershire's Youth Climate Group (GYCG)**, currently provided by Creative Sustainability⁹, providing opportunities and events for the young people aged 16-25 to build skills, develop teamwork and provide feedback on Gloucestershire County Council's climate actions. Their comments and the Council's response are set out in Annex 1, Appendix 3.
31. The Council helped to promote a **Gloucestershire-wide youth survey** (July to October 2022), carried out by the InterClimate Network¹⁰ (ICN) working with GYCG, Creative Sustainability, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust¹¹ and Planet Cheltenham¹².

⁹ [Creative Sustainability](#), a community interest company based in Stroud, support young people by working to bring about inclusion, sustainability, youth empowerment and wellbeing.

¹⁰ The [InterClimate Network](#) is a charity who work collaboratively to deliver climate sustainability programmes to engage young people (primarily age 11-18) across the UK with the complexities of climate change, inspire their climate action, and promote their voices in their own sustainable future.

¹¹ [Young Ambassadors Group \(YAG\) – Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust](#) was set up in recognition that the future of nature and our connection with it will in part be decided on by young people, and GWT wants to be pivotal in making this happen by giving young people a voice. They will work closely and be supported by the Board of Trustees and key GWT staff.

¹² [Planet Cheltenham](#), a community action hub, seeks to connect people to community initiatives that help tackle climate change, fight social inequality and build a sustainable, resilient future for their town.

32. Nearly 3,000 young people responded from schools and communities across Gloucestershire. The key findings are outlined below, with the findings report attached as Annex 1, Appendix 4.

- More than 8 in 10 young people are concerned about climate change.
- More than 8 in 10 (86%) young people support council action on climate change.
- 3 in 4 young people are already choosing to act on climate change.
- The top 5 actions likely to gain further support are:
 - 1) Reduce energy use
 - 2) Reduce, reuse, recycle
 - 3) Improve travel and transport
 - 4) Help protect and improve nature
 - 5) Think about the impact of what we buy and use
- Young people are inspired to act by schools, working together and their families.
- Young people want more joined-up action – systemic change as well as individual action, with more national-level leadership on climate action, and for responsibility and action to be shared fairly across society.
- Young people can be enabled to take more climate action by ensuring they have:
 - 1) Enough opportunity to act
 - 2) A supportive community of action
 - 3) Knowledge about actions and their impact
 - 4) The motivation to feel positive that individual action can make a difference.
- Three key motivators for action:
 - 1) Install more equipment to make it easier to take action
 - 2) Track results and showcase the positive impact of actions
 - 3) Rewards and competition to encourage action.

Officer recommendations

33. That the Annual Report (Annex 1) is approved for publishing on the Council's website, and that the updated action plan (Annex 1, Appendix 2) is approved for implementation and reported to the Climate Leadership Group to inform the countywide approach.

Performance management/follow-up

34. The Council will ensure delivery of the action plan by ongoing monitoring and reporting of progress against key performance measures within the Climate Change Strategy and its accompanying annual action plan.

35. The action plan will continue to be developed for Cabinet approval each year and be considered by Leadership Gloucestershire's Climate Leadership group, alongside other partners' plans, to inform and reflect the countywide approach.