

Questions for the Annual Climate Change strategy review

1. Understanding the increasing threats posed by global heating, it would be helpful to change the wording from climate change to climate emergency (where wording is important to underline the urgency needed to act now)

Could we please change to the Annual Climate Emergency Strategy review?

This has been added as a subtitle to the annual report.

2 How can we ever get real control over emissions when everybody seems to exclude motorways from the numbers? Similarly, GCC is for some reason excluding from the county figures (right hand pie chart p6 of the report) large industrial sites, railways and land-use – can these. Particularly industrial sites and land use please be accounted for to get a more accurate assessment of the County's carbon emissions?

They are excluded because they are not within the local authority's influence (they are managed by Highways England) and are instead included within the national figures addressed by government.

3 Great that the climate team is finally growing and being resourced as necessary.

4 Decarbonisation of buildings – according to the annual Health report, GCC occupies 775 sites across the county (<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2111500/dph-report-2021-sources-of-strength.pdf>), so having assessed 12 of them (bottom of p17 in 2.8) should not the RAG rating of orange be red. 12 out of 775 is about 1.5%/year?

The Action Progress, 2021/22 to date (Appendix 1) states that the RAG ratings denote whether the action is complete (green), in progress (amber) or not yet underway (red). The action is in progress and the premises referred to are those whose heating systems requiring replacement over the next 3 years.

5 We should be doing commercial energy recovery AND heat decarbonisation, not just deleting 2.10 because a solution has not yet been found. And why aren't we doing carbon capture particularly on our biggest emitters like Javelin Park EfW?

This refers to a technology that was to be piloted at Shire Hall but is no longer appropriate. Carbon Capture technology at Energy from Waste facilities is at an early stage of development within the UK. The council hopes to commission a study in 2023 with its contractor at Javelin Park to better understand the potential and feasibility of carbon capture.

6. 30% modal shift (p20, 3.11) should not have an orange RAG rating, it should be red. We all know that the Local Transport Plan targets for public transport and cycling are nowhere near being met. Although not complaining per se about the Cheltenham to Gloucester cycle route, this route is generally well served with public transport whereas many of the rural connection routes are not and therefore deserve more funding for active travel routes and should not be left behind?

The amber rating denotes that the action is in progress. Comments re: active travel in rural areas are noted and will be discussed with Traffic & Transport colleagues.

7 Public Transport is in chaos. 3.17 (p21) should be red.

The amber rating denotes that the action is in progress. The council's approach to addressing recent challenges with bus services was reported to the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 22 Nov 22.

8 The consequences of low CIL contributions affects the lack of new local school places meaning that our public and school transport costs (and carbon emissions) are increasing. Are these being accounted for and measured?

The amount of CIL being collected and distributed by the five District Councils that have implemented it is being closely monitored by the County Council. It is hoped that all of the District Councils will soon implement a method of distributing CIL and that the County Council will be enabled to bid for the monies that the District Councils have received. It is difficult to directly assess the impact of the lack of CIL payments to the County Council, as CIL should cover a wide range of infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of new developments – not just transport / education. GCC officers will continue to actively engage with the District Councils to attempt to secure CIL monies and deliver the required infrastructure to reduce public and school transport costs and carbon emissions.

9 (4.4 p22) – why has no progress been made on district heat networks. Why can't progress be accelerated rather than revisiting the timeline? The incinerator is wasting heat whilst there are no local sites able to use it.

The amended timeline for this action is a result of a combination of factors including limited capacity within the team and the absence of any viable heat off-take options. Any development in the vicinity of the EfW would be dependent on investment by a third party with suitable energy requirements and being able to reach a commercial agreement with them.

10 Fosse Cross FRC battery storage (4.5, p22) – why is this being pushed out to 2023/24? We need to be moving at pace to decarbonise our energy system.

The timeline for this action is a result of limited capacity within the team, which is being addressed through a restructure.

11 (6.1 p22) – why has nothing happened on the climate award scheme? The activity seems to have been pushed out to 2024-8. We need to be promoting urgent action from our communities, who control the majority of the emissions.

This action is considered of lower priority than many others within the action plan and as a result of limited capacity within the team, the timeline has been extended. Our current focus is on increasing our communications and community engagement work in line with our engagement plan. There has been a significant increase in the scale and reach of our engagement campaigns throughout the past year.

12 Proposed actions (1.8 p.ii) – a dynamic purchasing system for local seasonal food would be great, but the circular economy is really about repurposing what would otherwise be waste. Where are the new actions for this? There's work going on in other county councils eg Essex CC with the BLUEPRINT programme e.g.

<https://projectblueprint.eu/https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/two-national-awards-for-circular-economy-team>- are we engaging with it?

Thank you for drawing this initiative to our attention. The council's waste strategy includes actions on promoting reuse and repair, supporting the circular economy. The Minerals

Plan also seeks to increase the reuse of material in place of virgin materials from quarrying.

13. Youth Panel survey – the GCC responses to the young people’s feedback in general read as if they’ve been written as an auto-response. The Panel have asked for community involvement in the response group (by which they mean the Climate Leadership Group, as is evidenced by the questions above) – the GCC response is “N/A”. (1C p v) How is that helpful?!

Maybe find a human within the officer team to respond next time, and recognise the passion, creativity and genuine interest in the Panel’s involvement rather than just quoting back some existing GCC strategy of limited relevance please.

A considerable amount of officer time is spent on developing and supporting the GYCG, including regular in person attendance at evening and weekend events, together with the development of an engaging and fulfilling program of activities for them. We acknowledge that our written response was a little hurried in places and it will be redrafted to provide more detail and consideration.

14. Recycling rate up 50.8%. Can the residual waste tonnage reflect that, as it would be frustrating to find that recycling is up simply due to an increase in consumption e.g. cardboard from online shopping?

We are pleased to say that our latest waste forecasts are a 4% increase in recycling this year (compared to last year) and a 4% reduction in residual waste. Overall waste (all household waste streams, recyclable and residual) are down 5% year on year.

15 net zero means carbon emissions will continue to enter the atmosphere. Should we not be looking at carbon negative or possibly zero carbon?

The Net Zero ambition was agreed by Full Council and remains our current stated ambition. The council’s climate change strategy is due to be reviewed in 24/25 and it may be opportune at this point to revisit our targets and ambitions.

16. Is Cotswold Airport carbon footprint not mentioned for any particular reason now that duties on internal flights have been reduced? What is GCCs involvement with Cotswold airport, and indeed any other aviation facilities in the county?

GCC has no direct involvement in Cotswold Airport or other aviation facilities in the county. Gloucestershire Airport is jointly owned by Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council.

17. Looks like emissions nationally (and globally) are rising again following return to business as usual post pandemic. Are we bucking that trend?

It is too early to tell, Gloucestershire data for 2021 will be published in 2023.

18 Do we note that it takes a newly planted oak tree about 100 years to sequester 1 tonne of carbon. This takes us way beyond our net zero targets.

The 1 Million Trees initiative is in support of the Gloucestershire Tree Strategy developed by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership. There are a range of alternative carbon sequestration opportunities, including wet woodland, flood plain and grassland that we will explore with partners through the Local Nature Partnership.

19 How is the 56,861 tonnes CO₂e from landfill calculated.

This is calculated using the government carbon conversion factor for residual household waste to landfill, using Gloucestershire residual household waste arisings. Available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021>

20 The Committee on Climate Change have recorded a fall in waste sector emissions to landfill but there has been a significant rise in fossil emissions from EfW plants. The recommendation is to install Carbon Capture and Storage. Will GCC look into that possibility to further reduce carbon emissions?

Please see response to Q.5.

21 (6.2 p 22) Libraries are creating greener together zones to increase access to sustainable literature. How does this work and what does this mean?

All libraries in the county now stock a Greener Together collection of books providing information on how to reduce your carbon footprint, along with a wide range of other useful advice on topics including growing your own vegetables and recycling. You can find the Greener Together collection by searching for 'climate change' on the library catalogue at <https://gloucestershire.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME>

22. How are we supporting young people through education on carbon (literacy) to help them become the climate leaders of tomorrow?

We have formed and continue to support the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group to give young people a voice on climate change issues. The Gloucestershire Libraries Greener Together collection includes titles suitable for younger readers. Our outreach work includes engagement with schools and youth groups, and our social media work now extends to platforms such as Instagram which tend to have younger followings.

23. We need to decrease demand first. Are we able to write to government to pilot/fund a home retrofit scheme? (And tackle the rising energy costs)

We are supporting retrofit work through the energy theme at Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.

24. Is the development of a carbon offsetting scheme really ethical? (Allowing the wealthy to pay to continue polluting). Most offset schemes actually decrease biodiversity.

The Net Zero ambition was agreed by Full Council, which includes an 80% reduction in carbon emissions. The Gloucestershire Nature & Climate Fund (GNCF) seeks to secure funding from developers for Biodiversity Net Gain and carbon sequestration funding for the county. Without the GNCF that developer funding and its biodiversity and carbon benefits would go elsewhere.

25. (1E p vi) With the critique of traditional power structures, GCC responses do not appear to understand that power could be devolved down to the most local level that can effectively use it and that truly participatory budgeting and planning could then become the norm. Could changing power structures be discussed again please?

This would be a matter for Full Council. Colleagues in Democratic Services would be best placed to support on this, although we are of course happy to remain part of the conversation, particularly on matters relating to the environment.