



REPORT TITLE: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy - Fourth Annual Report and Action Plan

Cabinet Date	31 January 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr David Gray, Cabinet Member for 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 updated five year action plan.
Recommendations	That Cabinet: 1. Notes the overall emissions for the County Council and for Gloucestershire outlined in this report. 2. Notes the progress and planned key actions outlined in Annex 1 (Progress on 2021/22 actions to date). 3. Approves the five-year Action Plan in Annex 1 to be reported to Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.
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 and developed into a detailed plan.
Resource Implications	Core funding is in place for a small team of staff and a £1m annual Climate Emergency Fund. There is a need for a significant scaling up of activity if we are to meet our climate change targets for the county by 2045. It follows that further funding will need to be secured either internally, from external grant sources or from partnership working in the forthcoming years. Projects dependant on external grant funding are outlined in the 5 year action plan (Annex 1). Delivery of some actions including investment in greener vehicles and decarbonising heat use in council properties will be subject to further resources being secured as detailed in the report.

Background Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environment Scrutiny Committee (November 2022), Item 8: 'Annual Climate Change Strategy Review', 2. Gloucestershire County Council. Cabinet (January 2022), 'Leading the response to the Climate Emergency: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy Annual Report & action plan, 2022/02 – 2027/28', 3. Gloucestershire County Council. 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.
Statutory Authority	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.
Divisional Councillor(s)	All
Officer	Name: Kelly Osborne, Sustainability and Engagement Officer Tel. no: 01452 426 480 Email: kelly.osborne@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Timeline	Ongoing

Background

Introduction

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 annual progress.
2. This report summarises the progress that has been made in 2022-23, and proposed actions over the next 5 years.

Our vision and targets

3. Our Vision for Gloucestershire remains unchanged:
 - By 2045 we will create a net zero county that provides quality of life now and for future generations, having improved the quality of our natural environment.
 - By 2030 Gloucestershire County Council will have reduced corporate carbon emissions by 80% on 2005.
4. Countywide net zero targets cannot be achieved by any single organisation and will require extensive partnership working between councils, businesses and other organisations. Everyone who lives, works and visits the county has a significant role to play in reaching net zero.
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 (from the 2006/07 baseline); and
 - to aim for 100% ('net zero') by 2030 through both reduction and carbon offsetting.Best practice in carbon offsetting will be followed with reductions in emissions prioritised over offsetting.

Gloucestershire countywide carbon emissions performance

6. The Government publishes UK emissions each year, by district, 2 years in arrears. The latest figures, published in 2023 for the county of Gloucestershire in 2021 are shown by sector below (Figures 1,2 and 3). Note that the Covid pandemic will have impacted these figures.

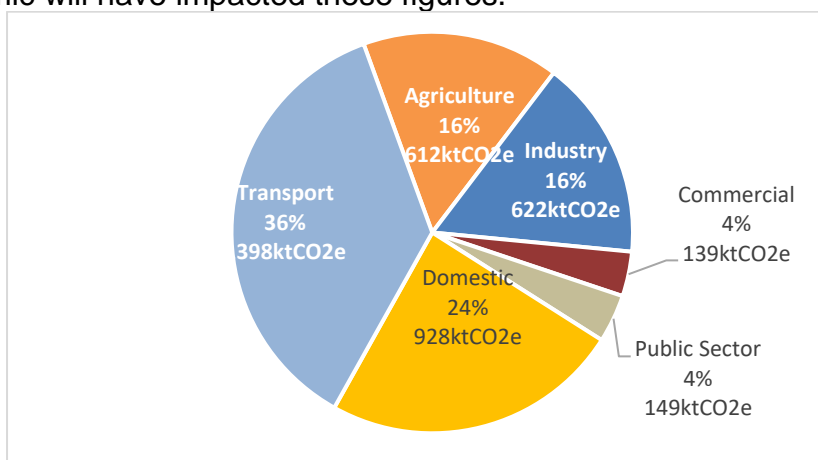


Figure 1 – Gloucestershire countywide emissions 2021, those under local authority influence (excludes large industrial sites, railways, motorways and land-use)

	2006	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	ktCO2e difference 21-22	
Agriculture	699	640	653	632.87	613.57	612.33	- 1.25	-0.20%
Commercial	578	241	176	151.92	120.54	138.58	+18.04	14.96%
Domestic	1525	974	958	925.25	900.12	928.05	+27.93	3.10%
Industry	919	610	659	643.62	578.94	622.5	+43.56	7.52%
LULUCF*	-214	-236	-234	-236.75	-238.88	-237.29	+1.59	-0.66%
Public Sector **	248	145	127	118.98	102.56	149.04	+46.48	45.32%
Transport	1606	1562	1532	1532.72	1202.79	1398.2	+195.41	16.25%
Waste management	363	252	265	211.03	110.64	121.06	+10.42	9.42%
TOTAL	5724	4189	4135	3980	3390	3732	342	10.09%

*Land use, land use change and forestry
**The public sector includes all sectors in SIC codes 84-87 page 16 [UK local and regional greenhouse gas emissions estimates for 2005-2021: TechnicalReport \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/145659/uk_sic_prtr_codes_2007.pdf) UK SIC codes can be found here https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/145659/uk_sic_prtr_codes_2007.pdf

Table 1 – KTCO2e per sector in 2020 and 2021 in the county of Gloucestershire

A marked drop in emissions in 2020 was attributable in large part due to the impact of the COVID pandemic and the assorted lock downs. In 2021 emissions have bounced back towards the longer term trend as the economy and society have “re-opened”. The higher rate of increase in the public sector in 2021 (table 1) reflects the severity of the impact of the pandemic on activities by all public sector services including but not limited to schools, higher education (including tertiary education), hospitals, justice services, social services and wider health services. This upward trend for 2021 has been seen across public sector services in the UK after a bounce back effect from the pandemic. Full data for all sectors is available online <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/final-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-1990-to-2021> As illustrated below (figure 2) the long term trend of reducing emissions in the county continues with emissions now down 34.8% since 2006 (figure 3).

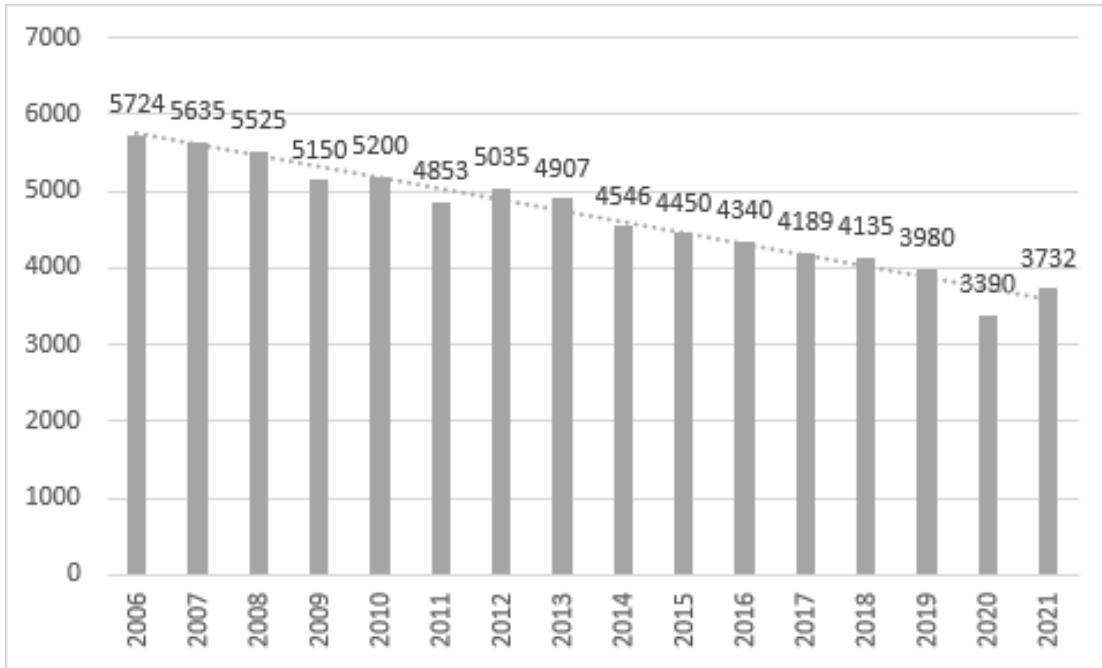


Figure 2 – Year on year comparison for county of Gloucestershire emissions ktCO₂e, showing an increase from 2020 to 2021 due to the impact of the COVID pandemic.

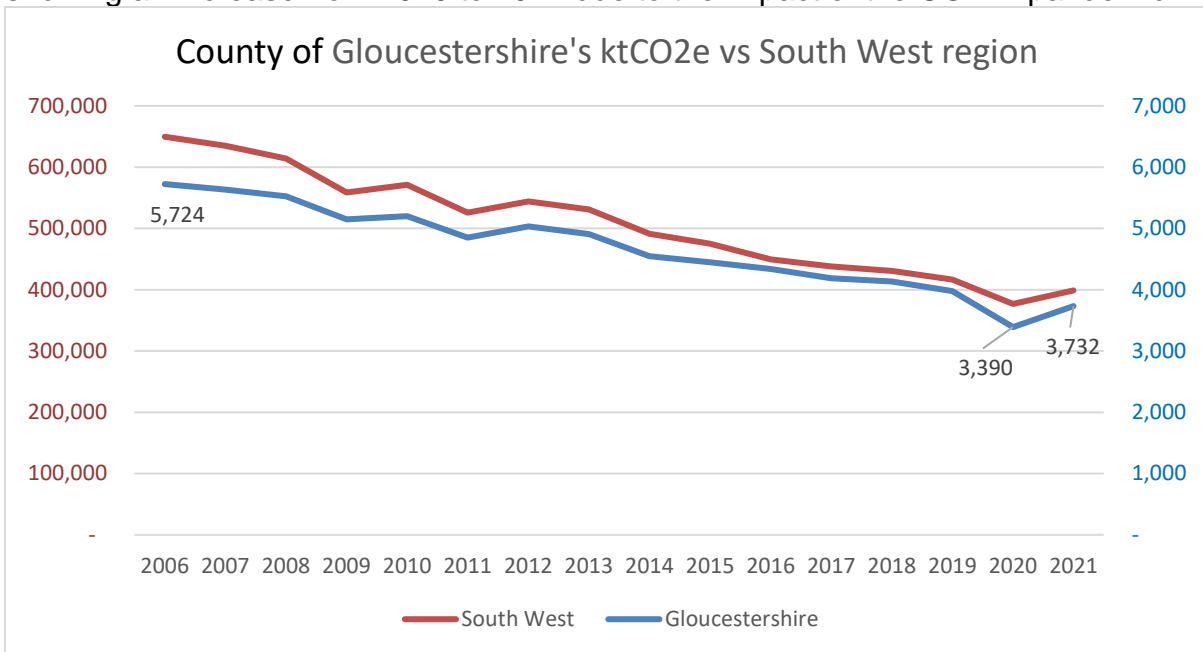


Figure 3 – County and region wide emissions since 2006 highlighting slightly larger decrease in emissions during 2020, with increases in 2021 below region average. In 2021, the county of Gloucestershire emitted 3,732 kilotonnes of carbon (ktCO₂e), 6.38 kgCO₂e per person. This increase from 3,390 ktCO₂e in 2020 reflects the impact of the 2020 COVID pandemic and the assorted lock downs. In 2021 emissions have bounced back towards the longer term trend as the economy and society have “re-opened”.

Carbon emissions performance – Gloucestershire County Council

7. Gloucestershire County Council’s gross emissions for 2022/23 were 6,745tCO₂e, a reduction of 76% against the baseline (figure 4). Our net emissions were 3,867 tCO₂e, a reduction of 82% when accounting for

renewable electricity supply. In 2022/2023 scope 2 emissions (primarily from electricity consumption) within Gloucestershire County Council's own estates increased compared to the years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. This is primarily down to the effect of the COVID19 pandemic and the figure 2022/23 follows a downward trend in line with the figure from 2019/2020.

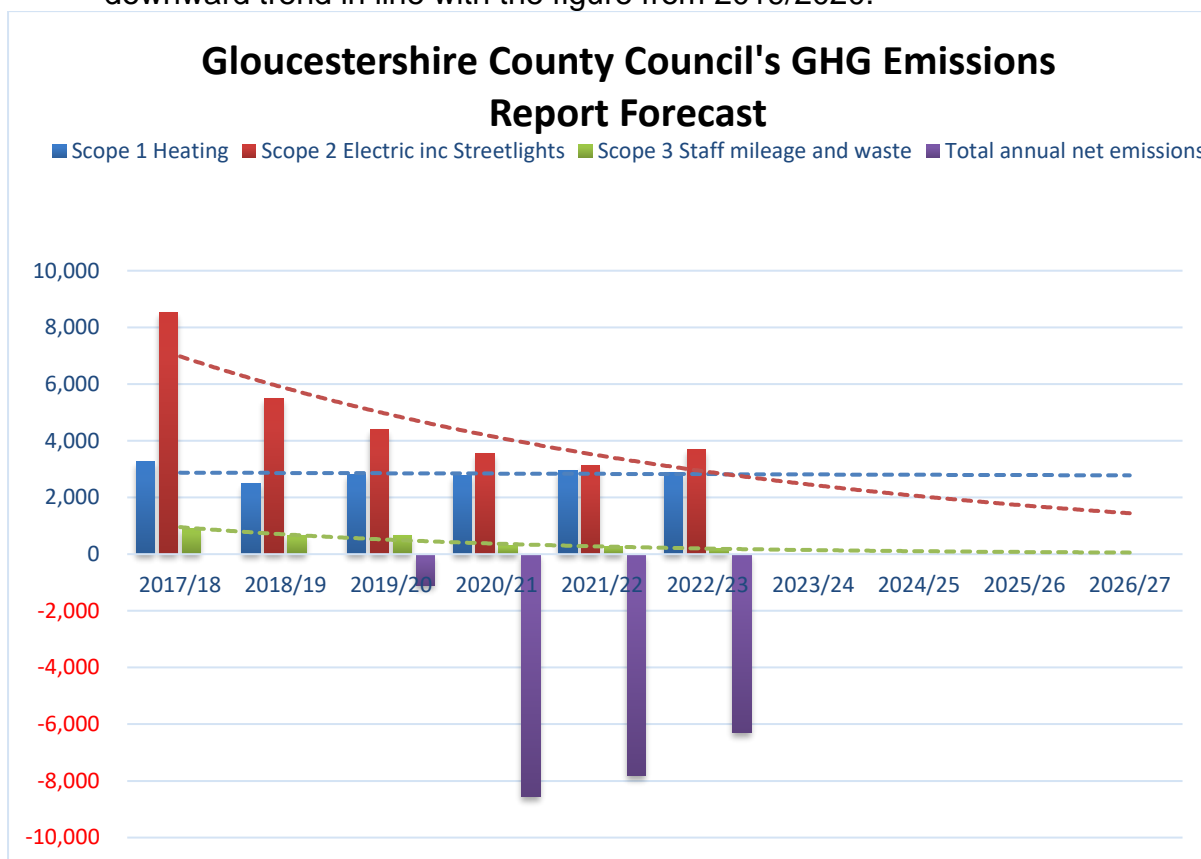


Figure 4 – Gloucestershire County Council’s greenhouse gas emissions forecast (tCO2e)

- However, the majority of the Council’s carbon footprint is estimated to be from emissions from the supply of goods and services (‘Scope 3’ emissions), of which we have a limited understanding due to the complexity of reporting on all areas of scope 3. Estimates vary on how much scope 3 accounts for, the LGA says that generally around 70-80% of an LA’s emissions could be scope 3 (<https://www.local.gov.uk/climate-change-reporting-guidance-local-authorities#:~:text=scope%203%20emissions%20are%20all,a%20local%20authority's%20total%20emissions>) but some councils estimate up to 96% of emissions fall within the bracket of scope 3 (<https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/procurement-tools-carbon-emissions>). We are working to improve our understanding and reporting by researching the approach to scope 3 reporting by other local authorities and meeting with relevant teams internally to discuss how scope 3 emissions could begin to be reported on more effectively. Details of our current scope 3 reporting can be found in figure 4 and section 1.6 of the action plan for this year. In section 1.5 of the five year action plan we have committed to reporting on the carbon emissions of platinum level contracts over the next 5 years.

9. The Javelin Park Energy from Waste Facility in processing Gloucestershire's residual household waste emitted 2,660 tCO₂e in 2022/23 (part of GCC's scope 3 emissions), compared to 55,772.4 tCO₂e had the waste gone to landfill. The renewable electricity generated offset 12,363 tCO₂e compared to grid electricity; giving a net reduction of 9,704 tCO₂e.
10. Our key climate achievements are highlighted in annex 1. The Council's action plan is split into 7 areas;
 - decision making
 - influencing others
 - power
 - waste
 - transport
 - buildings; and
 - land use

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 ever before.
12. Implement the strategy via the ongoing five-year rolling action plan.
(recommended) – working within the resources available to bring about changes, working with partners to facilitate change and secure additional resources. This is the recommended option.

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 we have 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 the Local Government Association estimates they 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 in emissions 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.

15. This challenge has been recognised with the appointment of the Countywide Climate Coordinator and establishment of the Climate Leadership Gloucestershire (CLG), which works to provide strategic coordination across a set of priority themes. CLG membership includes the county and district councils, the NHS, Gloucestershire Constabulary, and other local stakeholders such as the Local Nature Partnership. As the local transport and highway authority for Gloucestershire, the County Council leads on both the transport theme and external behaviour change. 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 and Air Quality 'Action Fund' is being used to deliver against the objectives set out in the Climate Change Strategy. Core funding is 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. We 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 – we have two separate roles, as 1 of 200 employers, and as the administering authority of the Gloucestershire Pension Fund, which is fulfilled by the Council's Pension Committee. In 2023 the Pensions Committee have been working to develop a responsible investment policy for the Fund, which in early 2024 will be consulted on with all key stakeholders. The Pensions Committee recognises that Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) and stewardship are rapidly developing topics and will continue to develop its understanding, approaches and ambition in these areas. The Pensions Committee have undertaken analysis of the Funds investment portfolio to establish an emissions baseline as of 31 December 2019. The analysis has enabled the Pensions Committee to set a Fund net zero target of 2045. Additionally, the Pensions Committee have set interim target reductions to its listed equity and corporate bond allocations on the Funds journey to net zero. The Pensions Committee is also committed to reporting in line with the anticipated Taskforce for Climate related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) regulations for the 2023/24 fund year.

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
Cabinet Members should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.
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, the young, 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 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.
23. This highlights the importance of climate change being an integral part of our decision-making process, and of meaningful engagement with communities across all demographic groups.
24. 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 as identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment. Implementing the strategy will reduce the effects of climate change, [which will disproportionately impact some groups](https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/). (<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>)
25. The climate change impact assessment tool was integrated into our cabinet decisions process in 2023. This tool also assesses links to social outcomes.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

26. A DPIA is not required for this decision.

Social value implications

27. 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

28. Environment Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Climate Change action plan on the on the 15th November 2023. Scrutiny Committee members made the following points:

- More detail is needed about the councils own scope 3 emissions, both the proportion of our emissions that come from scope 3 and information about scope 3 emissions produced overall.
- The report should include more detail on our approach to carbon offsetting.

29. The Youth Climate Group continues to work with the sustainability team. Projects this year have included public engagement campaigns, outreach events and joint training sessions.

Officer recommendations

30. To approve the 5-year plan for implementation (subject to future funding being secured) and report to Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to inform the countywide approach.

Performance management/follow-up

31. We 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.

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