

Climate Emergency Advisory Committee



Report of Head of Partnership and Insight

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To: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

DATE: 28 January 2020

AGENDA ITEM

Climate Emergency Year One Work Programme:

Recommendation(s)

(a) Committee to note the progress and process to date, including the activity commissioned within the existing 2019/20 budget, in respect of providing a strategic response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and adopted carbon neutrality targets for the Council and the District.

(b) Committee to review the proposed year one climate emergency work programme, which will provide a base for a future proposed South Oxfordshire District Council Climate Change Strategy.

(c) Committee to approve the submission of the proposed year one climate emergency work programme to Cabinet, to recommend for their implementation and adoption, including proposed additional measures in the budget for 2020/21.

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines a proposed climate emergency year one work programme the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) could recommend to Cabinet as a strategic response to the climate emergency declaration and adopted carbon neutrality targets for the Council and the District.
2. The items put forward for inclusion in a climate emergency work programme were originally outlined in an initial paper to the CEAC on 19 September 2019; the items have now been considered and evaluated by either external consultants or, where

it was felt there was internal expertise on the subject/item, by service area representatives. This report sets out the journey to selection for items put forward and prioritised within the subsequent proposed year one climate emergency work programme included in this report.

3. The work programme proposal is categorised into seven themes; council business, partnership, housing, infrastructure, transport, biodiversity and behaviour change, emphasising the holistic response required in order to achieve the adopted targets.
4. In addition to proposing new activity for the Council, this report outlines the significant ongoing projects in regard to this agenda which the Council is already involved in, items considered business as usual for council officers and items which have already been commissioned within the existing 2019/20 budget to support meeting the climate emergency targets that have been adopted.

Strategic Objectives

5. This work is supported by the current South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan 2016-2020 through the commitment to 'Build Thriving Communities' through aspects such as improving air quality, recycling rates and increasing the provision of cycle routes within the district.
6. Work is currently being undertaken to develop the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and update priorities, which provides an opportunity to embed climate emergency related goals. It is envisaged that the draft of the future corporate plan 2020-2024 for South Oxfordshire District Council will be reviewed by the CEAC and there will be an opportunity for recommendations to Cabinet on its contents.

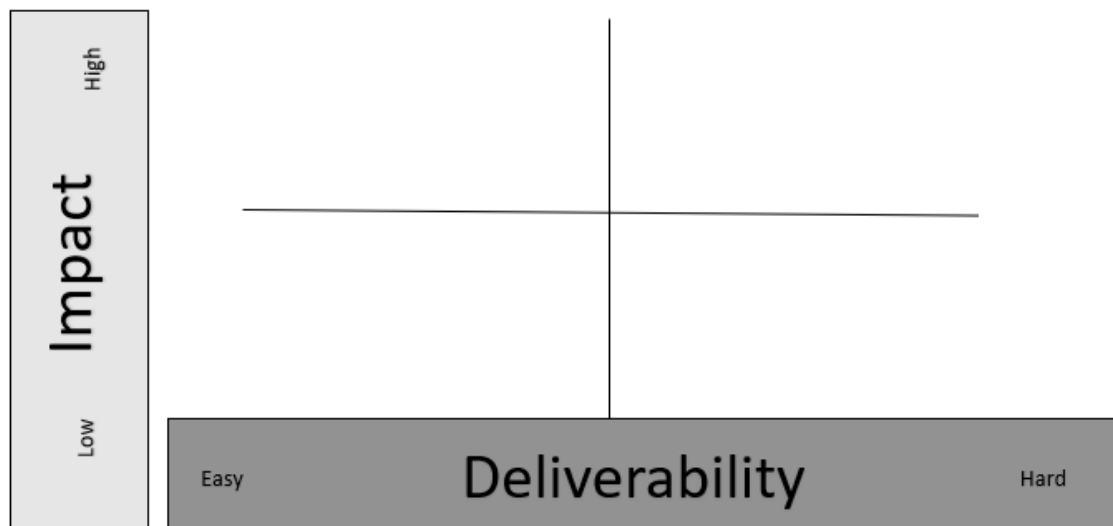
Background

7. A climate emergency was declared by the South Oxfordshire District Council administration at Full Council on 11 April 2019. The motion outlined the intention for the Council to consider adopting an early carbon neutral target.
8. To support a response to the climate emergency, the Council established the CEAC to develop and recommend mitigating actions and advise Cabinet on matters relating to climate change.
9. The CEAC reviewed a report from officers named 'Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps' and subsequent recommendations, at its first meeting 19 September 2019. At this meeting, the CEAC opted to select target option one (a Carbon Neutral Council) and three (a Carbon Neutral District) to recommend to Cabinet as overarching goals for the Council in respect of adopting an early carbon neutral target.
10. The CEAC opted to recommend to Cabinet that the Council becomes carbon neutral in its operations by 2025 and becomes a carbon neutral district by 2030. A motion detailing the full targets was put forward by the Chair of the CEAC to Cabinet on 8 Oct 19 and Full Council on 10 Oct 19, which was carried.
11. The CEAC report 'Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps' included the options of items for inclusion in a programme of work to address the climate emergency, of which Committee members reviewed and contributed to at the meeting. This amounted to a final list of items for further exploration, full evaluation

and costing, before these items were to be prioritised and selected for inclusion in the proposed year one work programme detailed in this report.

The Journey to Selection

12. At the CEAC meeting on 19 Sept 2019, the Committee established a task and finish group consisting of self-nominated committee members, to work with officers on developing work programme proposals, including assisting with building the programme proposals into a coherent strategic response and presenting options back to the CEAC.
13. The task and finish group have met twice. Once on 8 October 2019, to review the work programme item options to be fully scoped, evaluated and costed and for the second time, on 18 December 2019. On 18 December, the group then reviewed all the information received from the scoping exercise and based on this information, selected and prioritised items to include in a climate emergency work programme to support the development of a future strategy, to subsequently recommend to Cabinet their implementation following full committee review.
14. The prioritisation exercise on 18 December 2019 was conducted with officers as facilitators, guiding members through the process and offering information as scoped by consultants and internal officers, to support member discussion.
15. The purpose of the exercise was to prioritise the merits of alternative options/items in an interactive way, quickly generating and gaining consensus amongst the task and finish group. The aim of the exercise was to shortlist the best options to recommend to Cabinet, as part of a climate emergency work programme to provide a strategic response to the climate emergency.
16. During the exercise, each option/item was reviewed and placed on a matrix, considering impact (range low to high) and deliverability (range easy to hard), as per the illustration below:



17. The criteria for impact were defined as giving consideration to what favourable impact the item would have on fulfilling the Council's climate emergency

objectives, for example, measures such as carbon savings and reputational benefit.

18. The criteria for deliverability were defined as the ease of an item to implement, including factors such as cost, risk, implementation time, amount of influence and resource.
19. It was noted at the beginning of the exercise that the criteria could additionally be made up of many other components, however for the purpose of achieving the desired exercise output, the criteria were not broken down any further in order to achieve a basic qualitative assessment of impact Vs deliverability.

Prioritisation Exercise – Output

20. The output of the prioritisation exercise, and therefore the items it is proposed the CEAC recommend to Cabinet for implementation as part of a coherent, strategic response to the climate emergency targets, can be viewed in the tables below (paragraph 27 and 28). These are listed under theme, and within this, in cost order. All costs stated below are provided on a one-off basis for the year one work programme, unless explicitly specified as a recurring annual fee. It is also highlighted whether these are items are to be delivered internally or externally. Officers recommend the items included within the climate emergency work programme are formed of priority one items (easy deliverability, high impact) and priority two items (hard deliverability, high impact).
21. Items placed in priority three (easy deliverability, low impact) and priority four (hard deliverability, low impact) quadrants, as well as items the task and finish group members felt could be reviewed in two years, or did not want to consider any further at this time, are available to review in appendix A.
22. Additionally, included in separate tables below, are the items of which officers consider business as usual, items already commissioned within existing 19/20 budget and ongoing projects the Council is involved in, in respect of this agenda. These will be included within the scope of any future climate change strategy but are not additional activities being put forward by the CEAC.
23. Alongside the proposed year one work programme response as detailed below, some additional gains are available through the the committee in its advisory capacity; fulfilling its role and reviewing policies and strategies as they naturally evolve and enter the governance cycle, for example car parking fees and charges, the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the taxi licensing policy. A forward programme for the CEAC is being discussed as agenda item 11.
24. For the purposes of this exercise, options in respect of planning policy were not included or discussed, due to the temporary direction issued by the Secretary of State, meaning that progression of the emerging Local Plan is currently on hold and therefore any items in respect of this cannot currently be implemented.
25. The predominant theme prioritised and put forward by task and finish group members within priority one items, is 'council business'. This includes items which will be significant in contributing towards becoming a carbon neutral

council. It is important to note that an ongoing project outside of the new proposed items below, is the project to build the new South Oxfordshire District Council Crowmarsh Offices. The design and sustainability specification of this building will be crucial in achieving the adopted target of a carbon neutral council by 2025. The committee have already had early input into the design and sustainability specification at their meeting on the 19 September 2019. Moreover, a prioritised focus on council business allows the Council to get its 'own house in order' which will be reputationally positive for the Council, if it is to then fulfil its role as an influencer, in respect of the aspirations for South Oxfordshire to become a carbon neutral district by 2030.

26. Committee are asked to note that Oxfordshire wide items detailed in the table below are dependent on effective partnership working; they are firstly contingent on a shared South and Vale approach and following this, the buy in of other Oxfordshire councils, in order to progress and implement them effectively. These options are predominantly under theme: biodiversity. However, officers are encouraged by the level and commitment to partnership working already in place in respect of this agenda.

27. PRIORITY ONE ITEMS (easy deliverability, high impact):

Action	Cost
Theme: Council Business	
Council reporting and decision-making templates to include climate impacts section	Within existing resources
Review existing Council policies and strategies to embed the climate emergency	Within existing resources: Policy review An additional option (<u>CEAC preferred option</u>): £1200 for consultant co-facilitation of this exercise, developing criteria of review and delivery of a workshop to consider review conclusions
Internal staff intranet (Jarvis) page on the subject of the climate emergency	£375 (external)
'Single-use plastic free' pledge and action plan	£2250 (external)
Promotion of low carbon (plant based) diets within council facilities and buildings, and action plan	£2250 (external)
Implement electric pool vehicles for staff business travel – Initial three vehicles for testing and evaluating	Initial upfront cost for leases: £5000 (external) <i>Expected to be cost neutral or revenue saving over five years (upfront costs recurring should additional vehicles be added in future)</i>
Identify energy saving opportunities in council buildings	Site energy reviews: (Leisure centres)
Identify opportunities for solar energy on council buildings	£5280 Plus

Identify opportunities for heat pumps in council buildings	(Other sites) £2600
Strategy for the refurbishment of buildings to match zero carbon objective	(external) <i>Feasibility studies only - If projects identified are implemented, costs of these will be high and subject to the council's financial procedures and there could be opportunities for investment potential and revenue generation</i>
Review use of building management systems to increase energy efficiency	
Exploration of battery storage on council sites	
Development of a model to estimate how future district-wide carbon emissions will reduce on implementation of range of projects, demonstrating how South Oxfordshire can move towards the adopted district-wide target	£12,500 (external)
Implement a green travel plan for officers and members	<i>Cost not available at time of prioritisation, further scoping required. This will be subject to the council's financial procedures</i>
Theme: Housing	
Home retrofit service for private households	Within existing resources: Promote and refer to Cosy Homes Oxfordshire retrofitting scheme, pending officer review and assurance of the scheme to Councillors (internal)
Theme: Behaviour Change	
Residents and Communities	
Refocus of the grants programme to support community led initiatives which address climate change	Within existing resources (internal)
Residents' survey on climate change	Within existing resources: Scoping of survey (internal)
Information on the climate emergency for the public, to include; website information and communication tools and campaign opportunities. Initial focus to be information on retro-fitting for residents and supporting an increased understanding of the district council's role in planning policy and future development standards	£1000 (external)
Businesses	
Support and inspire local businesses to act (e.g. case studies, business events and resources)	Within existing resources: Compilation of case studies, guides and tools Additional (internal) £2000 business event, such as business breakfast

Join Oxfordshire Greentech (network for low carbon and cleantech companies) as a 'founder member'	£2500 per year for three-year membership (external recurring annual cost)
Theme: Biodiversity	
Feasibility study into setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and facilitate planting of trees	Initial study: Within existing resources (Internal)
Council reporting and decision-making templates to include biodiversity impacts section	Within existing resources (internal)
Influencing and engaging with farming and agricultural sector	Within existing resources (internal)
Tree planting and maintenance. Programme to be scoped and full exploration of options to be carried out pending cabinet decision	High cost, with potential to be provided/funded by CIL contributions (internal)
Develop a Biodiversity Net Gain Targeting Strategy	Oxfordshire wide strategy: £6000 (CEAC preferred option) (external) An additional option: Create a stand-alone South Oxfordshire strategy, within existing resources (internal)
Develop a Nature Recovery Network and Strategy for Oxfordshire	£6000 (Internal)
Work collaboratively with the aim of re-establishing a local nature partnership with Oxfordshire partners	£8000-£10,000 (internal) (annual recurring cost)
Total cost	£57,755

28. PRIORITY TWO ITEMS (hard deliverability, high impact):

Action	Cost
Theme: Council Business	
Identify opportunities to invest in solar energy off site	Review/report: £2,500 (external) <i>If projects identified are implemented, costs of these will be high and subject to the council's financial procedures</i>
Provision of summary data on energy use for towns in the district, including maps	£3,340 (external) <i>There is the potential to explore match funding basis with town councils</i>
Theme: Housing	
Enforcement of minimum energy standards for private rented homes (ratings F&G are unlawful)	Enforcement officer resource: £30,000 (internal)
Theme: Transport	
Initial feasibility study to an electric vehicle hire facility for residents	<i>Cost not available at time of prioritisation, further scoping required. This will be subject to the council's financial procedures</i>

Electric vehicles for council fleet	<i>Cost not available at time of prioritisation, further scoping required. This will be subject to the council's financial procedures</i>
Total cost	£35,840

29. ITEMS ALREADY COMMISSIONED (existing 19/20 budget):

Item	Cost
Theme: Council Business	
A baseline review of council energy consumption and CO ₂ e emissions	£250
Creation of a 'glidepath' tool to assess the contribution from identified initiatives and other variables, with the facility to consider different timelines in order to arrive at the optimum sequence of actions to achieve the adopted targets and track progress towards zero emissions, noting milestones and any necessary adjustments on the journey.	£750
Define the scope of carbon emissions across the District to be included in the target	£1965
A baseline review of district wide energy consumption and CO ₂ e emissions	£1650
Theme: Behaviour Change	
Implement training for officers on South Oxfordshire' target and work to address the climate emergency	£600
Full day conference for officers and members on the subject of climate change	£900
Crafting of a vision for a future low carbon South Oxfordshire	£2300
Creation of a subsequent action plan with gap analysis and recommendations. Additional creation of a public facing action plan	
Work with town councils across the district and facilitate a workshop to understand theirs and their parishes' local needs in respect of the climate emergency. Seek to connect with the District approach and create actions plans that complement and link to an overarching vision for the South Oxfordshire district.	£2000
Total cost	£11,015

30. ITEMS CONSIDERED BUSINESS AS USUAL:

- a. For the Council to meet the adopted targets, we need to ensure that there is a deep understanding of the subject and its importance as well as an assured commitment of staff across the organisation. It is envisaged that the climate emergency will be embedded at the heart of the organisation by ensuring that we have formalised and embedded it in within our internal governance – e.g. climate implication section on all reports.

- b. The Council will need a robust strategy and policy framework, that could include a climate change strategy. More broadly, it should be ensured that when other policies are developed or reviewed, they are done so understanding any climate considerations. A policy and strategy guidance document has already been created, as part of the council’s Corporate Delivery Framework, which will provide staff with the tools they need to develop robust fully rounded policy. In addition, we have also undertaken a ‘light touch’ policy audit to identify existing policies that could have high climate impacts, in order for us to target our interventions effectively and allow the CEAC the opportunity to review them at future meetings.
- c. Moreover, it is also important that the climate emergency is considered as a key factor in other business as usual activity such as procurement, especially major contract renewal. In particular this will include early preparation for the specification of the new leisure facilities and waste management contracts in 2024, ongoing leisure centre maintenance and refurbishment and grounds maintenance.
- d. In addition, the table below highlights the items originally outlined in the CEAC report ‘Options and Next Steps’ which are considered business as usual for officers:

Item
Theme: Council Business
Embed partnership collaboration to develop external funding bids in order to deliver agreed targets and commitments
Theme: Partnership
Identify public and private partners that have similar goals and compatible interests to work with, allowing the Council to leverage their resources. The most obvious way to leverage resources is to combine the response for South and Vale and create a working partnership with other districts and Oxfordshire County Council, as well as established charitable and community organisations with missions that line up with climate emergency.
Influence policy by agency partners. Central government have a very large role to play in reducing carbon emissions with regulatory control of building, large scale public education campaigns and public transit infrastructure, for example.
Actively monitor or participate in projects by trusted partners as resources allow. There may be specific projects that directly contribute to the target that is set which could be funded by South Oxfordshire and delivered by outside partners who have an established track record and expertise with the work.
Monitor Oxfordshire councils’ positions and action plans in response to their climate emergency declarations
Work with Oxfordshire County Council to respond to the Local Transport Part 5 consultation

31. ONGOING PROJECTS:

Project	Description/Status

<p>South Oxfordshire District Council Crowmarsh Offices</p>	<p>A consultant company are currently undertaking work to prepare a draft building design and specification, for consultation with staff and other stakeholders. The CEAC considered a report on sustainability options for the project, at its meeting 19 September 2019</p>
<p>Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy</p>	<p>This is a county-wide collaboration to set common standards for electric vehicle infrastructure, and an action plan to deliver the charging points needed to support the transition to low emission vehicles</p>
<p>Park and Charge Project</p>	<p>Innovate UK funding has been received for an estimated 120 electric vehicle charge points in council car parks across the county, including smart technology allowing overnight use by residents who do not have off street parking</p>
<p>Oxfordshire County Wide Climate Change Collaboration Group</p>	<p>All district and county councils in Oxfordshire have created a collaboration group at Director and Chief Executive level hosted by Oxford City Council to ensure action in this area is maximised, complimentary where possible and has strong senior leadership</p>
<p>Energy Procurement</p>	<p>Energy procurement options are currently being explored by the council's property team in preparation for the expiry of the current LASER contract in 2020. This will include consideration of the procurement of renewable electricity</p>
<p>Planning Design Guide</p>	<p>Initial initiation of a project to produce a new Design Guide to act both as a guide and as an assessment tool. It is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners in the process of developing high quality development and in assessing its design quality. One of the aims of this project is ensure alignment with the climate emergency.</p>
<p>Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 11: Smart travel and new technology</p>	<p>DGT are participating in MultiCAV consortium to pilot autonomous vehicles to transport between Milton Park and Didcot Parkway railway station.</p>
<p>Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 38: Feasibility study for sustainable fuels for council fleet and local private fleet operators</p>	<p>Capacity funding (revenue) awarded from Homes England, subject to cabinet budget approval. Delivery plan identifies this as a near-term project, to be coordinated through the DGT team</p>

<p>Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 62: Third party development for housing projects to review outcomes of zero carbon showcase homes to support future policy development</p>	<p>Capacity funding (revenue) bid/request made to Homes England July 2019. Awaiting notification from Homes England. Delivery plan identifies this as a medium-term project, to be coordinated through the DGT team</p>
<p>Didcot Garden Town – Delivery Plan Project 48: Strategy for promotion of growing local food</p>	<p>Included within DGT delivery plan; estimated cost £45,000 (funding not currently sourced). Further funding to support implementation by third parties may be required. Delivery plan identifies this as a near-term project, to be coordinated through the DGT team</p>

Financial Implications

32. Any decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the council’s overarching financial position. This is as reflected in the council’s medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to Full Council each February as part of the budget setting report. The February 2019 MTFP and the budget report showed that the council was due to receive £3.3 million less in revenue funding than it planned to spend in 2019/20 (with the balance coming from reserves and accumulated New Homes Bonus). This funding gap is predicted to increase to over £6 million per annum by 2023/24. Every decision should be made in cognisance of the need to substantially reduce this funding gap over the medium term and to eliminate it after five years.
33. Many of the projects and items within the proposed year one programme will have financial implications for the Council. Within the 2019/20 Corporate Climate Budget there is currently £5,500 unallocated.
34. It is clear that we cannot fund and undertake all of the work that is required to tackle the Climate Emergency. Additional sources of funding will be needed in addition to any new budget allocation. This could include government grants, investment by businesses, households, town and parish councils and resource support from community action groups. We believe that Oxfordshire is well positioned to secure the increased funding for responding to climate change that has already been alluded to by central government.
35. The base budget for 2020/21 is £22,990, therefore it is recommended the committee puts forward to Cabinet the request for an additional investment as outlined in the table below, in order to implement priority one and two items as part of the year one work programme that could provide a base for a future strategy to address the climate emergency in South Oxfordshire.

In summary,

<p>Total cost - priority one items, climate emergency work programme</p>	<p>£93,595</p>
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10% overall contingency	£9,359.50
2019/20 Corporate Climate Budget - unallocated	-£5,500
2020/21 Corporate Climate Budget – base budget	-£22,990
2020/21 Climate Change Lead – 1 FTC 12 months (including 25 per cent on-costs)	£31,798.13
Total additional budget request 2020/21	£106,262.63

36. Moreover, officers recommend in order to support implementation of the climate emergency year one programme of work, a resource of one additional officer on a twelve-month fixed term basis with a cost of **£31,798.13** This cost shown is a fifty per cent share of a total cost of **£63,596.25** as officers recommend that any additional resource will be shared with Vale of White Horse District Council on a fifty: fifty basis subject to both councils choosing to proceed in this way.
37. It should also be noted that many items included within the proposed year one programme of work are feasibility studies and therefore there will be significant resource implications and additional budget required beyond year one of the programme, if the recommended projects are implemented following the studies, they will be subject to the council’s financial procedures. The additional resource requested will provide capacity to move forward, review and evaluate the year one programme and draw findings and activities from the year one programme into a coherent strategy to address the Climate Emergency over a longer term.
38. As this area of work develops it is also likely that existing resources will need to be redirected and refocused to these outcomes.
39. Some of the items prioritised by the task and finish group have been costed at a fifty: fifty cost to South Oxfordshire District Council with Vale of White Horse District Council, due to benefits of scale from our shared resources. As a result, if some of the items prioritised by the task and finish group are not approved for submission to Cabinet by the CEAC, or if Cabinet amend or do not adopt some of the items within the proposed programme of work, there is the potential for an increased financial cost for Vale of White Horse District Council.

Legal Implications

40. Carbon Neutrality itself is not a legal requirement and consequently there is no legal duty for the Council to undertake actions and activities to achieve this.
41. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Legal implications may arise in respect of individual projects included within the subsequent work programme as they are scoped, approved by Cabinet and implemented. These will be subject to identification and appropriate action as required.

Risks

42. This agenda is not currently a statutory function for district councils; many of the projects/activities detailed within this report require a funding stream and have resource implications, including implications arising from redirecting current resource from areas across the Council to this agenda if this is the approach the Cabinet decide to take.
43. Moreover, due to the current financial position, it may not be possible to deliver on the full climate emergency aspirations declared by the Council.
44. South Oxfordshire District Council is in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District Council and any items implemented in relation to council operations could lead to complexities, due to shared resources and offices at 135 Milton Park.

Conclusion

45. In conclusion, this report outlined the process by which a proposed work programme to address the climate emergency declared by the Council was formulated and presented this year one proposed work programme.
46. Moreover, this report re-emphasised the targets set by the Council to achieve carbon neutrality for council operations (carbon neutral by 2025), and for South Oxfordshire district (carbon neutral by 2030) and the subsequent strategic steps required to work toward these targets, particularly in the area of 'council business'.
47. In addition to proposing new activity for the Council, this report outlined ongoing projects the Council is already involved in to address the climate emergency, and detailed items considered business as usual for council officers as well as items which have already been commissioned within the existing 2019/20 budget to support meeting the climate emergency targets.

Background Papers

- **Appendix One** Full Prioritisation Exercise Output