Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

Vale of White Horse District Council

Report of Head of Partnership and Insight

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To: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

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AGENDA ITEM

Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps

Recommendation(s)

(a) Committee to select target option one two or three to recommend to Cabinet as an overarching goal for the Council in respect of adopting an early carbon neutral target as outlined in the Council motion put forward on 13 February 2019.

(b) Committee to support the Climate Emergency work programme proposals for further exploration, full evaluation and costing. This will provide an initial assessment of the actions required, in order to facilitate costing and evaluation and is not an exhaustive list.

(c) Committee to support the commissioning of expertise where necessary to define and validate the Council's and District's energy consumption and carbon dioxide and equivalent (CO_2e) emissions baselines, and to fully explore, evaluate and cost proposed work programme options. The cost of this scoping exercise should be met within 19/20 existing budget, any increased expenditure outside of the remaining 19/20 budget will be subject to approval as set out in the council's financial procedures.

(d) Committee to approve commencement of a communications plan, to include engagement with members and officers, residents, community groups and businesses into routine communications by the district councils and the exploration of a Resident Advisory Group.

(e) Committee to note that all other Oxfordshire Councils have declared or acknowledged a Climate Emergency and are yet to declare specific actions to achieve targets or publish work programmes.

(f) Committee to establish a task and finish group to work with Officers on putting forward work programme proposals for further evaluation and costing, this will include presenting options back to the committee, to prioritise and recommend to Cabinet for their implementation.

Purpose of Report

1. This report considers options for recommendations that the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) could make to Cabinet in response to the climate emergency declaration.

2. Recommendations may include a cross-organisation policy response to climate change in Vale of White Horse and adoption of an overarching goal for the Council for an early carbon[1] neutral target.

3. This report is separated into two parts; it will firstly outline options for an early carbon neutral target. The spectrum may range from pledging to be a Carbon-Neutral Council, to aspiring to be a Carbon-Neutral *District*. There is also a middle option to achieve carbon neutrality, which has been named Carbon Neutral Council 'Plus+'. This is an option to adopt the Carbon-Neutral Council level and add on a number of projects that address climate change for the entire district. This allows the councils flexibility to identify key projects that would cover the entire district and be achievable with existing staffing and funding that could be identified from either internal or external sources. This report sets out the benefits and risks of each option.

4. In order to achieve the desired target, a programme of work to explore seven themes is proposed: housing, partnership, infrastructure, council business, transport, biodiversity and behaviour change. A specific public education campaign will be needed to encourage behavioural change by our residents, visitors and employees. Proposed options for specific topics that will be put forward for further evaluation and costing before being included in any final work programme will form part two of this report.

5. In addition to exploring the seven themes mentioned above, Vale of White Horse should consider a range of ideas for how to realistically achieve any target that is set. Useful strategies may include: integrating climate emergency action into existing work streams, working closely with outside partners to deliver on key initiatives, scoping important projects well enough to seek outside funding for them and eliminating existing programmes to redirect staffing and funding to climate emergency work. Elimination of existing

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[1]The term "carbon" refers to carbon dioxide (CO_2), which is a colourless, odourless and non-poisonous gas formed by combustion of carbon and in the respiration of living organisms. It is considered a greenhouse gas. Emissions means the release of greenhouse gases or their precursors into the atmosphere over an area during a period of time. Definition of carbon dioxide taken from Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development website. https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=6323

programmes would need to consider that some core services are mandatory and that there are funding limitations.

6. In defining the overarching vision for Vale of White Horse, it is important to clarify the use of various terms. The term "carbon-neutral" can mean making or resulting in no release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. A community may generate carbon emissions which are offset elsewhere. This results in "net zero carbon" overall. "Zero carbon" typically means that a community produces no emissions and is the purest form.

Strategic Objectives

7. This work is supported by the current Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan 2016-2020 through the commitments to 'Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing', 'Housing and Infrastructure' and 'Running an Efficient Council' through aspects such as improving recycling rates, finding solutions to flooding problems across the District and seeking to reduce energy costs.

8. Work is currently being undertaken to develop the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and update priorities, which provides an opportunity to fine-tune climate emergency related goals. It is envisaged that the draft of the future corporate plan 2020-2024 for Vale of the White Horse District Council will be reviewed by the CEAC and there will be an opportunity for recommendations to Cabinet on its contents.

Background

9. Please note and review appendix one: background paper - scene setting.

10. A Climate Emergency was declared by the Vale of White Horse District Council administration at Full Council on 13 February 2019.

11. At the time of writing, 212 councils have declared Climate Emergencies across the United Kingdom; this equates to 52 per cent of principal authorities.

12. 86 District Councils have declared a climate emergency; within their motions, 56 of these (65 per cent) explicitly pledged to become carbon neutral on council operations.

13. In 2019 in Oxfordshire, the following events are notable:

28 January – Oxford City Council declared a climate emergency; the motion included the pledge to establish a Citizens Assembly made up of a representative range of Oxford citizens to establish the facts and make recommendations for the city

2 April – Oxfordshire County Council acknowledged a climate emergency; the motion included the pledge to make Oxfordshire County Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions

11 April – South Oxfordshire District Council declared a climate emergency; the motion detailed that the option of adopting an early carbon neutral target for South Oxfordshire should be reviewed

26 June – West Oxfordshire District Council declared a climate and ecological emergency; the motion included expression of the Council's determination to be carbon neutral by 2030 and to encourage others in the West Oxfordshire District to follow this example

22 July – Cherwell District Council declared a climate emergency; the motion included the pledge to make Cherwell District Council carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions

14. Vale of White Horse District Council is signed up to carbon reduction targets through the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership - 50 per cent reduction from a baseline taken in 2008 by 2030. From 2008-2015 Oxfordshire emissions have fallen by 23 per cent. There has been a greater than 30 per cent reduction in the domestic and industrial/commercial sectors but no change in emissions from transport. This reduction has been achieved largely because of national policy measures e.g. more renewable energy in the national grid for us to pull on and improved product energy efficiency. Under a business as usual scenario where there are no more national policy measures in the pipeline to help us, it is expected that emissions will level out by 2020 and then start to build up in line with economic growth.

15. The Vale of White Horse District Council motion 13 February detailed that the option of adopting an early carbon neutral target for Vale of White Horse should be reviewed.

Target Options

16. **Option One: Carbon Neutral Council**

a) Records of the Council's emissions from buildings, vehicles and key contracts date back to 2007. In 2017/2018, gross carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) emissions (including a basket of greenhouse gases[2]), from the Council's operations were 3,932 tonnes. CO_2 emissions alone were 3,139 tonnes (80 per cent of this figure). Net CO_2e emissions for Vale of White Horse District Council 2017/2018 were also 3,932 tonnes.[3] Net figures are calculated by subtracting carbon offsets[4] and green tariff[5] emissions from the gross figure.

To provide a comparison,

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[2] The basket of greenhouse gases is based on those covered by the Kyoto Protocol, and consists of seven gases: carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF3)

[3] Vale of White Horse District Council, *Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2017/18*. See www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/environment/climate-change/tackling-climate-change/carbon-management

[4] The definition of this term as taken from the government guidance on reporting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions: "In some situations, your organisation may choose to reduce your emissions through external GHG reduction projects that reduce GHG emissions outside your operations or your supply chain."

[5] The definition of this term as taken from the government guidance on reporting greenhouse gas emissions: "Green tariffs are electricity tariffs marketed as having environmental credentials, i.e. typically electricity generated from renewable resources (e.g. wind and solar). Emissions from green tariffs are lower than traditional tariffs."

Council	Gross CO2e emissions (tonnes)	Net CO_2e emissions (tonnes)
Vale of White Horse District Council	3,932	3,932
South Oxfordshire District Council	3,896	3,896
Oxfordshire County Council	26,437	26,330
West Oxfordshire District Council	3,170	3,140

b) Officers consider it achievable for the Council to commit to becoming carbon neutral within its own operations by 2030 at the latest, in line with the timescales outlined within the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special report October 2018, to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

c) This could be delivered by reducing the Council's overall energy usage and changing to zero carbon electricity sources where possible. Any remaining energy use would need to be offset by matching it against energy reductions achieved elsewhere, to achieve a net zero energy use.

d) In respect of achieving this target, it should be noted by the Committee that there are fixed milestones/timescales which would need to be taken into consideration when making recommendations to Cabinet, such as the Council's office relocation to Crowmarsh and the end dates of contracts in respect of services such as waste and leisure.

e) Benefits of 'Carbon Neutral Council' target;

    i.   Officers consider it achievable for the Council to commit to becoming carbon neutral within its own operations by 2030 at the latest

    ii.   Commitment to this target is likely to be positive for public relations and the Council would be setting an example for local businesses

    iii.   Implementation of measures to achieve this target could result in cost savings for the Council over time as a result of lower bills

    iv.   This target is consistent across Oxfordshire councils and thus there is potential for cross collaboration in achieving carbon neutrality for the councils

f) Risks of 'Carbon Neutral Council' target;

    i.   This agenda is not currently a statutory function for district councils; the projects/activities arising from this agenda will require a funding stream and will have resource implications

ii.   The Council leases the offices at 135 Milton Park and therefore there is limited opportunity for delivery of some projects in respect of building and infrastructure alterations in the short term

iii.   Vale of White Horse Oxfordshire District Council is in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council and any target set in relation to council operations could lead to complexities, due to shared resources and offices at 135 Milton Park

iv.   This target is the first stage of the spectrum and subsequently may be viewed by stakeholders as not aspirational enough

v.   This target requires embedding of a working culture which considers climate change and impact across all activities and at all levels

vi.   This target is reliant on the pace of technological advances outside the influence of the Council, for example, electric waste collection vehicles

vii.   The longevity of some current contracts leads to limited opportunity for delivery of short-term procurement alterations

17. **Option Two: Carbon Neutral Council Plus+**

a)   Officers consider Carbon Neutral Council Plus+ as an option to achieve carbon neutrality in its own operations as above, and then go beyond this, offering the opportunity for flexibility and to be responsive to local and national trends, shifts or momentum in policy.

b)   Benefits of 'Carbon Neutral Council Plus+' target;

i.   This target offers the opportunity to work on specific projects that could use external funding as part of this target.

ii.   The definition of 'Plus+' can be adapted to respond and refocus projects as may be required

iii.   In comparison to a 'Carbon Neutral District' target, further outlined below (section 18), Carbon Neutral Council Plus+ offers less reputational risk and does not outline definite targets that the Council does not have authority to influence

iv.   This target offers the potential for available resources to be better aligned to respond to goals, in comparison to a 'Carbon Neutral District' target

v.   This target offers opportunity to extend the reach of the Council and use its leadership role to influence and engage with partnerships and communities to further this agenda

vi.

c) Risks of 'Carbon Neutral Council Plus+' target;

In addition to the risks associated with the 'Carbon Neutral Council' target, officers have identified the following:

    i. This target is in the middle of the spectrum and subsequently may be viewed by some stakeholders as not aspirational enough

    ii. A lack of a clear and agreed definition of 'Plus+' could lead to confliction or confusion in respect of the Council's ambitions

18. Option Three: Carbon Neutral District

a) The total CO_2 emissions from Vale of White Horse District in 2017 was 853.8 kilotonnes, or 6.5 tonnes per year per resident.[6] However, this figure does not capture a complete picture, as it does not include emissions from flights by district residents or businesses, or transport emissions associated with resident consumption of food grown or produced elsewhere and transported to local supermarkets, for example. The District's total emissions is calculated via a combination of domestic, commercial and transport sources.

b) The Council's operations equate to approximately 0.37 per cent of the total emissions for the Vale of White Horse District. This is not an exact figure because council operations are calculated on a financial year basis, and district data is calculated on a calendar year basis.

c) Given the scale of challenge that would be required to achieve a Carbon Neutral District target, it is inevitable that future measures would entail radical steps which will require far-reaching policy and societal changes.

d) Benefits of 'Carbon Neutral District' target;

    i. This target aspires to secure the sustainability of the District's future and aligns with research on the impact of global warming on ecosystems, human health and well-being (IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius).

    ii. Commitment to this target is likely to be positive for public relations and could increase stakeholder satisfaction with the Council.

    iii. This target offers the opportunity for engagement in creative, innovative solutions which could lead the way for national progress. Innovation can lead to, or 'unlock', future funding opportunities.

    iv. Future central government policy could facilitate the growth of this agenda and may align with the ambition of Vale of White Horse District

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[6] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, *UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2017*. See https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics

Council; thus, the Council may at the forefront of future policy development.

e) Risks of 'Carbon Neutral District' target;

    i. This agenda is not currently a statutory function for district councils; the activities arising from this agenda will require a separate funding stream and may have significant resource implication.

    ii. This target relies on measures taken at a national and international level to achieve an overall carbon neutral target. The council cannot do this alone.

    iii. This target is inclusive of areas of which a district council has limited legislative influence over, for example 46 per cent of Oxfordshire's emissions are related to transport; the County Council provides the strategic planning role in respect of transport.

    iv. There is reputational risk for the Council if the target is not achieved by selected timescales.

    v. This target requires access to technical expertise, due to the level of innovation and measures required to achieve carbon neutrality for the District.

    vi. This target requires embedding of a working culture which considers climate change and impact across all activities and at all levels, additionally projecting this stance externally; there is reputational risk if the council does not inwardly act on its outward stance.

    vii. To achieve this target, it is anticipated that wider Oxfordshire councils would need to also declare an ambition for a carbon neutral Oxfordshire, due to the intersectional nature of the remits of two-tier authorities. At the time of writing, the Council does not know what the wider Oxfordshire councils will declare as specific actions to achieve targets or the detail of their work programmes, or what opportunity there could be to deal with this agenda as an Oxfordshire collective, which Officers believe represents a significant risk.

    viii. Due to the district council's role as an influencer in respect of this target, there is an inability to hold responsible organisations and stakeholders to account.

Climate Emergency Work Programme

19. Role of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC)

a) Once a target is put forward by the Committee and the options have been subject to a full evaluation it is envisaged that a work programme will be developed, prioritised and implemented under the governance arrangements outlined in the below visual:

CABINET

CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CLIMATE EMERGENCY PROJECT TEAM

TASK AND FINISH GROUPS
as required

b) Where required, a short-term project group will be formed to provide limited advice using expertise on hand to support the CEAC's function. The CEAC will make recommendations to Cabinet on matters relating to climate change and for specific programme goals, and the staffing, action plan, outside expertise and funding needed to accomplish them.

c) The approach to communications and engagement with stakeholders will need to be considered by the CEAC and encompass a wide range of views and audiences. The approach recommended to Cabinet will need to inspire, engage and mobilise members and staff, residents, community groups and businesses. Public communication and engagement should be discussed at a future CEAC meeting. A recommendation is to approve commencement of a communication and engagement plan, including the exploration of a Resident Advisory Group, to include residents with expertise in relevant fields, for example farming. The communication and engagement plan will subsequently be reviewed by the CEAC at the next meeting.

20. Options for Further Exploration

a) The work programme proposals outlined in this section are grouped under seven themes of council business, partnership, housing, infrastructure, transport, biodiversity and behaviour change. This has been informed by an informal CEAC workshop held 23 September 2019 attended by CEAC councillors or by Officers engaged in the development of this report. The CEAC are asked to review these in line with the target the CEAC will recommend to Cabinet. Work programme proposals will be put forward for further exploration, full evaluation and costing as necessary to draft a realistic work programme, this will be subject to review by the CEAC before being recommended to the Cabinet.

21. Theme One - Council Business – Define a strategic response that could include:

a) CO_2e emissions; commission a baseline review of council and district wide energy consumption and CO_2e emissions

b) Minimise energy use; retrofit of council owned buildings, including review of energy audit reports to identify new energy saving opportunities and commission additional audits where required

c) Renewable energy sources;

    i. On-site solar to deliver electricity for council use; project LEO (see appendix one 'current activity') includes mapping activity to identify the most appropriate sites for renewable energy across Oxfordshire

    ii. Off-site solar to meet remainder of power demand; solar electricity generated by the council off site can be contractually matched to the council's electricity use (sleeving)

    iii. Review opportunities to use ground, water and air source heat pumps in council buildings

d) Implement zero carbon building acquisitions and refurbishments including Crowmarsh offices

e) Make a 'single-use plastic free' pledge and reduce use of single-use plastic products in all council activities

f) Promotion of low carbon (plant based) diets within council facilities and support consumption of local produce and products

g) Offsetting with community benefit; invest in the energy efficiency of community buildings, for example through a grants programme

h) Gain carbon credits through tree planting, an option for this could be that the Council buys additional land on which to plant trees (and provide other recreational uses in line with the Green Infrastructure Strategy)

i) Embed partnership collaboration to develop external funding bids in order to deliver agreed targets and commitments

j) Investigate options on the councils energy contracts to switch to purchasing green or renewable energy, though these tariffs might be subject to a higher unit price

k) Explore use of building management systems to track energy use in buildings and target out of hours energy use i.e. ensuring that PCs and lights are turned off where appropriate

22. **Theme Two - Partnership – Define a strategic response that could include:**

a) 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. Established charitable and community organisations with missions that line up with climate emergency are The Earth Trust, Friends of the Earth, One Planet Oxfordshire (Bioregional), Sustainable Wantage and many more.

b) 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.

c) 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 Vale of White Horse and delivered by outside partners who have an established track record and expertise with the work, for example One Planet Oxfordshire (Bioregional) have already developed a one planet living action plan for Oxfordshire and a shared vision over the last 18 month period and are externally funded to build on this work.

d) On 10 July 2019, Council Members for Climate Change across Oxfordshire came together to discuss the response to the Climate Emergency. One of the actions to emerge from this meeting was for each council to respond to the Friends of the Earth publication entitled *'33 actions local authorities can take on climate change'* to establish each council's position on climate-impacting areas including transport, waste, buildings, energy, procurement and green spaces. By harnessing this information, it is hoped that it will highlight where councils are succeeding in tackling climate change and opportunities for collaboration to address where further action is required. It is the intention to hold a workshop of lead officers to look at the responses and propose areas where we might work together.

23. **Theme Three – Housing – Define a strategic response that could include:**

a) Policy; monitor and review the national policy position in respect of energy standards for new homes to ensure that the Local Plan reflects the latest national policy at a minimum, in addition to lobbying government as appropriate

b) Creation of a Supplementary Planning Document to provide additional guidance on mitigating impact on the climate within developments expanding on Core policies 33, 38, 40, 41 and 43 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1, or prepare a Supplementary Planning Document expanding on development policy 26 of Local Plan 2031 Part 2 if/when adopted.

c) Undertake a review of the adopted Local Plan which focusses on addressing Climate Change and introducing the highest standards for development

d) Retrofitting;

    i. Cosy homes programme (see appendix one 'current activity') includes trialling a home retrofit service which offers a holistic service, centred on the 'Retrofit Works' delivery model and using local service providers

> ii. Review Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan project 26: Feasibility study for installation of renewable energy sources for new build and retrofit housing (see appendix one 'current activity')

e) Oxfordshire Plan 2050; contribute to work at a county level to achieve zero carbon standards for new developments, including lobbying of Government as appropriate

f) Monitor Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan project 62: Third party development for housing projects (see appendix one 'current activity') to review outcomes of zero carbon showcase homes to support future policy development

g) Embed green initiatives in the Dalton Barracks Garden Community

h) Exploration of providing Council owned affordable housing built to a zero-carbon standard; Development and Regeneration service are currently exploring opportunities for this

i) Private rented sector; implement minimum energy efficiency standards for private rented homes

24. Theme Four – Infrastructure – Define a strategic response that could include:

a) Smarter and more flexible management of electricity demand, for example installation of battery storage on council sites

b) Review opportunities for renewable energy for example, engage with the Oxford Energy Superhub (Pivot Power) which is trialling a battery system linking to the national grid (see appendix one 'current activity')

c) Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy; deliver and maintain charging infrastructure to support transition to electric vehicles

25. Theme Five - Transport – Define a strategic response that could include:

a) Provide a response to Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Part 5 consultation

b) Investigate closer working links with Oxfordshire County Council Transport Planners, to extend the reach of Vale of White Horse District Council

c) Electric Vehicles;

> i. Implement electric vehicles for council fleet

> ii. Implement electric pool vehicles for staff business travel; review Hello EV report proposals (see appendix one 'current activity')

d) Taxi Licensing; Vale of White Horse Air Quality Action Plan includes reviewing the licensing policy to encourage low carbon vehicles (see appendix one 'current activity')

e) Continue promoting the vehicle anti-idling campaign, 'Turn it Off', that targets idling at locations with sensitive receptors, such as schools and medical practices (www.southandvale.gov.uk/turnitoff)

f) Provide eco-driver training for council employees

g) Implement a green travel plan for officers and members

h) Deliver an active travel campaign

i) Publish the updated Air Quality Planning Guidance and looking into the possibility of formally adopting this as Supplementary Planning Guidance or incorporating Air Quality into any future Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents

j) Scope the feasibility of a dock-less bikes scheme for the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) towns

k) Commence the process of producing a new air quality action plan for Vale of White Horse District Council

l) Review parking incentives for low emission and electric vehicles, such as reduced hourly rates in district owned car parks

m) Monitor outcomes of Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan project 38: feasibility study for sustainable fuels (see appendix one 'current activity')

26. **Theme Six – Biodiversity – Define a strategic response that could include:**

a) Require all new developments to deliver a 10 – 15% net gain in biodiversity through new local plan policy.

b) Work with other Oxfordshire Authorities to develop a Biodiversity Offsetting Targeting Strategy.

c) Work with Oxfordshire Authorities and partners to develop a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire.

d) Work with partners to support the re-instigation of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership.

e) Spend 5% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts on supporting Biodiversity/Green Infrastructure Projects.

f) Investigate the options for setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and to facilitate the planting of trees as a carbon offset.

27. **Theme Seven - Behaviour Change – Define a strategic response that could include:**

a) Officers and Members;

i. Implement mandatory training for officers and members about Vale of White Horse's target and work programme to address the climate emergency

ii. Review existing policies and strategies to consider how they affect contribution to climate change

iii. Implement an internal staff intranet page on the subject of the climate emergency

b) Residents and Community Groups;

i. Produce easy to understand public information so every resident can access the complex information that underpins the topic of the climate emergency

ii. Give people a menu of choices for ways they can change their lifestyle and advance goals for change to allow for flexibility in individual living situations

iii. Engage stakeholders in the decision-making process(es) e.g. through a Residents Advisory Group

iv. Implement increased opportunities for residents to access local produce and products, for example review and consider outcomes of Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan project 48: Strategy for promotion of growing local food (see appendix one 'current activity')

v. Share existing literature about electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and harness opportunities through the Park and Charge project (see appendix one 'current activity')

vi. Support community-led initiatives which address climate change, for example through the grants programme

vii. Work with town and parish councils across the district to champion initiatives and support work with their communities. Wantage Town Council have implemented a Climate Emergency Sub Committee and Abingdon Town Council have have approached Vale of White Horse District Council for support in respect of their declaration of a climate emergency 20 March 2019

viii. Review and consider outcomes of Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan project 39: Feasibility study for combined recycle and reuse hub in Didcot (see appendix one 'current activity') to consider model replication across the District

c) Businesses;

i. Invite local businesses to move more strongly toward a low carbon economy and support local businesses wherever possible, including continued promotion of Oxfordshire Green Fund (see appendix one 'current activity')

ii. Develop and compile a portfolio of project examples to inspire local businesses to act

iii. Encourage low-carbon business into the area, identifying incentives for them to locate locally

iv. Develop skills in the local workforce, including apprenticeship opportunities, in respect of low carbon infrastructure and installation

v. Work with partner bodies across the County to ensure that the climate emergency is adequately reflected in the development and implementation of county wide strategies and plans such as the Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy and Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

Financial Implications

28. Many of the projects and actions for consideration within this programme will have financial implications for the Council. Before proceeding with any options, a financial evaluation will be undertaken to assess these costs, this will be subject to review by the CEAC before recommendations are made to the Cabinet.

29. A recommendation arising from this report is to commission expertise to define and validate the Council's and District's baselines and scope the costs and gains on options to include in the arising Climate Emergency work programme, the commissioning of this scoping work should be met within existing 19/20 budget. Any increased expenditure outside of the remaining 19/20 budget will be subject to approval as set out in the council's financial procedures.

30. Given that all Oxfordshire Councils have declared a Climate Emergency, the option of a shared resource should be investigated as the necessary challenges and measures are likely to be very similar and an Oxfordshire wide approach would strengthen any outcomes. Currently the committee is being serviced within existing officer resources.

31. As work develops and further funding is required, projects and activities will be subject to individual business cases as appropriate, and financial scrutiny.

32. The financial implications of any recommendations made by the committee will be reported to the Cabinet when it considers them.

Legal Implications

33. 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.

34. 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.

Risks

35. Risks in respect of each carbon neutral target option are outlined within the 'target options' section of this report. Full risk assessment will form part of the evaluation and costing process for the work programme proposals.

Conclusion

36. In conclusion, this report outlined options and a process for CEAC to define overarching goals and recommend adoption of an early carbon neutral target. They are as follows;

> One: Carbon Neutral Council

> Two: Carbon Neutral Council 'Plus+'

> Three: Carbon Neutral District

37. In order to achieve an early carbon neutral target, this report highlighted that stakeholder engagement is an essential part of embedding change; officers propose drafting a communications and engagement plan to be reviewed at a future CEAC meeting.

38. This report outlined the initial scoping work and a range of ideas and options for the CEAC to review. These will now be subject to further exploration, full evaluation and costing, in order to finalise the scope for a Climate Emergency work programme and for the CEAC to prioritise options into a coherent work programme. Officers propose this is scoped around seven themes; council business, partnership, housing, infrastructure, transport, biodiversity and behaviour change and that a task and finish group of 4 CEAC members is appointed to work alongside Officers and external commissioned support during this scoping phase.

Background Papers

- **Appendix One** Scene Setting