



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 24 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	UPDATE ON ACTIONS TO EMBED CLIMATE CHANGE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Mike McKeown - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability Email: mike.mckeown@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Claire Locke, Assistant Director - Property & Regeneration Email: claire.locke@cotswold.gov.uk
Report Author	Claire Locke, Assistant Director - Property & Regeneration Email: claire.locke@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide an update on actions following the Audit Position Statement on Climate Change in 2023.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee resolves to: I. Note the actions to-date and the ongoing activity to further embed Climate action across all the Councils activities.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Responding to the Climate Emergency● Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees	Chief Executive Cabinet Service leads across CDC and Publica including Business Managers, Assistant Directors and specialists.



I BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In October 2023 Audit and Governance Committee received a report on recently completed Audits and were informed that Climate Change had received a 'Low Reasonable' level of assurance .
- 1.2 The audit considered how teams across the Council and Publica were seeking to embed the climate change challenges within their own operational activities. An organisational wide survey to 27 officers (Assistant Directors, Business Managers and the Climate Change team) was utilised to inform the basis of the review and included questions to assess staff understanding of corporate objectives, key Performance Indicators surrounding Climate Change operations, operational risk reporting process relating to Climate Change, and engagement with the public on Climate Change operations.
- 1.3 The questionnaire that was issued only received 8 responses, so provided limited information on which to draw conclusions. A Position Statement was therefore issued.

2 EMBEDDING CLIMATE ACTION

- 2.1 Embedding climate action is challenging but needs to be achieved if the Council is to ensure it is considering the climate implications of all its actions and is creating positive change through direct action or influence.
- 2.2 The previous audit survey asked whether services were measuring the climate impact of their activities. However, this is extremely difficult to quantify and would need significant additional skills and resources. Some actions the Council takes, cannot be measured i.e. it can install Electric Vehicle Charging Points to increase the use of more sustainable vehicles, but the Council will not know how many people switch to an electric vehicle as a result of that action. The Council is instead focussed on ensuring it accurately collates data on its carbon footprint and then prioritises activities on areas that will achieve the greatest reduction in carbon. For this reason, the focus to-date has been on projects like the decarbonisation of the leisure centres and the installation of Solar PV at Trinity Road.
- 2.3 Another area considered in the survey was risk. The issue is broader than risk, as the Council needs to consider all climate implications from its decisions and policies. Publica has therefore developed a Sustainability Tool, which enables project information to be fed in and then produces a result indicating areas that will have a negative, neutral or positive impact on carbon, the environment and ecology. This enables a 'red flag' if there will be harm or an opportunity will be missed to enhance performance. An example where this may be useful is a new build or renovation project which shows the building works will be negative and the buildings future operation will be negative. Alternative building materials, design or greener technology could change this position, making it more sustainable both in construction and operation. This tool is now being trialled by the corporate project management team.



- 2.4 Operational work to meet Net Zero commitments is now wide ranging and crosses multiple services including Forward Planning and Development, Property, Waste and Leisure services. The Council recently compiled information in support of the 'Climate Scorecard' national assessment which is conducted annually by Climate Emergency UK. The scorecard assesses each Councils climate performance, reviewing activities across areas such as Planning and Land Use, and Buildings and Heating. Information is available on the Councils website [Frequently Asked Questions - Cotswold's Climate Initiatives and Future Plans - Cotswold District Council](#) setting out the activities across a wide range of services.
- 2.5 The Council has also established a Climate Board and has been conducting meetings with officers to fully explore the activities already completed or underway to embed climate change within services but also to identify additional opportunities. This work will inform the prioritised action plan which will now be developed.
- 2.6 In the meantime, climate focussed projects are continuing and include investment in Solar PV on the Councils estate , the next tranche of EVCP installations in public car parks and a retrofit project which has secure external funding to bring in additional resource working in partnership with Climate Leadership Gloucestershire. The work to reduce the Councils office footprint at Trinity Road has also recently been completed reducing the Councils carbon footprint and reducing costs.
- 2.7 To support staff Publica has been rolling out Carbon Literacy Training. Since March 2021 249 staff have attended Carbon Literacy training and 140 are certified as Carbon Literate including 75% of managers. This training has also recently been delivered to Members. Silver Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) status was achieved in March 2024.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None associated with this report. Individual climate projects will be subject to business cases where this is necessary.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 There has been significant action taken since the original Audit survey was carried out to ensure Climate is a consideration for all services. More activity is also planned to ensure it is truly embedded throughout the organisation.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None relevant to this report.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 If the Council does not take action to embed Climate action across all services and does not effectively assess its performance in reducing its carbon emissions it will fail to deliver against its Climate targets.



7 EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 None associated with this report.

8 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Covered within the main body of the report.

9 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

10 The Council could decide to reduce its climate activities but will then fail to deliver against its Climate priority.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

(END)



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