



## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Annual Progress Report 2022-2023
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment
<b>Contact officer:</b>	<b>Steve Bambrick, David Johnson</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Recommendations:</b>	1. NOTE the progress made in 2022-2023 against the aims, objectives and actions in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	Action 9 in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy commits the Council to 'Report annually on progress made against actions and reducing emissions'.  Addressing climate change and poor air quality is relevant to all Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025 priorities.

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report provides an update on the significant progress made against the aims, objectives, and actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy within the second year following its adoption on 19th October 2021.
- 1.2 Details of 51 activities are provided, many of which address several actions in the Strategy. These have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) decreasing by 7.73% from 2019 to 2021; nitrogen dioxide concentrations staying within the annual mean value in 2022 (apart from one location where new diffusion tube monitoring was established within the Friarage Road Air Quality Management Area in 2022); and, the Council's GHG emissions being 73.7% lower in '22/'23 compared to its emissions from 1990 (please see Appendix A).

- 1.3 The Council was responsible for 5,401 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (net emissions) in '22/'23. We have kept comfortably within the Council's carbon allocation for '22/'23 (6,953 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and are on track to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by at least 75% by 2030.

## **2. Summary of Climate Change & Air Quality Annual Progress Report**

- 2.1 Action 9 in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy commits the Council to 'Report annually on progress made against actions and reducing emissions' and addressing climate change and poor air quality is relevant to all Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025 priorities. The Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report (please see Appendix A) provides an update on the significant progress made against the aims, objectives, and actions set out in our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy within the second year following its adoption on 19th October 2021.

## **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 The option to not produce Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report was considered as not being viable due to the commitment to 'Report annually on progress made against actions and reducing emissions' (action 9 in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy).

## **4. Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications of this annual progress report.
- 4.2 In Tables 2 and 3 of Appendix A, the Progress Report document, the difference between the Council's "Gross" and "Net" emissions is shown as 1,747 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This difference is the result of the procurement by the Council of Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) backed electricity since October 2022.
- 4.3 The price difference between REGO backed electricity vs grid derived electricity is largely driven by the price of REGO certificates. [Renewable Exchange](#) provide an index tracking REGO certificate costs across their platform. While this may not be representative of all REGOs traded across the GB market, their August update showed an increase in REGO average price to [£6.41 for July 2023](#). This compares to a price of [£3.13 for July 2022 and £0.60 for July 2021](#). The upward trend has been caused by a number of factors, but may be slowing down as more domestic customers switch from renewable backed tariffs to the price cap standard variable tariffs.
- 4.4 If the Council were to require renewable tariff electricity in order to meet the seven year carbon budget and the price of REGO certificates were to significantly increase this could cause upward electricity price pressure for the Council. This is unlikely to

be a requirement for the first Carbon Budget through to 2027 but may be necessary to meet future carbon budgets.

## **5. Corporate implications**

5.1 Due to their negative impacts on health, natural and built environments, and the economy addressing climate change and poor air quality is relevant to all corporate plan priorities:

- Increasing prosperity
- Strengthening our communities
- Improving our environment
- Protecting the vulnerable

## **6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

6.1 As the annual progress report is relevant to all parts of Buckinghamshire, there has not been engagement with local councillors and community boards regarding its production.

## **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

7.1 Should the recommendation to approve Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report be agreed, the Report will be published online and promoted as part of the Bucks Climate Challenge communications campaign. The Communication Plan submitted alongside this document provides further detail.

## **8. Next steps and review**

8.1 Should the recommendation to approve Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2022-2023 Progress Report be agreed, the Report will be published online and promoted as part of the Bucks Climate Challenge communications campaign.

## **9. Background papers**

9.1 [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#) (approved by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021)

9.2 [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021-22 Progress Report](#) (approved by Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022)

9.3 [Large Scale Tree Planting on Buckinghamshire Council Land Holding](#) (approved by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021)

- 9.4 [Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050 Motion](#) (at Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020)
- 9.5 [Buckinghamshire Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Action Plan 2022-27](#) (approved by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022)
- 9.6 Appendix A – Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report 2022-23
- 9.7 Appendix B – Communications Plan Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report 2022-23

## **10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).

