



Report to Cabinet

Date:	2nd January 2025
Title:	Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Annual Progress Report 2023-2024
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Thomas Broom, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment
Contact officer:	Steve Bambrick, Alex Beckett, David Johnson
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. NOTE the progress made in 2023-2024 against the aims, objectives and actions in the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy2. NOTE that the council is on track to meet its first carbon budget.
Reason for decision:	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 2023-2024 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 during the third year since its adoption on 19th October 2021.

- 1.2 Details of a wide range of activities are provided, all of which deliver against one or more of the actions in our strategy. Following our procurement of renewable electricity in 2022 we have seen a reduction in net emissions to 4,476 tCO₂e, representing a decrease of 78.2% against our 1990 baseline. We also remain comfortably within our first carbon budget, having used 47.1% over the first four years of the seven-year budget. This means we are on track to meet our first carbon budget.
- 1.3 Air quality has seen consistent improvement since the adoption of the strategy in 2021. Following good progress, the council has now begun the formal process of revoking four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

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’. For the purposes of carbon emission accounting, we are reporting on the period April 2023 to March 2024 in line with corporate reporting timelines. Regarding actions undertaken by the council pursuant to achieving the aims and objectives of our strategy, we are reporting on activity from October 2023 to September 2024, aligning with the 12 month period following adoption of our Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy on 19th October 2021.
- 2.2 While our gross emissions have increased compared to last year, the council has achieved a 78.2% reduction in net emissions compared to our baseline from 1990, driven largely by the decision to procure 100% renewable electricity in 2022 which has seen substantial carbon savings achieved. The council have recently undergone a procurement exercise to [secure energy supplies for the next 3 years, starting in October 2024](#). The decision has been taken to procure 25% of our electricity from sources backed by a Renewable Electricity Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificate from October 2024.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 The option to not produce Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy 2023-2024 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 The Legal Director’s nominee has read and noted the report.

4.3 Financial Implications

4.4 The forecast capital spend on climate change related activities for 2024/25 is £723,000. The forecast capital spend on climate change related activities in future years is £4,667,000. This is funded from a mix of sources, including the Climate Change Fund, the Sustainable Energy Recycling Fund and grant funding in the case of [LEVI](#), [where the council have secured £1.991m for additional public charging infrastructure](#).

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 2023-2024 Progress Report be agreed, the report will be published online and promoted as part of the Bucks Climate Challenge communications campaign. Due to the timing of Cabinet, the initial communications campaign will be a “soft launch” so as not to compete with Christmas/New Year’s. Following this, the progress report will be promoted in January 2025. 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 2023-2024 Progress Report be agreed, the Report will be published online and promoted as part of the Bucks Climate Challenge communications campaign. It will be submitted to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee in February 2025.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy](#) (approved by Cabinet on 19th October 2021)
- 9.2 [Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy 2021-22 Progress Report](#) (approved by Cabinet on 11th October 2022)
- 9.3 [Large Scale Tree Planting on Buckinghamshire Council Land Holding](#) (approved by Cabinet on 16th February 2021)
- 9.4 [Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050 Motion](#) (at Full Council on 15th July 2020)
- 9.5 Appendix A – Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report 2023-24
- 9.6 Appendix B – Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report 2023-24 Summary Document

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 by 5pm on 30 December 2024. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.