

CLIMATE BIO-DIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 15th December 2020

Title: Witney Town Council Carbon Footprint

Contact Officer: Compliance & Environment Officer – Angus Whitburn

Background

To understand the council's entire carbon emissions the Compliance and Environment Officer was gathering data to calculate the total carbon footprint. This is a necessary step to take to understand areas energy could be saved easily, where emissions are excessive for the activity and buildings that require works to improve their energy rating thus reducing the total emissions. Cllr Andrew Proser kindly supplied the accounting tool provided by the LGA to make this process easier.

Current Situation

The accounting tool has been completed using available data from bills dating between March 2019 – February 2020 for all council operated buildings. The total emission for building heating fuel and electricity also include that of WWS&S and Langdale Hall. Officers are still awaiting Langdale's gas usage and Madley Park's figures to finalise the emissions. Also included in the accounting tool is unmetered connection labelled as "street lights" and vehicular emission for the works team fleet of vans and heavy machinery.

Town Hall Offices

The Town Hall offices consume more electricity than any other WTC managed building. This is largely part to do with the amount of computer in use but also the building's heating is entirely electric. One solution has been to install IR heaters in one office to assess if this would cut the needed heat output from the electric radiators. This project is still due to get underway due to the effects of the pandemic but it is hoped they can be installed early January. The effect of these heaters can then be measured against the kWh used in previous years.

The option to produce electricity from solar or some other form is limited for both the Town Hall and Corn Exchange mainly due to their building construction. The Town Hall is currently being supplied with 100% green energy from green energy UK. One option would be to offset the building emissions from projects elsewhere. The Leys project has got the potential to cover the electric usage of the Town Hall.

Leys Depot

The Leys Depot has a completed plan for a solar installation included battery storage. The square footage available at the Leys is enough to cover the consumption of both the Pavilion's tenants and works depot from April to August. This coverage would also be extended for that of the splash pads electric usage during this period. One unforeseen advantage of this system is WTC could charge the tenants of the pavilion for their use of the energy WTC produce. Officers are currently reviewing the plans submitted by R-ECO and the Town Clerk is reviewing the detail of the lease.

Unmetered connections

The Christmas lights are billed off an unmetered connection. This is an estimated usage that is calculated then a certificate is produced for billing. For this year's display that is significantly smaller than usual, it is 21,356 kWh. One significant saving that could be made on any future bill would only be to run the lights dusk to midnight.

Energy Supplier

All of WTC electric and gas supplies have now been switched over to Green Energy UK. Their energy is 100% green energy and not part of a carbon offsetting scheme. The gas they are supplying WTC building is from gas that would have otherwise gone to waste.

The only exception to this has been the unmetered connection. Unfortunately, Green Energy quotes on these supplies were too exorbitant for the town council. Excluding the Christmas lights, the two other supplies use 3544 kWh of electricity.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

As outlined in the report the cost to change the unmetered supplies of the Buttercross and St Mary floodlighting would have cost an extra £124.89 a year. This would have more than doubled the spending on these two supplies.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Future Christmas lighting contract to include timers on all lights that run reduced hours from dusk to midnight to cut emission.
2. To review the solar plans for the Leys and recommend officers proceed with developing the project.