

FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 11 October 2021

Title: Climate Emergency

Contact Officer: Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

Background

Witney Town Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2028.

Current Situation

Carbon Footprint

The council carbon footprint for March 2019 – March 2020 was 64.08 tonnes. This is not an entirely accurate figure as it does not include travel for work purposes, the breakdown of the three-phase supply from the coffee shed and the water supply. The same period was also calculated with the inclusion of the council's tenants West Witney Sports and Social and the ICE centre (Langdale Hall). Unfortunately, it was also difficult to retrieve information from Madley Park Hall during the pandemic. With the inclusion of West Witney and Langdale, they contribute a further 34.83 tonnes. Both buildings represent the need for major thermal and heating upgrades.

Since the carbon footprint calculation in 2019-2020 the new administration office has been opened so, this would be expected to increase once the calculation for 2020-21 has been finished. But what will be done is to calculate the 2019 – 2020 footprint against the same buildings for 2020 – 2021 to see if any reductions have been made. Small improvement has been made over the councils' facilities such as LED lighting, improving heating controls removing unnecessary electrical equipment and attempting to change employee behaviour.

Building's

The new administration office has been insulated where possible, infrared panels have been installed along with fully programable ceramic core electric radiators. However, the age and condition of the building make it hard to achieve passive insulation or install technology to renewably produce electricity.

The council have agreed to complete an energy efficiency study on Burwell Hall that should provide us with actions to help reduce its carbon footprint. Council officers have already

identified works to carry out such as installing thermal blinds, insulation ceiling voids and installing better heating controls.

Windrush depot and Tower Hill mess hut. Most of the actions taken over these 2 buildings have involved removing unnecessary electrical equipment such as water heaters, fridges and installing LED lighting. The energy usage was minimal and now should have been reduced as far as feasibly possible.

The Leys Depot has had the initial research into the feasibility of a solar installation encompassing the coffee shed. The concept would be to sell back energy produced to the coffee shed. From the figures provided to the council from solar installers, this definitely seems possible.

Works Department

It's a big task to find feasible solutions to some of the works team's processes. Small plant equipment such as combi engines and chainsaws can be changed to their electric equivalent, which now provides the power needed for commercial applications. However larger plant equipment such as the compact tractor, excavator and dumper don't have financially feasible alternatives for the council. Although a possible solution has been found for Tower Hill Cemetery through the use of an electric powered wheelbarrow.

A big challenge but what would mark as a massive achievement for the council is the conversion of its fleet of vehicles. The fleet currently consists of 3 LGV's and 2 OGV's. The current plan is to keep one of the larger flatbeds to be used for towing and replace the 1 remaining OGV and all 3 LGV with smaller electric utility vehicles. The Maintenance and Environmental Services Officer has been to see and test drive one set of these vehicles and is due to visit another supplier on the 11th of October.

Energy Provider

The council's electricity and gas are supplied from the UK's only supplier of complete green energy. They do not achieve this through carbon offsetting but by purchasing their energy from a large variety of renewable producers small and large.

There is the option to purchase a tariff from the council current providers to give us EKO energy credentials. Its energy that is not only 100% green but meets strict sustainability criteria.

Recycling and Waste Reduction

All buildings are now recycling, and good progress has been made to reduce plastic waste. Officers have identified a commercial supplier of soluble cleaning pods removing all plastic waste from our cleaning supplies. The next challenge is to try and improve the waste streams creating from the works department, currently, everything is disposed of in a skip.

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.

In the event of the collapse of the council green energy supplier it would currently leave us with forcing us to source energy from a supplier that uses an offsetting scheme or a standard provider.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- Officers are currently obtaining quotes for electric vehicles and working with the renewables funds to try and get the vehicles transferred over. There is also an additional fund for an electric vehicle.
- No budget is available to seek a solution for the gas boilers at The Corn Exchange or the generation of renewable electricity.

Recommendations

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

1. Create a target of reducing CO2 emissions by 5% year on year and publicise the results and how we have achieved our target.
2. The council needs to discuss what carbon neutrality looks like for them. Can carbon neutrality only be announced when all the council emissions have been removed through its own renewable energy production? Or can neutrality be announced when we manage to remove all our direct emissions through fuel usage. Additional discussion needs to be held if this is to include tenants and contractors working for the council.