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CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Pathway to Net Zero

Our 2030 action framework to become a net zero
Council and Borough



Foreword

From Cheltenham's Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency



Our planet is precious. Climate change is the biggest challenge we all face. That's why Cheltenham has joined hundreds of local areas around the country in declaring a climate emergency and setting an ambitious Net Zero goal. But in this discussion we cannot afford lose sight of why we must act. It's because we are all obliged to leave a better future for our children, grandchildren and everyone in future generations. The consequences of failing to act are often presented in negative terms, with the threats of extreme weather, migration crises, widespread poverty and much more besides. I like to point out the positives of taking the necessary action. If we have more plentiful clean energy supplies and energy efficient homes, fuel poverty will fall. If we promote and protect nature, our world will be more beautiful. If we switch short car journeys for walking and cycling or onto clean buses, people will be healthier and air quality will improve – and urban areas will become more social places too.

That's at the heart of our Climate Emergency Action Plan: Pathway to Net Zero. Cheltenham Borough Council's document sets out a wide range of actions that we must undertake to reach Net Zero. Some of these will be achievable by the Borough Council alone, but nearly all of them rely on the involvement of others. In many areas it's partnerships with the County Council. In other areas, it's a reliance on funding from the government. In nearly all, the involvement of local people and businesses will be crucial. Some of the changes to our everyday lives will barely be noticed, but others will be more revolutionary.

Whatever the scale of change, we must all bear in mind that we cannot afford not to act. But also that we can all contribute to a brighter future for all. Cheltenham can make a difference.

Councillor Max Wilkinson

Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

February 2022

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1. Introduction

Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and committed to becoming a carbon neutral council and Borough by 2030. The motion received unanimous support and committed the Council to:

- Declare a 'Climate Emergency';
- Pledge to make Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;
- Call on the Government to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible; Work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;
- Continue to work with partners across the town, county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
- Report to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency.

This declaration was quickly followed by our Carbon Neutral Cheltenham¹ report, published in October 2019, which provides the council with a set of indicative actions to reduce its own carbon footprint to net zero, as well as that of the wider borough. The council recognises that it cannot achieve this change alone

and welcomes the opportunity to pursue a collaborative cross-community approach to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.



In recent times, our lives have been dominated by the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, councils across the UK are implementing recovery plans to kick-start local businesses and look after the welfare of their communities. However, we know that the climate and nature crises haven't gone away and the urgency to act is now more important than ever.

The production of Cheltenham Borough Council's 'Climate Emergency Action Plan: Pathway to Net Zero' (CEAP or 'Pathway') sets out our aim to achieve the 2030 target by acting holistically as a town, not just as a council working in isolation. It is well evidenced that climate action has a range of wider benefits for the health, equity and prosperity of towns and their citizens. This plan therefore also considers the wider advantages of achieving net zero carbon and how we can ensure these benefits are engrained in the fabric of our aspirations.

Outlined here are the key steps needed to push forward this vast agenda and strive to achieve the 2030 goal. We have collated our actions based on eight categories to help provide focus to the broad impact of the climate emergency. The emerging programme from CEAP will be monitored on an annual basis up to 2030, with interim milestones, to ensure that the targets remain on track whilst the council continues to be dynamic to adapt quickly to market changes alongside any relevant new research, insights and innovations.

This pathway goes above and beyond the ambitions set out in the 2008 Climate Change Act, which committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. Although, this target was made more ambitious in 2019 when the UK committed to reaching 'net zero' carbon by 2050, CBC's aim is to reach the target 20 years earlier than this.

However, since Cheltenham's Climate Emergency declaration called for the devolution of power and funding to local areas, financial pressures on local areas, specifically Local Authorities, have significantly increased.

¹ www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/61/sustainability/1622/climate_emergency/3



2. Purpose of the Climate Emergency Action Plan

We strive for Cheltenham to be a thriving and equitable town, ensuring a good life for everyone within the Earth's natural boundaries. We want to be a town in which prosperity and wellbeing for everyone comes first. The aspiration for 2030 fulfils the Council's vision for Cheltenham to be a place:

Where everyone thrives:

- **Where all our people and the communities they live in thrive**
- **Where culture and creativity thrives, and is celebrated and enjoyed throughout the year**
- **Where businesses and their workforces thrive**

In line with the Carbon Neutral Cheltenham² report, and in support of the above commitments set out in the Cheltenham Place Vision³, this CEAP has been developed as a framework, to help shape the Council's priorities for climate action across the borough for the period 2022-30. As set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2023, achieving a cleaner and greener environment for residents, businesses and visitors is a key priority⁴. The CEAP gives us the opportunity to:

- **Communicate our response to the climate and ecological emergency and share good practice**
- **Influence and shape the development of strategy and policy for climate at county, regional and national levels**
- **Make a positive impact towards the national effort to address climate change**
- **Work in partnership to take forward projects and initiatives that reduce the impacts of climate change**
- **Set an example to other Local Authorities yet to set a goal and pathway for becoming net zero.**

We know that waiting to take action is not an option and this pathway focuses on the actions we can take now, and over the coming years, to reach our 2030 target, as well as sharing what we have already achieved.

We expect that further adaptation and changes will be needed as climate innovation and advances in technologies improve our ability to achieve our goals in new and potentially revolutionary ways.

We aim to be at the forefront of these advancements wherever possible and see this as a key element of our climate pathway.

There will be further developments which we cannot yet foresee, such as changes in government policy, the emergence of new technologies and lessons learned through experience. Therefore, although the main goal of the 2030 CEAP will remain the same (i.e. to become a net zero council and borough by the year 2030), the action plan will remain flexible and be reviewed and updated annually, taking account of new research, developments, technologies, community needs, and funding opportunities.

² www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/61/sustainability/1622/climate_emergency/3

³ www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/6343/cheltenham_place_vision

⁴ www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/7401/corporate_plan_2019-23



In addition to the benefits that achieving net zero carbon emissions will have on climate change, a well-managed carbon reduction programme will also offer substantial positive effects, known as co-benefits, on a wide range of other interrelated issues, including fuel poverty, air quality, health and wellbeing and economic growth.

The work required to meet our climate obligations also means developing climate resilience, which will include:

- **Mitigating flood risk**
- **Considering adaptations that reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts**
- **Developing a more tightly-knit community**
- **Planning for more green and natural space for both people and wildlife.**

This presents a great opportunity and necessity for the CEAP to set out a collaborative approach across the borough – a time for multiple partners to join forces to support the Council and the town in reaching its ambitious target.

This Pathway was prepared by the Council's Climate Emergency team and developed in conjunction with relevant stakeholders. Climate action plans from local authorities are already paving the way on the climate agenda and served as a basis for this Pathway, but a special thanks must be made to Friends of the Earth for their 'Climate Action Plan for Councils' 50-point plan⁵, which has been instrumental in guiding the development of this Pathway.



3. Jargon-busting and achieving Carbon Net Zero

3.1 What is the Climate Emergency?

There is a climate emergency because our climate is warming and changing faster than nature can adapt to it. Scientists have calculated that by the middle of this century, the world has to reduce emissions to as close to zero as possible so that the earth has a chance to recover and stabilise. We therefore have to take action now.

A climate emergency declaration, or declaring a climate emergency, is an action taken by governments and scientists to acknowledge humanity is currently heading towards climate catastrophe.

The climate is the long-term pattern of day to day weather. Our food and water supplies depend on stable seasonal patterns of temperature, rain and wind, both in the UK and elsewhere. In the last 100 years, the earth's average temperature has increased faster than previously seen – this is known as global warming or global heating. This heating of the planet is causing our global and local climates to change and is therefore putting our ecosystems⁶ at risk, which may no longer be able to support our current way of life, or those plants and animals that live among us. This includes the production and provision of food and water for instance.

It is clear from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report⁷, that human activity plays a significant role in this increase in temperatures. Our use of fossil fuels like petrol, diesel, gas and coal is widely accepted by scientists to be the main cause of global warming. When these fuels are burned, they release greenhouse gases which trap heat in the earth's atmosphere, causing the air and seas to heat up, which in turn changes the climate. The GHG produced when we burn these fuels contain a lot of carbon and so the term 'carbon emissions' is often used when talking about tackling the climate emergency. These emissions are rising at such a rate that our climate is changing much more rapidly than earth's ecosystems and lifeforms can adapt.

We have already witnessed evidence of the climate emergency happening right now, with an increase in the prevalence of floods, droughts and fires around the world, including devastating climate events across the UK this year too. It is likely that these events will get more frequent and fierce if carbon emissions continue unchecked. Preventing this requires urgent action on a global scale.

This mitigation pathway is paving the way for Cheltenham to play its part in limiting the catastrophic impacts caused by climate change, harnessing the potential of our own residents, businesses, visitors and communities, to contribute locally to the national and global commitment required.

You can find further information and useful links on our climate change webpages if you would like to know more: www.cheltenham.gov.uk/climate

⁶ An ecosystem is where plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and landscapes, work together to form a sphere of life.

⁷ www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1



3.2 Climate implications for Cheltenham

At a local level, we have already started to feel the impacts of climate change. Increased flooding in the area has posed a risk to transport infrastructure, damaging our roads and causing disruption. An increase in impermeable surfaces such as concrete and tarmac, and a reduction in natural flood mitigation, for example due to land drainage schemes, has resulted in flash flooding which can impact health, wellbeing and livelihoods.

The 'Urban Heat Island' effect, where towns and cities experience higher summer temperatures than the surrounding rural areas, has been noticed in Cheltenham. Higher building density, less green infrastructure and air pollution from traffic, all increase the likelihood of heat becoming trapped or stored and lead to a disproportionate rise in local temperatures. Since the start of temperature recording, 10 of the warmest years have been since 2002 and there is a trend of increasing temperatures. Higher temperatures result in an increase in heat-related illness and death, particularly in vulnerable groups, including the elderly and very young.

As time goes on, we will notice more changes to our environment and an increase in extreme weather events. Some of these are hard to predict accurately, such as shortages of public water supply and problems with food production.

However, this mitigation pathway will consider how we can become a more closely-knit community which knows where to turn in the face of an extreme event and how we will prepare and adapt to changes that come our way.

Not only will climate mitigation and adaptation help to address the global issue, it will bring improvements in our local area. Co-benefits such as enhanced access to green spaces, job creation, improved mental and physical health, together with increased biodiversity, **will make Cheltenham a better place to live for all of us.**



3.3 The Jargon: What is the difference between ‘carbon-neutral’ and ‘net-zero’?

It is important that we ensure there is clarity surrounding our targets and the terminology we use. Therefore, we have outlined the difference between the various terms you may hear across the press, social media and other publications, to help with the narrative and related aspirations.

Greenhouse Gases (GHG)

are gases in Earth’s atmosphere that trap heat. They let sunlight pass through the atmosphere, but they prevent the heat that the sunlight brings from leaving the atmosphere. This warms and creates the ‘greenhouse effect’. The main greenhouse gases are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, nitrous oxide. When we measure GHG, we usually refer to them as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO2e) to allow us to easily compare their impact on global warming⁸.



Carbon neutral means that any carbon dioxide (CO2) released into the atmosphere from an organisation’s activities is balanced by an equivalent amount being removed. Typically, this would be achieved by determining the organisation’s **carbon footprint** and deciding how best to counteract these emissions via renewable energy generation or **carbon offsetting**, and sometimes carbon emissions reductions. An organisation can demonstrate carbon neutrality, whilst still increasing its own carbon emissions.



Net-Zero emissions means not adding any greenhouse gases to the atmosphere through an organisation’s activities. Becoming net-zero starts with a plan to rapidly reduce GHG emissions to zero by a specified date. However, most organisations find that some emissions can’t be reduced to zero. These are expected to be small and are usually then offset by initiatives aimed at removing an equivalent amount of GHG from the atmosphere. The UK became the world’s first major economy to set a target of being net zero by 2050. **Cheltenham has set a more ambitious target of being net zero by 2030.**

In October 2021, the Government stated that to reach their Net Zero target, the task is to “reduce emissions to as close to zero as possible, with the small amount of remaining emissions absorbed through natural carbon sinks like forests, and new technologies like carbon capture.”⁹



Carbon footprint is the calculated amount of CO2 released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation, or community.



Carbon offsetting is the action or process of compensating for the CO2 emissions arising from an organisation’s or individual’s activity by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent reductions of CO2 in the atmosphere. It is suggested that CO2 has the same impact on the climate no matter where it is emitted and, therefore, it is considered that a tonne of CO2 absorbed from the atmosphere in one part of the world, through carbon capture or tree planting, for example, can cancel out a tonne of CO2 emitted in another.

Scope 1 emissions cover an organisation’s GHG emissions which are produced directly by their activities. This is usually through the burning of fossil fuels, whilst running gas boilers or diesel vehicles, for instance.

Scope 2 emissions cover GHG emissions produced indirectly by an organisation, for example the electricity used to heat a building which has been produced by burning fossil fuels elsewhere.

Scope 3 emissions include all other indirect emissions that are produced by an organisation’s activities, such as the disposal of waste, employee commuting and the supply chain.

⁸ ecometrica.com/assets/GHGs-CO2-CO2e-and-Carbon-What-Do-These-Mean-v2.1.pdf

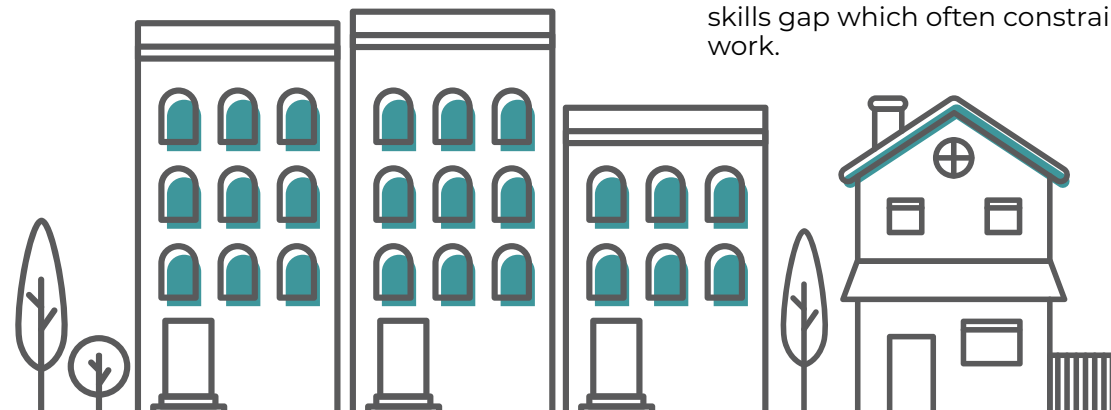
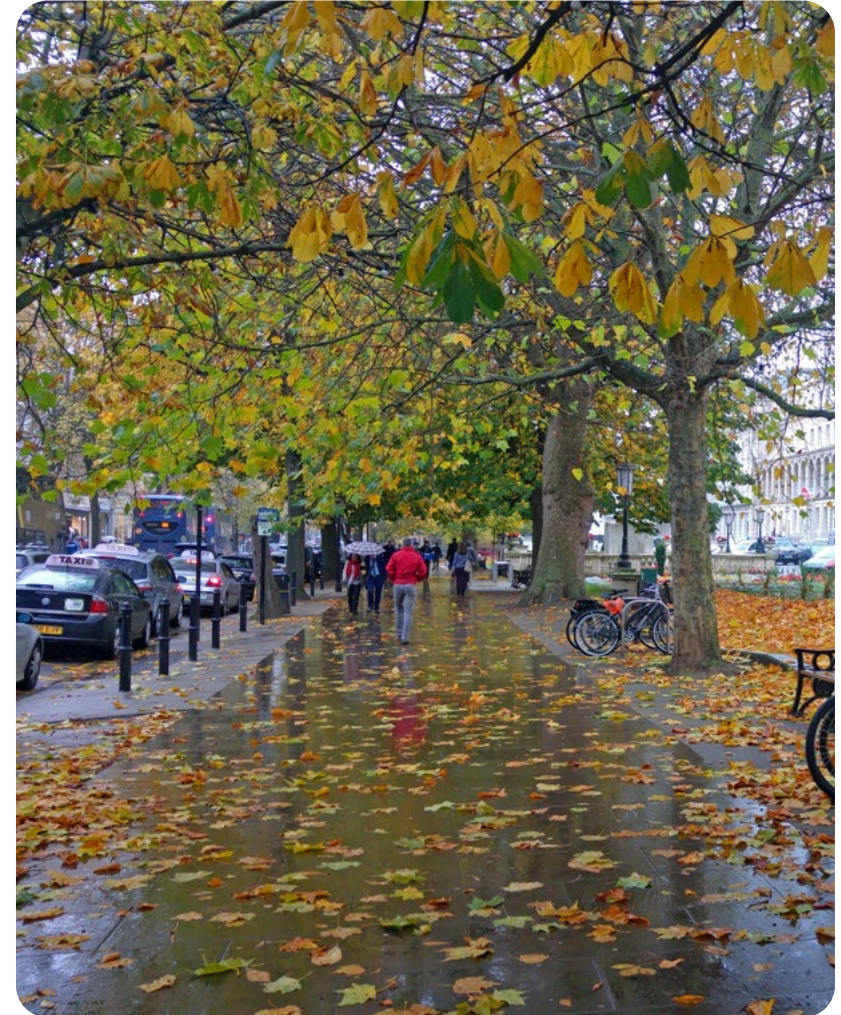
⁹ assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028157/net-zero-strategy.pdf

3.4 What do we want to achieve?

CBC has set an ambitious target to become **Net Zero** by 2030. Primarily, this involves a plan to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions to almost nothing and to explore the viability of compensating for the remaining emissions through mechanisms such as carbon-offsetting. Although we will endeavour to reduce our Scope 3 emissions as much as possible, for example, by looking at how our officers travel to work and where our waste is generated and disposed of, much of our Scope 3 emissions come from those across our supply chain, from the builders we use, to the manufacturers of our office pens. This presents a significant challenge for us to reach net zero, as we will need to consider the carbon impact of our procurement activity across the board, i.e. where products come from, how they are made and what they are made of, as well as the business activities of service providers. Therefore, although we plan to tackle our Scope 3 emissions head on, we recognise that this may be a longer process than reaching net zero for our Scope 1 and 2 emissions.

As well as becoming a net zero Council, we have also committed to reach net zero carbon emissions as a Borough. This is a challenge that will require support and change from all those living and working in Cheltenham, as well as businesses, partner organisations like the County Council and LEP, and the Government.

CBC recognises its role as one which necessitates leadership, facilitation and signposting to make it easier for others to follow on the journey to net zero. We know that there are requirements for input and support from others to help us achieve our net zero ambitions. For example, to help us deliver our vision of how transport could work better in the borough, we will work with others who have the crucial statutory powers and resources, such as GCC. To align with our ambition, central Government will need to enhance legislation and funding so that the necessary policies and structures are in place for us to drive change. We must continue to motivate the construction sector to 'gear up' in order to meet the coming demands for the retrofitting of homes and commercial buildings, and support the education sector in reducing the skills gap which often constrains our work.



4. Carbon Footprint Calculations

4.1 CBC Carbon Footprint 2019-21

Table 1.0 below shows CBC's carbon footprint in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). We have striven to be as thorough as possible when calculating the carbon footprint and widened the scope in 2020/21 to include emissions from both waste and water. This means that some of the reductions in gas consumption resulting from the reduction in the use of buildings during the Covid-19 pandemic were partially mitigated. This is presented next to our base year of 2019/20 as originally calculated, and the revised base year, which was calculated using the updated approach.

	2021/22	2019/20 (base year)	2019/20 (revised)
Scope 1	2,954	3,620	3,650
Scope 2	1,047	868	1,279
Scope 3	1,069	1,134	1,178
TOTAL GROSS EMISSIONS	5,070	5,622	6,106

4.2 Cheltenham Borough Carbon Footprint

Table 2.0 below shows the annual carbon footprint, in CO₂e, of the Borough. These figures comprise data from various sources including from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)¹⁰ and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)¹¹, as well as some of our own data collection and extrapolation. The calculations include emissions from sources such as waste disposal, transport, and energy consumption in homes and businesses.

	2020	2019	2018
TOTAL GROSS EMISSIONS	539,856	555,568	570,993

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env23-uk-waste-data-and-management

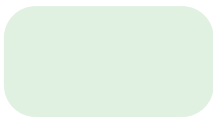
¹¹ data.gov.uk/dataset/4b7b7f64-0b97-4a6e-8e45-1218b9a81876/sub-national-total-final-energy-consumption-data



5. Topics

Outlined below, are 8 key areas of focus we believe are needed for us to become a net zero Council and Borough by the year 2030. The ambition for each topic is broadly covered, together with a list of the actions we will take to help reach our net zero goal. This list will remain fluid to keep up with changes in government policy, the emergence of new technologies and lessons learned through experience.

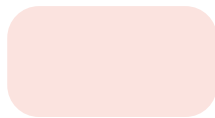
Moving forward, an annual progress report will be produced by our Climate Emergency team to monitor and evaluate our progress against the list of actions set out here.



**Priority in
2021-23**



**Priority in
2024-26**



**Priority in
2027-28**



**CBC taking a
leading role**



A. LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Overview

CBC strongly believes that in order to ask others to make the necessary changes to their organisations and lives, we must be seen to be leading on making these changes ourselves. By seeking to set ever higher standards, we can offer advice and share best practice to make it easier for others to follow, signposting to other leaders along the way.

Ongoing & Completed

We are already on our way to understanding how our staff travel to and from work and will proceed by promoting lift-sharing and public transport options. We have introduced a staff cycle purchase scheme through salary sacrifice, to encourage modal shift and help reduce our commuter transport emissions. We continue to consider flexible and home-working options to reduce the emissions from commuting and building use.

In addition to this, charging points for the Mayors electric car will be installed at Swindon Road in 2022, coinciding with the arrival of the first two electric vehicles as part of the Ubico fleet, as we begin our transition away from fossil fuel consuming vehicles. In support of this, during 2022, we will be changing some of our UBICO fleet to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a fuel with much lower carbon emissions.

In order to improve our ways of engaging with communities, we are trialling two different platforms which encourage democratic participatory processes and stakeholder involvement, one of which is under the Cheltenham Zero Partnership. We have already had many positive interactions through haveyoursay.cheltenham.gov.uk and cheltenhamzero.org and continue to explore ways to get the most out of these sites. These sites not only allow us to hear the views of Cheltenham residents and businesses, but also provide a platform for us to share updates and case studies from ourselves and other organisations. In this way, we hope to inspire and encourage others to join us on the journey to net zero.

Actions

1. Report our carbon footprint annually and encourage others to follow suit. Endeavour to be more thorough and precise over time and include more of our impact year on year.



2. Commit to lobbying higher levels of government for stronger climate action and greater support to local authorities to help facilitate them making a difference.



3. Introduce compulsory 'Carbon Literacy Training' to the Council and partners and commit to 100% of the Council's officers, staff and elected members gaining a Carbon Literacy certification.



4. Develop case studies to share our experience in implementing climate initiatives, learnings and success stories, to help others learn from our actions, replicate, or ideally, do better.



5. Keep the public informed about our progress in meeting or missing our climate targets.



6. Develop, or help facilitate through the Local Resilience Forum, a strategy for locally addressing epidemics and pandemics as part of our wider climate actions.

7. Leverage our position as 'The Festival Town' to drive change through the development of a more sustainable and carbon friendly events strategy.



B. DECISION MAKING, POLICIES, PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Overview

We know there is a need for the climate agenda to be a strong policy thread across the council. Without climate being a focus for all our officers and members, woven through each of our departments, we will fail to embed a Net Zero culture. Thus, we will ensure all our decisions help to meet national and local net zero carbon targets, improve air quality and protect and restore nature, as well as delivering on COVID-19 recovery.

Ongoing & Completed

The Council has been working hard since declaring a climate emergency and throughout the pandemic, to deliver action that will lead to a seismic shift in our approach to reaching net zero.

First and foremost, we have employed and committed future annual budgets for two dedicated climate emergency officers - a team we expect will need to grow to achieve our goal of becoming a net zero, climate resilient council and borough by the year 2030. This team is complemented by a new, dedicated climate emergency Cabinet Lead to drive positive change among our members and help challenge leadership and decision-making. Furthermore, we have established a core multi-disciplinary group of officers from across the Council, to help ensure climate change is not just delivered by one team, but is woven throughout the business across everything we do.

Additionally, the Council is part of the Government's Kickstart Scheme¹² which will allow for the 6-month hire of a Climate Action Support Officer, providing additional resource to the Climate Emergency Team in delivering the actions from this Pathway, but specifically, will employ someone claiming Universal Credit and in the 16 to 24 year old age bracket.

The creation of a 'Climate Change Programme Board' will help to keep us on the right track throughout our journey to 2030, ensuring we are focusing resource and efforts in the most important areas. The Board, led by an appropriate Cabinet Member, will consist of other political representatives and the Countywide Climate Change Coordinator, meeting on a quarterly basis to steer the programme of works stemming from this pathway.

¹² www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme

Actions

1. Identify both a councillor at cabinet level and a lead officer as Climate Champions, who are required to publish an annual public report on progress against meeting the targets set out in the CEAP.



2. Issue a new climate-focused Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that addresses the limitations within the existing Local Plan and Joint Core Strategy. This will set a new 'Cheltenham Standard' for developers and aid our planners in their decision making. The SPD may include the necessity to develop using Natural Flood Management (NFM) techniques, the requirement to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, installing sustainable energy solutions, driving adoption of the 'Building with Nature' benchmark and the use of Passivhaus standards.



3. Introduce a tool to ensure that climate implications are adequately considered at the early stages of each project, initiative or decision. This tool should be used to develop initiatives that the lowest possible impact on the environment whilst still meeting the needs of the Council.



4. Annually review the existing and additional workforce needed to deliver the actions set out in this pathway and swiftly prioritise the decisions and investment needed to recruit the necessary capacity and expertise.



5. Align our council statutory and non-statutory plans, policies and guidance with our climate, nature and green economy goals, including corporate areas such as procurement and infrastructure development.



C. FINANCE, FUNDING, INVESTMENT AND PROCUREMENT

Overview

Both public and private investment is crucial to the success of reaching our targets for 2030. How we invest is fundamental to facilitating change. We cannot overestimate the power that our purchasing decisions across the borough can have on encouraging, supporting and driving the green revolution and forcing markets to change for the better. Currently, the Government's Procurement Policy Note¹³ requires that any suppliers bidding for goods, services or works, with an estimated contract value of over £5 million, must provide a Carbon Reduction Plan confirming their commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2050. This also has to outline the environmental management measures that they have in place for the project/works. Policy such as this can incentivise climate action through the supply chain, however, we hope to be more ambitious by introducing suitable criteria for much lower contract values.

Ongoing & Completed

CBC has developed its own Climate Investment Strategy with a view to source funds using various financing options. This investment strategy will provide a wider pool of funding to help tackle the climate emergency by supporting and activating carbon reduction projects. This strategy is expected to be published in early 2022 and will enable the council to act quicker and respond better to investment opportunities, grants and private investment projects. A Green Investment Strategy Board is to be established to evaluate and authorise decisions for investments under £500,000.

We know that working closely with our fellow districts across Gloucestershire will be an important part of our effort to reach shared carbon reduction targets. Financial contribution has therefore been made by CBC to employ a County-wide Climate Change Coordinator, a role hosted by Gloucester City Council and financed by public bodies and district Councils within Gloucestershire. This officer will help ensure that the districts and county work collaboratively, learnings are shared and economies of scale are drawn upon wherever appropriate.

We are committed to reducing our investment in oil and gas whilst understanding the continued need to balance this commitment with making the right financial decisions to safeguard our residents, businesses and communities.

¹³ assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/991622/PPN_0621_Taking_account_of_Carbon_Reduction_Plans_2_.pdf

Actions

1. Develop a Climate Investment Strategy known as 'Cheltenham's Green Deal' that approves and enables money to be raised for investment in green projects, using various means such as grants, bonds, or Community Municipal Investments (CMI) to speed up carbon emission reductions and increase resilience to climate change and to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).



2. Introduce an annual 'Climate Community Fund' that helps to finance smaller scale, community climate initiatives and projects, which can be used as best practice exemplars to encourage the take up of similar schemes.



3. Ensure all future investment decisions take into account our climate emergency objectives. As the Council recovers from the impact from the pandemic, we will look at the earliest opportunity to review our modest investment portfolio, as part of our commitment of divestment from funds which support the burning or extraction of fossil fuels.



Actions continue on next page



4. Encourage suppliers to measure and report on their Scope 1 and 2 emissions, to help improve the level of detail of our Scope 3 emissions reporting, focusing first on the highest expenditure areas of repair and construction.



5. Review our Procurement Policy to ensure all purchases properly consider climate-related impacts and add greater weight to purchasing from sustainable local businesses and those which add social value.



6. Look to invest in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure that reap multiple environmental benefits wherever possible. This may range from small Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and rain gardens, to solar farms and green roofs.

7. Work with Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership (GFirst LEP) and other authorities and organisations to rapidly grow the green economy, by investing in economic activities that promote reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy efficiency and prevention of the loss of biodiversity.

8. Use legal and planning mechanisms, such as Section 106 agreements, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and others to help fund climate actions and nature restoration projects.

9. While acknowledging that the County Council is the lead transport authority, explore opportunities to introduce economic nudge mechanisms to help disincentivise car use, particularly for shorter journeys. Further encourage the County Council to use such mechanisms to enable and encourage sustainable transport, particularly measures that allow people to use active and collective forms of transport to travel to work, such as segregated cycle ways and public transport.



D. BUILDINGS & ENERGY

Overview

Heating for homes and workspaces currently makes up almost a third of all UK carbon emissions. Excessive use of energy due to inefficiencies and sourcing from fossil fuels also contributes significantly to climate change. Improvements drastically need to be made on improving the energy efficiency of housing and non-domestic properties, ensuring they require less energy to heat, making them cheaper to run and more comfortable to live and work in, whilst reducing our dependence on imported energy. In turn, we hope to tackle fuel poverty and thereby improve the health and wellbeing of residents that struggle to cover the costs of energy, particularly during the winter months. This needs to apply to both new and existing housing stock and other types of assets that utilise energy.

Ongoing & Completed

In spring 2021, CBC was awarded over £380k to install an integrated utility metering platform with works commencing November 2021 and an expected completion date in March 2022. The platform brings together all the available energy and water data for some of our biggest buildings, via mechanisms such as a network of sub-meters providing real time data on energy usage. The data and ensuing analysis will inform a programme of behavioural change, to target a reduction in our energy wastage in these buildings.

This project has also generated a decarbonisation plan for each of the identified buildings, such as Leisure@ and the Pittville Pump Rooms, which have considered the viability of removing gas heating and cooking elements from each building and explored the required funding and permissions necessary for the Council to proceed with such actions.

The continued strong partnership between the Council and Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) will be vital in ensuring an inclusive approach, ensuring that the benefits of investment and climate mitigation through retrofit activities and sustainable new developments are far reaching. Collaboration to deliver shared climate priorities is already underway between CBC and CBH.






A 'fabric-first' approach is being taken with the existing homes managed by CBH which include the Council housing stock of around 4,500 dwellings. Many of these homes are heated by GHG emitting gas boilers and improving the insulation and reviewing low carbon heating options will ensure that the homes are as energy efficient as possible. CBC and CBH have already been successful in a bid to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) for a deep retrofit scheme¹⁴. This will demonstrate the potential of our existing homes in becoming energy efficient through fabric improvements and low carbon heating. We continue to bid for future waves of these funds and, where beneficial, strengthen bids through partnerships with other local authorities.

New social housing developments in Cheltenham will seek to achieve the very highest standards of energy efficiency. CBC is working together with CBH to regenerate existing redundant sites, as part of the commitment to provide 500 affordable homes delivered or in the pipeline by 2026, made possible by £180m investment by CBC to provide quality homes and support thriving communities. The work is a direct delivery of CBC's key priority to increase the supply of housing and investment to build resilient communities and CBH's priority to provide great homes to make Cheltenham a better place to live. CBH will also strive to make the best use of land in the interests of enhancing biodiversity performance, with insightful design for long-term ecological impact. The development of 320 Swindon Road¹⁵ is an early example.

¹⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-decarbonisation-fund-demonstrator-successful-bids

¹⁵ www.cbh.org/proposed-development-of-320-swindon-road/

Actions

1. Measure the energy usage of CBC owned properties and develop a heating and energy efficiency strategy to set out actions needed to actively reduce energy consumption and move away from the use of fossil fuels. Introduce behaviour change programmes to reduce energy consumption in council owned buildings. Support businesses and residents to similarly reduce their consumption. 
2. Retrofit council-owned social housing, focusing first on the homes most at risk of fuel poverty.
3. Develop a new 'Sustainability Design Code' for the Golden Valley Development, as a vision for integrated living in West Cheltenham that promotes a low carbon lifestyle. Our aspiration is for this thinking to then be replicated across the town, or within other districts and regions.
4. Explore the viability of a shared low-carbon heat network, to help reduce borough-wide emissions.
5. Retrofit council-owned properties with sustainable, energy-efficient solutions where feasible. 
6. Help owner-occupiers to create more energy efficient homes. For example, by supporting energy companies to provide fuel-poor or vulnerable households with insulation, or by helping influence the retrofit market to ensure there is effective demand for energy efficient measures by those that are classified as "able to pay". This may include supporting the provision of skills-training for local workers, actively encouraging applications for new installations, and facilitating the applications of funding bids from home owners.
7. Seek to invest in renewable energy generation by identifying suitable areas in the future Planning Policy documents, such as the Cheltenham Plan and Joint Core Strategy. Review the feasibility of alternative energy sources, new technologies and innovations and the potential to be a net contributor. 
8. Commit to using 100% renewable electricity across council owned assets, including those operated by key partners. Support businesses and residents to do the same. Encourage developers to commit to renewable energy by stipulating requirements in a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 
9. Engage with landlords to improve energy efficiency of homes in the private rented sector and commercial properties and encourage them to achieve good insulation.
10. Look for potential to align Conservation Area policies with climate emergency goals. 



E. ACTIVE TRAVEL, TRANSPORT AND AIR QUALITY

Overview

An estimated 70% of car journeys within Cheltenham are under 2km; many of these journeys could be made on foot or by bicycle. A modal shift to more active transport is needed to reduce emissions from privately owned vehicles. For those unable to make these journeys without a vehicle, public transport needs to become a more attractive option and fossil fuel consuming cars need to be phased out as soon as possible. The Government has already started this journey by committing to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030¹⁶. Policies such as this will lead to reduced carbon emissions, a reduced number of petrol and diesel cars on the road, and will help to improve Cheltenham's air quality.

Ongoing & Completed

Whilst we are not the Highways Authority and therefore have limited control over this element of the pathway, CBC has a vision for how transport could work better in the borough. To deliver this vision, we must work with others who have the statutory powers and resources to help us.

In 2019, we published our Connecting Cheltenham¹⁷ report, to seek to influence GCC's new Local Transport Plan, as well as articulating a clear aspiration of how Cheltenham wanted and needed to change.

Positive engagement has progressed with partners to look to develop a cycle hub in the heart of Cheltenham with secure, covered cycle parking, which is also suitable for cargo bikes. We hope this project will start taking shape in the first quarter of 2022, along with proposals for additional cycle parking provision across the town more widely.

Plans are underway to extend the Honeybourne Line beyond its current boundary at the underpass of the Queens Road Bridge, Lansdown towards the Lansdown Bridge. Developed by Great Western Railway and maintained by CBC, this key link to the existing Honeybourne Line will provide Cheltenham residents and our local communities with a much better connection between three key sustainable transport networks: the train station, the Cheltenham to Gloucester 94 bus network, and the Honeybourne cycle and pedestrian network into the heart of the town. This seemingly small link will play a big role in supporting CBC's climate agenda, promoting modal shift and public transport, reducing pollution and car use, and encouraging walking and cycling which leads to healthier and happier communities.

CBC is required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), relating to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared around an area of High Street / Poole Way in 2020. This document is likely to be completed and submitted to DEFRA in early 2022. Our formal AQAP will be published as part of a town-wide strategy for improving air quality, backed by existing policies drawn from other documents.

To reduce the carbon footprint of our own CBC fleet, we are in the process of transitioning our heavy goods vehicles used for environmental services away from fossil fuels to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a fuel with much lower carbon emissions.

¹⁶ assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005301/transitioning-to-zero-emission-cars-vans-2035-delivery-plan.pdf

¹⁷ www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/61/climate_and_sustainability/1649/connecting_cheltenham

Actions

1. Work with GCC to prioritise transport investment in cycling and walking, with a priority of installing segregated cycleways, increasing space for pedestrians and introducing a 20mph speed limit in urban areas. Seek to safeguard routes for a future mass transport system to enhance and improve the sustainability of Cheltenham's public transport offering.

2. Introduce new 'safe cycle hubs' across the town, working with businesses to help facilitate these, as well as installing more cycle racks, wherever it is suitable and safe to do so.



3. Enable a shift to electric vehicles by installing electric vehicle charging points within Council owned car parks and support GCC with the delivery of their Local Transport Plan (LTP).



4. Deliver a policy that will require all taxis to be electric, or another form of zero carbon as technology evolves, and support the provision of required infrastructure.



5. Transition the council's own fleet to electric vehicles. Explore interim measures such as the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel in place of traditional diesel in instances where electrification is not yet a viable option, particularly for the Council's heavy goods vehicles delivering environmental services across the borough.



6. Reduce the use of private vehicles used for commuting by council officers through a reinvigorated green staff travel strategy, including progressive flexible and home-working options.



7. Reduce car use through measures available to the Borough such as promoting car-sharing schemes, supporting the continuation of the county e-scooter trial, introducing staff incentive schemes such as 'Cycle to Work' and reducing or removing direct car parking benefits.

8. Work with GCC to develop and implement a "last mile" strategy that encourages greener deliveries across the area by setting up an area-wide distribution centre. This will help remove large delivery vehicles from the central road network and facilitate the introduction of efficient cargo bikes to Cheltenham, whilst creating new jobs and economic growth.

9. Review our existing car parking strategy. We will continue to explore ways to ensure alternative travel options to car use are viable and seen to be more favourable than driving. Town centre parking charges will need to reflect this policy choice. Repurposing some car parking spaces (i.e. by creating urban gardens or for car share schemes) will be necessary to demonstrate the council's ambition to remove priority for privately-owned vehicles and to amplify services and support for active travellers.



10. Reduce the need to own and use a car by requiring that the location and design of new developments means they are demonstrably accessible by safe cycling, walking routes and good quality public transport and situated close to essential services.

11. Explore the feasibility of introducing Clean Air Zones within Cheltenham town centre, similar to schemes recently introduced in other areas such as Bath and Birmingham.



F. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Overview

We are not only experiencing a climate emergency, but an ecological emergency too. Our wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems are at just as much a risk of catastrophe as we are as human beings if action is not taken to protect our natural environment and halt climate change. We must acknowledge our planetary boundaries. Planting more trees, protecting and extending wild spaces for nature, increasing biodiversity, restoring our land to sequester carbon and building our resilience to flooding, will all contribute to mitigating the climate emergency.

Ongoing & Completed

Over the last year, CBC has planted 1,200 trees across our parks, gardens and other land-based assets. We'll be looking to work closely with GCC as they undertake their new tree planting programme¹⁸ in association with the Woodland Trust, whilst looking to produce a robust tree planting strategy of our own.

We continue to protect our existing green spaces and locally designated nature sites and endeavour to ensure public access to local authority-owned green spaces.

In March 2021, CBC resolved to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill which aims to 'to actively restore biodiverse habitats, and to stop damaging our natural world through the production, transportation and disposal of the goods we consume'¹⁹. Moreover, new legally binding environmental targets are to be set and enforced as part of the Environment Act which became UK law in 2021²⁰. This legislation will protect and enhance our environment for future generations and aims to halt the decline in species by restoring natural habitats.



¹⁸ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-september-2021/open-call-for-land-trees-need-you/>

¹⁹ <https://www.ccebills.uk/>

²⁰ <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2593/publications>

²¹ <https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/>

Actions

1. Update local planning strategies and work closely with other authorities, including GCC, to significantly increase tree cover across the borough and ensure existing trees are properly protected, in order to store carbon, support nature, aid flood protection and deliver health and wellbeing benefits. Increased canopy cover can also provide shade for people and buildings, cooling the air and ground temperatures in extreme heat. 
2. Manage council-owned land to increase biodiversity and reduce carbon pollution, i.e. through reduced pesticide use and mowing and increased planting of wildflowers and perennials. 
3. Focus on nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation. For example, work with a range of partners to develop opportunities for Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes across the borough to help mitigate flooding and adapt to climate change, using nature to hold and slow water run-off.
4. Seek to actively restore and expand ecosystems in line with the Environment Act 2021, with a focus on enhancing biodiversity and natural carbon sinks. This could be through market based mechanisms that improve and safeguard our natural environment, for example the development of a habitat bank for biodiversity net gain credits.
5. Work with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership and their Natural Capital Mapping²¹ project to help identify nature and ecosystem restoration opportunities across Cheltenham, to reverse and restore habitats, support species and promote ecosystem quality and function.
6. Encourage and influence the uptake of green roofs on roof-tops with green roof potential to help support urban greening in the community.
7. Identify demand for allotments with a view to increasing allotment utilisation and developing land for community spaces and provide opportunities for those that may not have access to their own garden.

G. WATER AND WASTE

Overview






Water is often a forgotten limited resource in the UK, with easy access via our taps for a seemingly endless supply as and when we need it. However, climate change affects water management in multiple ways, ranging from changes in rainfall and therefore seasonal and annual patterns of floods and droughts which can affect water quality and availability. This can have related impacts on our health, economic activities and on freshwater dependent ecosystems. Discarded plastic and other pollutants, along with an over-use of herbicides and pesticides, are also damaging us and the environment and reducing biodiversity across land and sea. The Environment Act 2021²² will drive new business behaviour for waste and recycling, and CBC will continue to work with the business community as well as residents to make sure that we move towards a circular economy, improve resource efficiency through measurement and ensure that the Act is translated into action.

Ongoing & Completed

A new 'pocket forest' of 300 trees will be created thanks to a new coffee pod recycling service. The pioneering 'Podback'²³ scheme has resulted in the kerbside collection of nearly 1 million coffee pods.

While we continue to raise recycling rates, which are up 52.05% at the end of 2020/21, we will also seek to promote the reduction of waste being produced. Waste is no longer sent to landfill, and goes to Gloucestershire County Council's Javelin Park Energy from Waste facility²⁴. This facility produces electricity, but does produce emissions. Our successful behaviour change campaigns aim to educate and raise awareness, ultimately diverting resources from the waste stream into the recycling stream.

Actions

1. Continue to work with communities and businesses to promote food waste reduction, local food sourcing, sharing of unwanted good to eat food within the community. Continue to promote home composting and sustainable food waste.
2. Promote community sharing and reuse to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption, including water.
3. Develop an incentive strategy for all staff, including our partners, to help drive down energy consumption and waste across our buildings. 
4. Reduce the use of single-use plastic in council offices and premises and work with local businesses to help influence reduction in their plastic use and waste. 
5. Encourage businesses and other organisations within the borough to seek waste and recycling solutions which send zero waste to landfill.
6. Following the new requirements set out within the Environment Act 2021, ensure adequate recycling and food waste facilities are provided across all Council-owned and operated buildings and community centres. Support small businesses to recycle, as well as seeking to expand the 'on the go' recycling bin provision across our public realm. 
7. Reduce water consumption at CBC owned sites. 
8. Leverage the new climate-focussed Supplementary Planning Document to encourage the provision of better waste and recycling facilities in developments. Continue to look to the future for innovative ways of dealing with our waste collections such as underground bins to maximise land use and provide more opportunities for biodiversity.
9. Adopt circular-economy waste policies in relevant plans and contracts. 
10. Work with Gloucestershire County Council and other partners to increase the uptake of water butts and grey water recycling in new and existing homes and non-domestic properties as well as continue to promote sustainable food waste disposal across the county as part of Gloucestershire County Council's contract arrangement for anaerobic digestion.

²² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

²³ <https://www.podback.org>

²⁴ <https://www.ubbglooucestershire.co.uk>

H. COLLECTIVE ACTION - INFLUENCING, ENGAGING, CAMPAIGNING AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Overview

Addressing the climate emergency goes beyond simply reducing our GHG emissions and the council knows it cannot achieve the 2030 target alone. We need a tight-knit community that can adapt to coming changes and knows where to turn in the face of a crisis. By working in partnership with organisations and residents across the borough, we can have greater power to influence others and bring about the necessary behaviour change and action needed to achieve our collective global goal.

Ongoing & Completed

In recognition of the need for cross sector and district working to tackle the climate emergency, we have joined the new 'Climate Leadership Gloucestershire' group. Working with other districts in the county to share best practice and learning whilst endeavouring to solve the most challenging of climate actions. The group will work to increase our available spaces for nature, reduce CO2 and ensure a strong focus on improving the health and wellbeing of Gloucestershire's residents.

The council has established the "CheltenhamZero" partnership²⁵ with the borough's leading climate change charity, Vision 21. As an active partner, Vision21 will lead our campaign to reach out to communities and businesses, supporting them to make the transition to net zero and tackle the climate emergency collectively. As a precursor to the partnership, we launched a CheltenhamZero 'Climate Community Fund' offering grants totalling above £50k to community groups, to enable meaningful carbon reduction and climate action initiatives that can be used to showcase best practice to others.

Positive interactions with higher education institutions, has already resulted in collaborative work across numerous departments of the council, including Green Space and Climate Emergency teams. We recently secured funding as part of the Local Government Association's 'NetZero Innovation Programme', to deliver a project in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire and continue to utilise their expertise where we can.

Actions

1. Drive the wider adoption of the CheltenhamZero Partnership across businesses, communities and residents, influencing behaviour change, collaboration and the sharing information and best practice.

2. Establish 'Climate Champions' among our communities, schools and businesses – building capacity for local people to be involved in helping meet our climate targets, inspiring communities and enterprises to find and implement solutions. Climate Champions will also be established within CBC and our key partner organisations to drive change from within.



3. Through mechanisms such as the CheltenhamZero Partnership, provide support to small and medium-sized enterprises, working closely with partners such as GFirst LEP, to access funds and expertise, so that they are able to contribute to carbon reduction and nature restoration plans.

Actions continue on next page



4. Explore partnership opportunities for setting up 'zero carbon hubs' – decentralised futureproof centres promoting zero emission lifestyles, that help to educate, inform and advise on 'all things climate' for individuals and communities. We continue to support the Planet Cheltenham²⁶ initiative in their fight against climate change and social inequality.

5. Regularly update the council's web content²⁷ to ensure the most relevant and up to date information is available to the public.



6. Create or signpost to toolkits available for businesses, community groups, individuals and families, relating to topics such as energy, transport, waste reduction and children's climate education activities.

7. Work closely with the University of Gloucestershire to help support local climate-based research, which not only helps to identify opportunities for the Council and the Borough, but also develops the skills needed for our future workforce, enhancing student experience and employability.

8. Use influence with others, such as schools and other private businesses and organisations, to help ensure their buildings are zero-carbon, purchasing is green and the environment they supports nature wherever possible.

9. Work with businesses to seek to introduce local incentive schemes that may help influence visitor and resident behaviour change towards more sustainable lifestyles, such as walking and cycling, reduced waste and healthier eating.



²⁶ planetcheltenham.org

²⁷ www.cheltenham.gov.uk/climate

6. Monitoring Progress

For Cheltenham to become net zero and climate resilient, and to leverage maximum impact from those around us, this mitigation pathway should provide a roadmap for our town and for those with similar ambitions to follow. We know that it isn't perfect and it will need to be adapted and improved as we learn. This overarching strategy is designed to be flexible and will be reviewed as the national context and technology evolve. We commit to being reflective, innovative and transparent on the journey to 2030 and beyond.

There is a need for us to develop a stringent monitoring process and the creation of a 'Climate Change Programme Board' will help to build this rigour. The Board, led by an appropriate Cabinet Member, will consist of other political representatives and the Countywide Climate Change Coordinator, meeting on a quarterly basis to steer the programme of works stemming from this pathway.

We have a baseline to start from and improve upon and will continue to monitor and report on progress. Continuously reviewing and revising this pathway and our delivery plans will enable us to be agile and increase co-benefits.

This CEAP will be reviewed and reported against on an annual basis to inform of our progress in relation to both climate mitigation and adaptation. These reports will be made publicly available. Internally, the monitoring of projects and initiatives will be reflected on 'Clearview', an internal strategy and performance system. We will look to take the annual review of the CEAP to the CBC Overview and Scrutiny committee once a year. The scrutiny committee looks at any issues affecting local people and makes recommendations based on evidence, therefore the annual review of the Pathway and the emerging actions will be of particular interest to the committee. Alongside this, we will improve our carbon footprinting, so that our calculations become more thorough and our reporting more transparent.

As the year 2030 comes nearer, we will continue to ramp up our climate action efforts and strive to create a place where community, culture, business and environment thrive.



20 CHELTENHAM 30
NET ZERO



CHEL TENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Own it



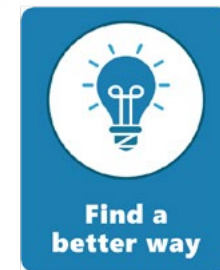
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