



Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date	7 JANUARY 2021
Title	CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
Report of	THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP FOR CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING

1 BACKGROUND

The climate change and environmental recovery strategy is developing nationally with pressure on Local Authorities to contribute towards UK carbon budgets set out in the UK Climate Change Act.

The Draft Climate and Environment Strategy sets out key activities that the Isle of Wight Council can undertake in the fulfilment of its duties and undertakings to reduce the Isle of Wight Council's carbon footprint from its own operations, and outlines activities that we can facilitate and encourage to achieve specific outcomes that are outside of the Isle of Wight Council's direct control.

The activities set out in this plan will support the following medium-term and long-term outcomes of the corporate strategy:

- The environment and unique island characteristic are celebrated
- Outstanding transport connectivity
- The Isle of Wight is a leading UK visitor destination

The Council is well-placed to become a leader in developing and adopting climate and environment-friendly activities through internal behaviour change and the promotion of a sustainability strategy for our community, economy, and environment.

2. CLIMATE MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL

In July 2019 the full Council voted to support a motion that the Isle of Wight Council will continue to take all reasonable steps to minimise its environmental impact and to maintain the beauty of our Island. In line with the Motion, the Council will:

- 1 Declare and acknowledge a Climate Emergency

- 2 Aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions on the Island by 2030
- 3 Establish a Task & Finish Group to develop a costed action plan, recommending how the Council could work with partners and central government to ensure that the Islands net carbon emissions can be reduced to zero by 2030
- 4 Develop and implement a community engagement plan via the IW Council's Environment and Sustainability Forum
- 5 Liaise with other local authorities that have declared a Climate Emergency

3. CONTEXT

The case for tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental risks is clear. The accelerating impact of climate change in this country and around the world is of profound public concern. The climate crisis will not only severely affect humans, but is also contributing to species loss, habitat erosion and the disappearance of cherished wildlife both on land and in the oceans. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2018 report looked at the effects of global heating in excess of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The report highlighted the importance of taking more urgent action on tackling climate change mitigation measures than those declared in the Paris Agreement.

The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced legally binding carbon budgets, with the aim of achieving net zero emissions across England and Wales by 2050 (initially stated as a reduction of 80% by 2050, but updated to a net zero target in 2019) via several interim targets. Local authorities do not have a statutory duty to implement the carbon budgets but are expected to contribute. It is important to note that climate emergency campaigners and many climate scientists argue that these targets are not enough, and that we should be aiming for net zero emissions as soon as 2030 in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

4. IWC CURRENT ACTIVITIES

A summary of the current activity undertaken by the council is described below:

- Assets – the reduction in office buildings and more efficient use of remaining space will reduce energy consumption for heating and lighting;
- ICT – more efficient equipment is being introduced with lower power consumption as well as providing staff with an opportunity to make smarter travel choices.
- Fleet – up to 4 electric vehicles (EVs) will be purchased during 2019 for council use;
- Business travel – a green travel plan is being developed with the aim of prioritising more sustainable forms of travel for business trips made by staff;
- Businesses – the council is committed to providing financial support to the Green Impact Programme which is helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve general environmental performance of Island businesses and other organisations and will be participating in the programme to actively reduce our estate's impact on the environment.
- Travel – the three-year Access Fund sustainable transport programme is encouraging low carbon travel options for visitors, employees, jobseekers, students and school children;
- Electric Vehicles – the council is offering a free parking permit for new EVs registered to an Island address during the 19/20 financial year to encourage EV ownership;

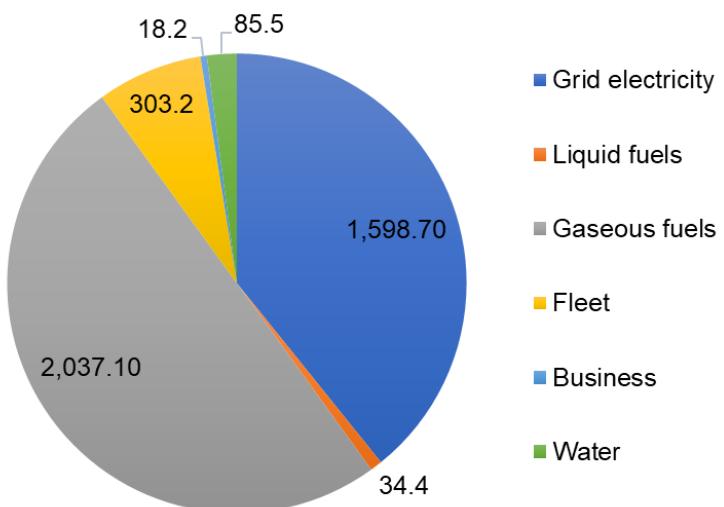
- Energy – heat network studies have been commissioned for the Newport Harbour and Ryde Nicholson Road regeneration sites to see if more efficient, low carbon heat networks will be viable for the new development and surrounding communities;
- Housing – the council has approved the Warm Up Wight scheme which offers free wall and loft insulation for low-income households;
- Waste – the council now has one of the highest recycling rates in the country. The new energy from waste facility will almost eliminate domestic waste going to landfill and generate electricity. This ongoing reduction in putrescible waste to landfill will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The council is also working with the Hospital trust in managing waste.
- Planning policy – the draft Island Planning Strategy contains policies to promote renewable energy and lower carbon developments;
- Highways: all street lights and traffic lights have been replaced with LED lighting which has significantly reduced the use of electricity on the island. Other initiatives delivered by Island Roads such as, for example, the use of recycled road materials and an on-island road coatings plant have significantly reduced the overall carbon footprint of these activities;
- Sustainable Transport: The council is funding a promoting a number of initiatives to increase participation in cycling and walking to reduce car use this includes off-road infrastructure for walking and cycling and provide further safe routes to school, with further plans to extend such networks if further funding were to be made available;
- Shoreline Management Plan: Utilises historic and predicted erosion and sea level changes to forecast erosion and coastal flooding rates and proposes shoreline management policies accordingly.
- Estate efficiencies: The council will develop internal communications to embed behaviour change across our properties that will reduce energy and water usage.
- Procurement: The council will review its procurement policy to identify how it can further embed carbon efficiencies in internal/corporate and services contracts.

The council has developed a methodology to measure its own carbon footprint but, due to a lack of dedicated resources, has not done so in recent years. All the above activities are actively monitored and evaluated to ensure they are effective and provide value for money. It should be noted that there has been a marked reduction in carbon emissions over the last 5-10 years.

The Isle of Wight Council published its baseline carbon footprint for the financial year 2009-10, finding a carbon footprint of 22,558 tCO₂. Since then, this footprint has been adjusted, leading to a new baseline calculation for **2009-10 of 11,568 tCO₂**. The figure for 2009/10 was significantly higher at the time of its publication as it included emissions from schools and refrigerant gases. This figure was adjusted for the publication of the 2015-2020 Carbon Management Plan. Schools were excluded from the 2015 figure as the Council no longer has access to schools' energy management and their budgets are now devolved from the Council. Refrigerant gases were excluded at the same time as most air conditioning units were removed from Council properties by 2013.

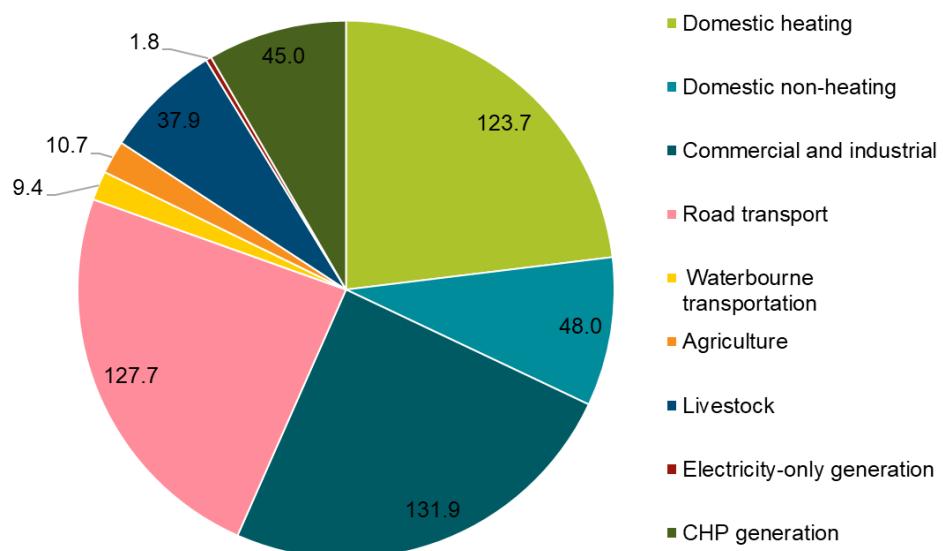
By 2018-19, the Council's carbon footprint had been **reduced by approximately 65% to 4,077 tCO_{2e}**.

Isle of Wight Council carbon footprint, 2018-19



Isle of Wight Council commissioned a study by Regen, who over the spring of 2020 have produced an emissions baseline for the Isle of Wight based on its statistics from 2017. The Regen analysis examines ten categories (outlined below), which were then used to create pathways for emissions reductions to 2030 or to 2040. **The Regen study found that the Isle of Wight area's carbon footprint, based on its 2017 emissions, is 506,900 tCO₂e**

Isle of Wight area carbon footprint, 2017 baseline



Domestic heating	Calculated from average heat demand using average gas consumption and boiler efficiency
Domestic non-heating	Emissions generated by powering homes other than those from heating, e.g. lighting, appliances, cooking
Commercial and industrial	Rail transport and off-road transport other than agricultural vehicles Waste and wastewater Industrial processes Commercial and industrial buildings
Road transport	Calculated using BEIS fuel consumption statistics and national split of petrol/diesel vehicles

	Includes emissions from electricity generation to power electric vehicles
Waterborne transport	Calculated using data on ferry passenger numbers Freight emissions are excluded
Agriculture	Off-road machinery Solid and liquid fuels Other agricultural emissions not covered by livestock or land use
Livestock	Methane and waste emissions from livestock
Land use	Currently sequesters almost 6% of Island emissions
Electricity-only generation	Emissions caused by the generation of electricity used to power the Isle of Wight, e.g. Cowes Power Station generates electricity
Combined heat and power (CHP) generation	Emissions caused by sources that generate both heat and power, e.g. Arreton anaerobic digestion plant generates both electricity and gas

5. TASK AND FINISH GROUP PROGRESS UPDATE

The Climate and Environment Task and Finish group convened in September 2019 to set out the scope for the investigation into how the council can enable the Island to aim to be net-carbon neutral by 2030. The CE Task and Finish has discussed ways in which the Isle of Wight Council and the Isle of Wight can develop a sustainable plans and act to promote a sustainable future.

The Task and Finish group identified that to enable the net-carbon zero target the future strategy would need to sit over carbon management, energy management and environmental management as the three areas all have a direct impact on our greenhouse gas emissions and climate adaptation strategy.

The Task and Finish group will reconvene in early 2021 to discuss next steps in enacting the Climate and Environment Strategy.

6. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY FORUM UPDATE

The Environment and Sustainability Forum met monthly from the July 2019 motion to full council until February 2020, when the meetings were stopped owing to Covid. These meetings started again in December 2020 and will continue to host guest speakers delivering presentations on a range of topics relating to the Climate and Environment Strategy, as well as other related issues. Proposed topics for discussion in 2021 include electric and hydrogen vehicles, active travel, renewable energy production on the Isle of Wight, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable business and tourism. Experts from industry and academic institutions will be invited to inform and develop strategies to enable our community to meet our net zero carbon aims.

The membership of the Environment and Sustainability Forum is open for any person, group or organisation that has an interest in helping develop and engage with the strategy.

7. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY KEY AIMS

The Climate and Environment Strategy sets out key activities that the Isle of Wight Council can undertake in the fulfilment of its duties and undertakings to reduce the Isle of Wight Council's carbon footprint from its own operations, and outlines activities that we can facilitate and encourage to achieve specific outcomes that are outside of the Isle of Wight Council's direct control.

The Council is well-placed to become a leader in developing and adopting climate and environment-friendly activities through internal behaviour change and the promotion of a sustainability strategy for our community, economy, and environment.

The Isle of Wight area's performance on climate change is better than most compared to other local authority areas. A recent national research project conducted by Friends of the Earth indicated the isle of Wight area is the second best performing in the country. Nonetheless, even the best performing need to do more to adapt to a changing climate and build resilience for energy water and natural resources. The Isle of Wight as a community should aim to increase public transport use, improve home insulation, and increase renewable energy.

8. KEY PRIORITY AREAS

Council actions

Achieving net zero in the Council's estate and activities by 2030. This will be split into six sets of actions.



- Behaviour
- Energy
- Transport
- Waste
- Environment and Biosphere
- Business

Enabling actions

Enabling communities and Town and Parish Councils to support the Island journey towards net zero of carbon emissions



- The Council will ensure information is available to Town & Parish Council, businesses, communities, schools, and individuals across the Isle of Wight to help them take climate action

Energy actions

Developing opportunities and energy resilience for the Island



- Currently the Isle of Wight area has capacity for **90MW** of renewable power. If the Isle of Wight area matched the best of similar local authority areas, it would have capacity for **183MW**

Transport actions

Ensuring that transport options on the Isle of Wight are in line with net zero targets



- 7% of commuters on the island travel by public transport, 3% cycle, and 18% walk.
- 6 in 10 drivers would shift to public transport if its quality improved.
- Electronic Vehicle Charging Hubs and on-street EV charge points should be 1 per 1000 locally registered vehicles by 2030. The IWC also needs to consider the tourism vehicle influx and ensure there is adequate charging for visitors.

Housing actions

Ensuring that private homeowners and landlords can retrofit housing to meet net zero standards wherever possible



- Only 36 per cent of homes on the island are well insulated.
- Fuel poverty effects 11 per cent of households on the islands
- Alternative energy heating and hot water systems will be phasing out fossil fuels, this is an opportunity to encourage alternative energy power and heating systems in homes and businesses.

Environment actions

Protecting and enhancing the Island's natural environment and UNESCO Biosphere by managing land sustainably and connecting people with the environment



- Inventory (NFI) 13% of the Isle of Wight area is woodland, the council can consider its own land use and working with the landowners of the Island to increase woodland.
- Woodland can be used to absorb nitrates and replace field systems using nitrates to control weed growth where appropriate.
- Green corridors linking existing woodland will increase biodiversity and carbon sequestering

- Environmental conditions in planning may be used to support increased carbon and nitrate absorption and increase biodiversity.
- Biosphere Promotion and Protection to increase biodiversity and climate adaptation. The UNESCO Biosphere designation is a unique opportunity to not only protect and preserve our ecology and natural environment but is also a unique selling point for the island. Through supporting the biosphere and growing sustainable products the island can use this USP in marketing its products and as a destination.

Resilience actions

Ensuring that the Island can meet future challenges presented by a changing climate



- A new IPCC Assessment report, outlining the expected impacts climate change is likely to have on the planet, is due to be published in 2022. Resilience actions required will be fully reviewed and updated in line with this report.

9. 2030 TARGET

The Isle of Wight has stated an aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2030. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines net zero emissions as:

“Net zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic [man-made] emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period.”

In other words, any greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activities should ideally be eliminated from activities and processes (for example, by using renewable energy instead of fossil fuels). Any emissions that can't be eliminated from processes must be balanced out by removing carbon emissions from the atmosphere (for example, by planting more trees). This is known as offsetting.

Regen have outlined various pathways for the Isle of Wight to achieve net zero. These pathways outline the approaches available to the Council and the wider Island to either eliminate emissions to achieve 'true' net zero, or to combine emissions reduction strategies with offsetting. Given the difficulty in decarbonising some sectors, including agriculture and older housing stock present on the Island, offsetting a portion of emissions is strongly recommended. This also allows us the opportunity to enhance the Island's natural environment through activities including tree planting, rewilding, and seabed and salt marsh restoration.

10. ACTION PLANS IN OUTLINE

Council outcomes	Achieving net zero in the Council's estate and activities by 2030. This will be split into six sets of actions.	
Behaviour	Encourage climate awareness and ensure climate change is a factor in all decision-making	
	Engage communities in the Council's climate plan	
	Promote the Green Impact Programme	
	Divest from fossil fuel funds	
Energy	Ensure only renewable energy is procured for all buildings	
	Ensure energy efficiency is improved in all buildings	
	Decarbonise buildings through use of alternative technologies for heat and power	
	Ensure environmental monitoring standards are met	
	Increase renewable energy generation across the Isle of Wight	
Transport	Encourage active travel for Council employees wherever possible	
	Reduce vehicle use across all Council activities	

Ensure efficient route planning to reduce mileage for business travel	
Introduce new procurement processes to electrify the Council's fleet of vehicles	
Reduce vehicle use across the Island	
Promote and encourage active travel across the Island	
Ensure the Island is capable of supporting increasing use of electric vehicles	
Waste	
Reduce waste across all Council activities, particularly from single-use plastics	
Increase recycling rates across all Council functions	
Waste collection and island-wide services	
Enhance shorelines and waterways	
Environment and Biosphere	
Offset carbon emissions through reforestation, afforestation, andrewilding	
Introduce new planning conditions to protect the natural environment	
Introduce urbanrewilding and green schemes to town centres	
Protect the Island's Biosphere status	
Business	
Promote sustainable tourism	
Promote the Island's products and tourism offerings through its Biosphere status	
Enabling outcomes	
Enabling communities and Town and Parish Councils to support the Island journey towards net zero of carbon emissions	
Encourage island-wide learning about climate change	
Energy outcomes	
Developing opportunities and energy resilience for the Island	
Increase alternative and renewable energy provision across the Island	
Reduce business use of fossil fuels	
Encourage heat and energy decarbonisation across Town & Parish Council estates	
Transport outcomes	
Ensuring that transport options on the Isle of Wight are in line with net zero targets	
Reduce vehicle use wherever possible	
Promote and encourage active travel across the Island	
Housing outcomes	
Ensuring that private homeowners and landlords can retrofit housing to meet net zero standards wherever possible	
Promote energy efficiency schemes to homeowners and landlords	
No more than 5% fuel poverty across the Island	
All new and at least 60% of existing homes to meet net zero emissions	
Environment outcomes	
Protecting and enhancing the Island's natural environment and UNESCO Biosphere by managing land sustainably and connecting people with the environment	
Offset carbon emissions through reforestation and afforestation	
Encourage biodiversity andrewilding across the Island	
Enhance shorelines and waterways	
Apply for environmental certifications in public areas	
Resilience outcomes	
Ensuring that the Island can meet future challenges presented by a changing climate	
Review the need for resilience and adaptation on the Island	
Manage the Island's water resources	

Increase food resilience and ensure the Island's agriculture is sustainable
Review the shoreline management plan to ensure it is still suitable
Ensure residents have sufficient cooling in homes and workplaces for hotter summers

11. GOVERNANCE

The further development and delivery of the Action Plans within the Climate and Environment Strategy will be monitored and reported through the Strategic Manager for Waste and Environment. A 1FTE equivalent 2-year fixed term Project Officer role has been appointed to oversee, deliver and embed the Action Plans. The delivery of the Action Plans will be matrix managed across the council with officers across the council being encouraged to embed decarbonisation and positive environmental outcomes.

12. BUDGET

Full costings against the Actions Plans will be completed following approval of the draft Climate and Environment Strategy and will consider existing officer time as well as funding required to deliver specific projects. Please note that it is highly likely that these costings will need to be reviewed at least every other year on an ongoing basis. As the Climate and Environment Strategy is intended to cover a 10-year period, costs for many of the items in the plan will change over time (for example, as the price of renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure may decrease over time). As such any costings outlined will always be stated as estimates.

13. NEXT STEPS

The Climate and Environment Strategy and Action Plan will be submitted for review in December 2020.

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