

Environment Strategy Progress Report

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| Committee considering report: | Executive on 18 November 2021 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter |
| Report Author: | Jenny Graham |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX4121 |

1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the first progress report on the Environment Strategy covering the first year of the Strategy from July 2020 to July 2021.

2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive approve the Annual Progress Report on the Environment Strategy (as included in Appendix C) for publication on the Council's website.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|-------------------------|---|
| Financial: | There are no direct funding implications as a result of this report. Projects and actions already underway have existing budgets. Teams across the Council will use the budget setting process to plan for future programmes and secure funding for them. |
| Human Resource: | There are no direct HR implications as a result of this report. The Environment Delivery Team has had additional resource approved in order to help deliver the projects within the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan |
| Legal: | There are no direct Legal implications as a result of this report. |
| Risk Management: | A high-level risk register has been developed for the Environment Strategy. This will be kept up to date each month and added to the website. It is kept under review by the Environment Delivery Project Board. |

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| Property: | There are no direct property implications as a result of this report. | | | |
| Policy: | This first annual report aims to demonstrate how the Environment Strategy is being delivered and will play a part in informing and shaping relevant Council policies and plans across the organisation. This is already happening and with relevant training of staff and Members this influence and understanding will become more effective. | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | | X | | No impact directly as a result of the annual report and more widely this will need to be dealt with on a project by project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact on equalities. |
| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | | X | | No impact directly as a result of the annual report and more widely this will need to be dealt with on a project by project basis through the PMM process to ensure delivery does not have a negative impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics. |

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| Environmental Impact: | X | | | The purpose of the annual report is to demonstrate the delivery of the Environment Strategy which seeks to have a positive impact on the environment in numerous ways. It has a primary target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and has a vision which can be found in section 4 of the Environment Strategy . As the projects within the Delivery Plan are implemented there will be consideration in the detailed planning stages as to whether there are unintended negative environmental impacts that require mitigation. |
| Health Impact: | X | | | The projects and activities within the Delivery Plan that have been delivered and have a focus on carbon reduction will have health benefits from a reduction in air pollution. Some projects delivered to date are not purely focused on outcomes that reduce carbon and also seek to improve health and wellbeing as a key benefit. |
| ICT Impact: | | X | | There is not a significant ICT impact. |
| Digital Services Impact: | | X | | There is not a significant impact on Digital Services. |

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| <p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p> | <p>X</p> | | | <p>The main Council Priority to which the projects and actions within the Delivery Plan contribute is maintain a green district. They do this in so many ways but will have a key focus on reducing carbon.</p> <p>Other priorities from the Council Strategy that the Environment Strategy helps to deliver are:</p> <p>Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire. Projects within the Delivery Plan seek to support businesses to be more efficient (especially impacting on energy and waste) and to develop in a green and sustainable way.</p> <p>Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy. The Delivery Plan includes active travel infrastructure, green and blue infrastructure and influencing the environmental standards of other infrastructure, including housing.</p> |
| <p>Core Business:</p> | <p>X</p> | | | <p>As a result of projects delivered the Council will see some of its core business processes improved as the Environment Strategy starts to have an impact.</p> <p>For example, the development of a Social Value Policy that includes environmental factors will impact positively on our procurement outcomes and how they can align with the Environment Strategy and bring environmental benefits.</p> |
| <p>Data Impact:</p> | | <p>X</p> | | <p>It is not envisaged that there will be any data impacts.</p> |

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| Consultation and Engagement: | <p>The Environment Advisory Group have been presented with the highlights of the annual report and are kept up to date with projects throughout the year.</p> <p>Environment Board have had the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>Various teams have been consulted within the Council and specifically officers who attend the Environment Delivery Project Board.</p> <p>Other specific consultation has been with:</p> <p>Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter Council Member for Thatcham, Colthrop & Crookham and Executive Portfolio: Environment, Cllr Richard Somner Council Member for Tilehurst South & Holybrook and Executive Portfolio: Planning and Transport, Jon Winstanley Service Director- Environment and Sue Halliwell Interim Chief Executive Officer.</p> |
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to present the first Annual Progress Report for the Environment Strategy. It specifically covers the period from the approval of the Strategy in July 2020 through to July 2021. It is, however, part of the continuous story of how the Council is addressing climate change and environmental issues in West Berkshire.
- 4.2 The Annual Progress Report is included in Appendix C and sets out actions and achievements under each strategic objective of the Environment Strategy with a specific case study for each one. The report also demonstrates how the Council has listened to feedback it has received throughout the year in a 'You asked, we did' section.
- 4.3 An important part of the report is to provide an update on the Council's carbon footprint and also to report on the carbon emission data for the District. Both these data sets have seen carbon emissions reduce.
- 4.4 The Council's carbon footprint has reduced by 16% (from 2019/20 to 2020/21). This is not surprising when this period has been affected by the national lockdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic. It is difficult to determine what proportion of the reduction is directly attributable to circumstances caused by COVID-19. It is likely that next year (when reporting on a more 'normal' year) will provide some further insight but it is hoped that the positive impacts of changes in behaviour as a result of COVID-19 may last into future years and be built on by further actions taken and projects delivered.
- 4.5 The District emissions (not taking into account areas where we have no influence) are provided via data published by government and are not so up to date. The Environment Strategy gave a baseline year for these emissions of 2017 which saw 5.7 Per Capita Carbon Dioxide emissions (tonnes). The latest data available is for 2019 and shows a 5% reduction on 2017. When more up to date data is available we will publish this on our website. The period we have been able to report does not include anything post the

Council's declaration of a Climate emergency or for the period where momentum has been gathering nationally in relation to addressing climate change.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 We have made a strong start building on previous work and some important milestones have been reached during the period of July 2020 to July 2021, a summary of these can be found in Figure 2 within the Annual Progress Report (Appendix C): *Environment Strategy Highlights July 2020- July 2021*.
- 5.2 There are two key strands of action:
- 1) reducing the Council's own carbon emissions with actions from across the organisation contributing to this,
 - 2) engaging with key stakeholders and encouraging and facilitating action in local communities to help reduce carbon emissions within the District.
- 5.3 Internally, we have expanded the Environment Delivery Team, significantly raised the profile of the Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan and liaised with key teams to start to establish a more coherent approach to carbon reduction within key projects. Highways are already progressing well, with one particular project saving 6.72 tonnes of carbon. In addition, streetlights have been replaced with more efficient LEDs and there is progress with the electrification of the Council fleet. Solar PV has been installed on 6 council owned buildings so far with plans to roll out a programme of further renewable energy generation. Linked to this, plans to develop a solar farm on Council land were announced in early 2021 and progress on delivery will be reported in future annual progress reports and through our [dedicated webpage](#). The Council will continue to build on its commitment and gain momentum in having an impact by introducing carbon reduction training for all staff and specific training for certain teams that can have a particular impact.
- 5.4 Externally, carbon reduction in the District is being addressed by fostering productive relationships with local residents, community groups, schools and businesses. We have established a West Berkshire Parish Climate Forum where ideas for local climate and environmental action can be shared and taken forward. In partnership with GWR and with Growth Deal Funding from the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP cycle hubs have been delivered at Newbury station to encourage sustainable commuting and we have made some great progress in terms of active travel, including starting work on 4 key routes within the LCWIP (Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan). This will make it safer and more convenient for residents to walk, cycle or scoot around West Berkshire. We have also had a focus on improving biodiversity, with our successful wild flower verge project which has received positive feedback time and time again and will be expanded over the coming years.
- 5.5 Additional background and supporting information is included in the Annual Progress Report in Appendix C.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 There is a commitment to report on an annual basis on progress delivering the Environment Strategy. Future reporting periods could be from first approval of the Environment Strategy (July 2020) or it could be aligned to the financial year for future reporting years which is how much of the Council's reporting is structured. Discussions around this can be had at Environment Board.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The annual report demonstrates the action that has taken place to set up and deliver projects within the first year of the Environment Strategy. This has been against a backdrop of setting up a new team, expanding the team and working mainly in periods of lockdown conditions. This first year of the Environment Strategy delivery builds on previous work and projects and, although it has benefitted from specific resource and additional momentum, it is part of the ongoing story of how the Council is responding to the challenges of climate change and protecting our environment.
- 7.2 The Council's carbon emissions and those recorded for the District are decreasing. The Council's figures have undoubtedly been impacted by the lockdown conditions but it is hard to determine the split between COVID-19 impact and other impacts.
- 7.3 However, there are projects that will have contributed towards the reduction in the Council's carbon emissions and there will be actions from businesses, landowners, local communities and residents that have been reducing emissions across West Berkshire and making a difference to our environment. It is worth celebrating successes such as:
- Our award winning and the UK's first Community Municipal Investment, which provided £1m of investment for several impressive environmental projects including a £520k Solar PV project on 6 council facilities;
 - Incorporating carbon reduction considerations in our Highways Asset Management Plan which has resulted in carbon savings by using 'warm asphalt' and recycled road materials.
 - Local businesses looking to increase their environmental action and reduce their emissions even as they deal with the impacts of COVID-19, showing a recognition of the benefits of a green recovery.
 - The flurry of local environmental initiatives from the communities in West Berkshire from tree and bulb planting to engaging with programmes like the [Greening Campaign](#) and running significant events such as Hungerford's Electric Vehicle Day organised by HEAT (Hungerford Environmental Action Team).
- 7.4 Actions will continue to be delivered through focusing on the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan. An important exercise of attributing carbon impacts to actions and projects is underway and will help to inform the prioritisation of the Delivery Plan.
- 7.5 The recommendation in section 2 seeks the approval of the first Annual Progress Report (Appendix C) for the Environment Strategy and agreement for it to be published on the Council's website.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment
- 8.3 Appendix C – First Annual Progress Report on the Environment Strategy

Background Papers:

The Environment Strategy was approved by the Executive in July 2020 – the papers relating to that decision can be found [here](#) and the [published strategy](#) is on the website.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: The Environment Strategy has impacts across the District

Officer details:

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Document Control

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|----------------|---|----------------|------------|
| Document Ref: | EX4121 ES Annual Progress Report | Date Created: | 05.10.2021 |
| Version: | 1.0 | Date Modified: | |
| Author: | Helen Ramsey / Adrian Slaughter / Megan Dalgarno / Jenny Graham | | |
| Owning Service | Environment Department | | |

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Change History

| Version | Date | Description | Change ID |
|---------|-------------|---|-----------|
| 1.0 | 05.10..2021 | Version for circulation for comments | |
| 2.0 | 20.10.2021 | Version taking into account comments from Corporate Board | HR / JG |
| 3.0 | 09.11.2021 | Tw eaks following Operations Board | JG |
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Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

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| What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make: | To approve the Environment Strategy Annual Progress Report. |
| Summary of relevant legislation: | N/A |
| Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Name of Budget Holder: | There are a number of budget holders relating to various actions and projects within the ES Delivery Plan. |
| Name of Service/Directorate: | Environment Department, Place Directorate |
| Name of assessor: | Jenny Graham |
| Date of assessment: | 05/10/2021 |
| Version and release date (if applicable): | |

| Is this a ? | | Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ? | |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Policy | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | New or proposed | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Strategy | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Already exists and is being reviewed | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Function | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Is changing | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Service | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

| (1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it? | |
|--|---|
| Aims: | To approve the first Annual Progress Report of the Environment Strategy |
| Objectives: | The overall objective is to report against the first year of delivery of the Environment Strategy and its aim of achieving net zero carbon across the District. |
| Outcomes: | Carbon reduction is linked into the Council strategy framework and influences plans, policies and decisions across the organisation. Local communities, businesses, schools and other organisations across West Berkshire are engaged in climate action and contributing to the district target of carbon neutrality by 2030. |
| Benefits: | Reduced carbon emissions and the associated environmental and public health benefits. |

| (2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this? | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Group Affected | What might be the effect? | Information to support this |
| Age | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Disability | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Gender Reassignment | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |

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| Marriage and Civil Partnership | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Race | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Religion or Belief | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Sex | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Sexual Orientation | None | Progress with delivering the aims of the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire would be unlikely to have any more impact on a person with a protected characteristic than on anyone else. |
| Further Comments: | | |
| The Environment Strategy seeks to deliver a wide range of projects and actions. It is considered appropriate that a review of equalities takes place as part of the project | | |

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development and project management stages of relevant actions and projects. This will ensure that, at a more detailed level, individual actions are in line with equalities legislation.

| (3) Result | |
|---|---|
| Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>The proposed decision is to approve the Annual Progress Report so is not relevant to areas of inequality. However, the projects included in the Delivery Plan will evolve there will need to be careful assessment on where investment goes to ensure that actions benefit as many people in the district as possible e.g. rural/urban compromise on infrastructure, sustainable transport solutions, environmental enhancements etc. This can be picked up through the Project Management Methodology associated with these projects individually and oversight through the Environment Board will be key.</p> | |
| Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>The decision to approve the Annual Progress Report will not have an impact. However, as above, there will need to be careful consideration about the future projects that are progressed to deliver the Environment Strategy. There are views expressed in the original consultation on the strategy that would suggest some solutions to climate change are unpopular and may cause some adverse impact. This will need to be evaluated against the gains the majority may experience e.g. infrastructure will be desirable to some but not all, reducing car travel is difficult for some rural communities, businesses may not want to see green initiatives push up the cost of trading etc.</p> | |

| (4) Identify next steps as appropriate: | |
|--|--|
| EqlA Stage 2 required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not for the Annual Progress Report but need to be mindful of impacts of individual projects as they are progressed. |
| Owner of EqlA Stage Two: | |
| Timescale for EqlA Stage Two: | |

Name: Jenny Graham

Date: 05.10.2021

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

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| Directorate: | Place |
| Service: | Environment Department |
| Team: | Environment Delivery Team |
| Lead Officer: | Jenny Graham |
| Title of Project/System: | Environment Strategy Annual Progress Report |
| Date of Assessment: | 10.05.2021 |

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><small>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “ data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><small>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><small>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual's input is "scored" or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any "profiling" of data subjects? | | |
| Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Note – this could include biometrics, "internet of things" connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised | | |

If you answer "Yes" to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

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