

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Environment Select Committee**

**12 November 2024**

---

### **Climate Emergency Task Group**

#### **Background**

1. The Climate Emergency Task Group (CETG) is a standing task group reporting to the Environment Select Committee. The task group's initial terms of reference were endorsed by the Select Committee on 3 September 2019 and were revised on 9 November 2021.
2. The task group has produced two reports with recommendations:
  - Energy and Transport & Air quality (29 September 2020)
  - Planning (13 January 2021)
3. At its meeting on 14 June 2022 the Select Committee approved the continuation of the task group 2022/23.
4. The task group's last update to the Select Committee was on [18 July 2024](#).

#### **Membership**

5. The membership of the task group from October 2024 is as follows:

Cllr Clare Cape  
Cllr Sarah Gibson MP  
Cllr Jacqui Lay  
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew MP  
Cllr Dr Nick Murry  
Cllr David Vigar  
Cllr Ian Wallis  
Cllr Graham Wright (Chairman)

#### **Terms of Reference:**

6. The task group's revised terms of reference were endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on the 9 November 2021. These are:
  - a) To help shape and influence the development of Wiltshire Council's programme (in all relevant areas) for meeting its objective of making Wiltshire Council carbon neutral and seeking to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 (excluding the geographical area administered by Swindon Borough Council).

- b) To scrutinise the delivery of this objective through the Climate Strategy (2022-2027) and its delivery plans, as well as key plans, policies, and programmes, such as the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Including the way in which the Council is measuring progress and how it is performing and reporting against baselines.
- c) To provide recommendations on other aspects of decarbonising the county including partnership working and community-led approaches as well as acting as a national role model.

## **Recent Activity**

### **Climate Audit (12 July 2024)**

7. The SWAP Internal Audit Services was commissioned by the council to look at whether the council has appropriate plans and structures in place to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
8. The audit covered seven areas:
  - a. Funding
  - b. Structures
  - c. Decision making
  - d. Action plan detail
  - e. The task group
  - f. The 'roadmap' for Scope 3 emissions
  - g. Embedding climate into all decisions.
9. SWAP reviewed the following.
  - The governance structure, monitoring and reporting around the carbon reduction programme.
  - The tracking of progress towards carbon neutrality, including key performance indicators and the use, accuracy of access to data and evidence.
  - The embeddedness of carbon reduction in the day-to-day activities of the Council including financial, procurement, and other decision making.
  - The level to which the Council and partners are embedding the principle of adaptation to its policy frameworks.
  - How the Council is engaging with third parties to ensure progress towards carbon neutrality within Wiltshire by 2030. This report reflects the audit testing carried out. The assurance given was restricted by the quality/lack of data made available during the audit.
10. The task group asked questions around the capacity of the Climate Team, the council's capacity to bid for external funding, and what is included in scope 3 emissions.
11. The audit concluded that there was a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues and scope for improvement were identified and an action plan has been developed.

12. One of the issues identified was related to the terms of reference of the task group in that they lack information such as membership, structure, reporting, responsibility/accountability, frequency of meetings and any budget allocation to the group etc. Though not all of these issues should be addressed by amending the terms, the task group would ask that the following be added to its terms of reference to address the above:

- d) **The task group is a standing task group of the Environment Select Committee; reporting to the select committee on its recent activity and on any conclusions or recommendations. The task group meets on an ad hoc basis considering items on its forward work plan.**

#### **Update on Council's response to the climate emergency (11 October 2024)**

13. The task group discussed the update report which went to Cabinet (17 September 2024) and Full Council (15 October 2024).
14. The task group asked questions regarding the council's green tariff provider, the measurement of the county's emissions and the time lag associated with the measurements. They task group also asked about active travel and overall transport emissions. They also looked at retrofitting.
15. The council is on track to reach its emissions targets by 2030, but significant work needs to be undertaken to lower the county's overall emissions. Though much of this relies upon national policy the council is looking more to focus upon areas where progress must be made, i.e., transport, buildings and agriculture, to impact the overall target.

#### **Updating the Council's Climate Strategy delivery plans (18 October 2024)**

16. This meeting looked at a summary of conclusions from the Climate Delivery Plan review and future priorities. The majority of actions in the plans have progressed as expected and most have reached their milestones. There will be a renewed focus upon the county with more countywide projects. There will be seven themes in the council's new plan with a clearer link to KPIs; a focus upon key areas, strengthened governance, monitoring and reporting (within a new framework) and the merging of some of the current delivery themes.
17. The task group asked about benchmarking outcomes with other local authorities, carbon offsetting; mapping outcomes visually; carbon trajectories, retrofitting and working with the national grid.

#### **Forward work plan**

18. The Climate Emergency Task Group forward plan is attached at Appendix 1.

## **Proposals**

**That the select committee:**

- 1. Provides feedback on the update on the Task Group's activity above.**
- 2. Approves the amended Climate Emergency Task Group terms of reference.**
- 3. Notes the Climate Emergency Task Group's draft forward work plan, see Appendix 1.**

---

**Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Climate Emergency Task Group**

Report author: Simon Bennet, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 01225 718709,  
email: [simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:simon.bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1

### Climate Emergency Task Group – Forward Work Plan

14 November 2024	<b>Local Transport Plan</b> To understand the future strategy in particular active travel, electric vehicles charging.
2024 (tbc)	<b>Climate Change Adaptation Plan</b> To review the council's draft plan.
2024 (tbc)	<b>Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUGS2)</b> Update on the government funded programme for retrofitting.
2025	<b>Bio-diversity Net Gain</b> Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a new planning policy with the potential to change the face of nature recovery in England.
2025	<b>Carbon Offsetting Strategy</b> Update on the development of the strategy.
tbc	<b>Soft Plastic Recycling</b>
tbc	<b>Alternative fuels</b>
tbc	<b>Biogas</b> To explore the potential for biogas as a replacement for natural gas and use in vehicles.