

For publication

Climate Change Action Plan

Meeting:	Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum
Date:	18 November, 2021
Cabinet portfolio:	Deputy Leader
Directorate:	Corporate

1.0 Reason for inclusion on the work programme

1.1 The purpose of reviewing the topic is to monitor the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan.

1.2 The objectives of the review are to:

- To understand what engagement has taken place or is due to take place with other agencies.
- To ensure that targets are met, to monitor the progress against the steps in the Plan and monitor costs to ensure they are not exceeding the budget those in the Plan.
- To understand what efforts are being made to influence partners and other organisations.
- To review staffing resources assigned to this area of work.
- To include more information in relation to each action within the Climate Change Action Plan.

1.3 This is an update to the reports provided to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum on 18 March, 2021. This item is also connected to the previous 2019/20 More Environmentally Friendly Council and the 2020/21 Climate Change Action Plan work programme items.

2.0 Summary

2.1 Progress towards delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) remains strong. Some aspects of the plan have been delayed, largely due to capacity constraints, and changes in external circumstances, but these

(5) actions are expected to be completed by the end of the action plan period and remain under close review. Six new items have been added to the CCAP designed to improve our ability to integrate climate change into our wider activities.

3.0 Report details

- 3.1 Significant progress has been made in delivering the climate change action plan since the last report. While a number of actions in the plan are still delayed (mostly by existing capacity issues and external factors) several others are already exceeding the commitments laid out in the original plan. The delay is mostly taking place in the waste category, partly because of internal disruption and capacity constraints, but mostly because of expected changes in the regulatory framework for waste which is expected following government consultations this year.
- 3.2 Following a review of progress and actions early in 2021, a further six actions have been added to the plan to support future climate change action and build capacity within the council to meet our goal of becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. Details of the Deputy Leader's decision to add these, and the underpinning rationale are available from the [council's website](#).

These additional actions are designed to develop a firm foundation for future development by increasing council capacity to identify and take effective climate action. They include:

- A review of actions to date
 - Development of a programme of Carbon Literacy training for elected members and officers
 - Work to develop a pipeline of potential climate change mitigation projects to take advantage of government support
 - Development of a carbon accounting framework to monitor our emissions and the effectiveness of action
 - Work to identify clear decarbonisation pathways for council activities estimating milestones for decarbonisation and identifying potential technologies, and support needed for transition to a low carbon Borough.
- 3.3 As in earlier reports, actions outlined in the climate change action plan have been rated on a traffic light scale or "RAG" rating (as defined in the table below.)

Established	Action is fully embedded in the service areas responsible for delivery. Requires minimal additional climate change officer time or budget to maintain.
Green	Expected to be delivered as described
Amber	Expected to be delivered however this may be later than originally anticipated (though still within the period covered by the action plan)
Red	Severe obstacles or challenges exist which render the action impossible to deliver on time and on budget without significant intervention or modification
Removed	Rendered moot due to changes in policy or external factors

3.4 Of 45 actions in the CCAP (including six additions in July) a total of 21 (47%) are established within the relevant service delivery teams, 19 (42%) are expected to be delivered as originally specified and 5 (11%) are expected to be delivered but have taken longer than originally envisaged. No items have been removed from the plan or are expected to require significant additional support (as shown in figure 1 below).

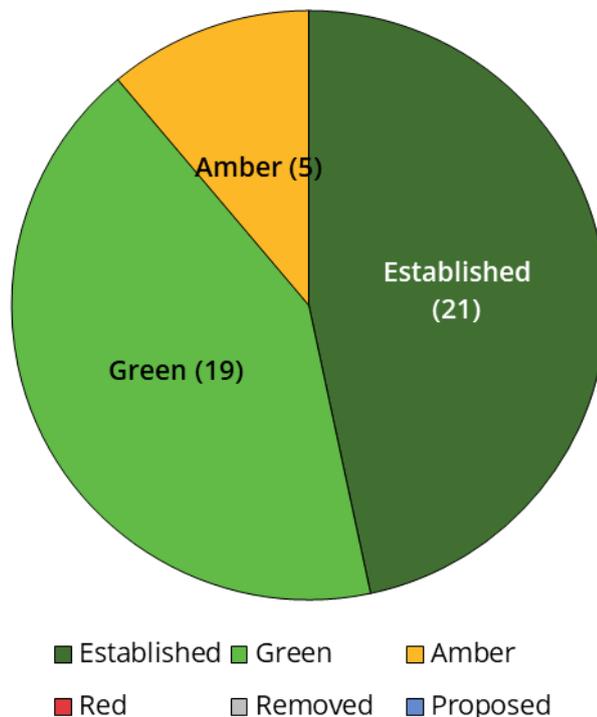


Figure 1 Overall status of CCAP actions as of October 2021

3.5 Figure 2 shows a breakdown of completed actions by category. The most significant slippage has taken place in the Waste category, and the largest

remaining work programme is in the Policy & General category, largely due to the new additions to the action plan.

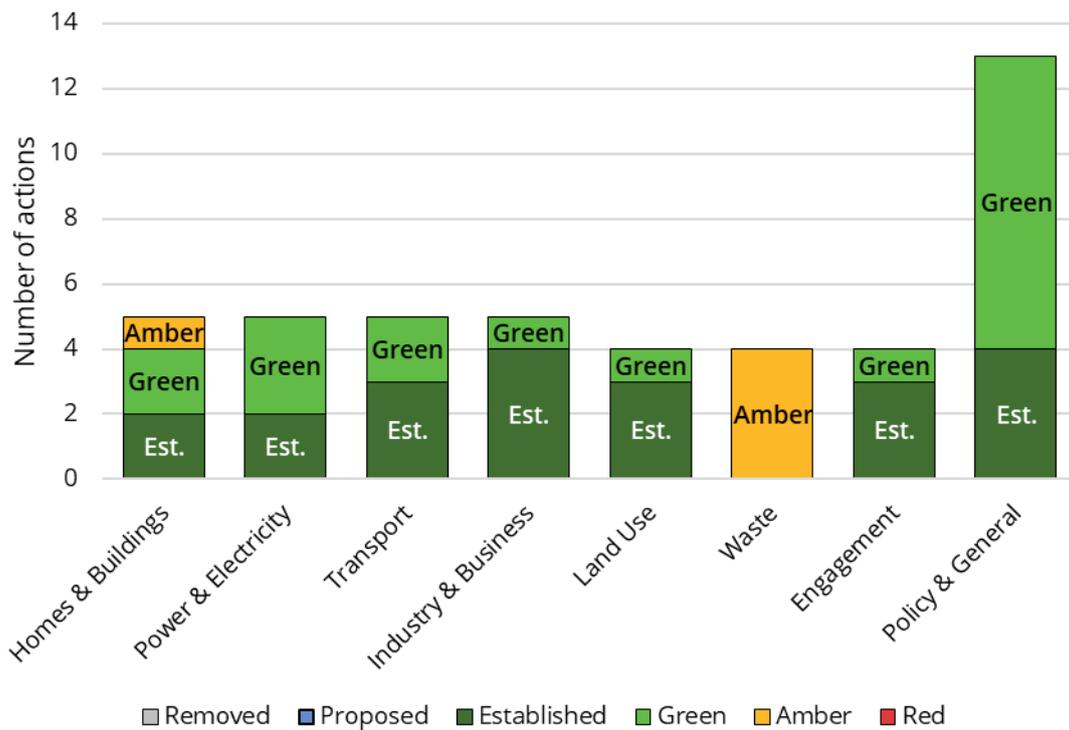


Figure 2. Breakdown of completion by category

- 3.6 A detailed overview of different actions under the action plan is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.7 Engagement with external partners including agencies, community groups, and other councils in the local area has been broadly positive. In particular, our relationship with the Local Authority Energy Partnership (LAEP), Climate Emergency UK (CEUK) and the Collective for Climate Action (CfCA) have resulted in a number of actions which strengthen the council's position on climate change.

4.0 Potential barriers

- 4.1 As described in earlier reports, the Covid pandemic has had a substantial impact on the work carried out to date given the demands that this has placed on local government. This has reduced the capacity of many staff across the organisation as they deal with lockdown measures, challenges regarding changes to working locations / practices, and unexpected changes to working patterns. It has also had a significant impact on the opportunities for engagement with voluntary groups and the private sector. While we hope that it will be possible to return to a less

constrained pattern of working over the coming months, the situation has resulted in slippage in some actions.

- 4.2 In terms of staffing resources, the change over the reporting period is that the climate change officer is now full time. It is important to note however, that climate change remains a team of 1.0 FTE. There will always be more actions which could be undertaken if resources allow, and staff time remains the most important constraint in this regard. Work under the new actions is designed to leverage wider council capacity to integrate climate change activity throughout the organisation, but it is acknowledged that climate change as a field is only going to become more pressing and significant over the coming years.

5.0 Future plans and areas for further scrutiny involvement

- 5.1 As always with projects which span several years, a number of external events have occurred which have changed the priorities and best route forward for some actions within the plan. This is particularly true in the Transport and Waste categories, where actions by central government and at county level have pre-empted or superseded our original intent. Where this has occurred, it is noted under individual actions (in Appendix 1), but in most cases it appears likely to result in a better outcome than previously expected.
- 5.2 A substantial proportion of the council's emissions are a result of the built environment (about 60% of the borough's emissions come from building use). This is addressed in more detail in the new asset management strategy (awaiting approval). It should be noted that additional capacity may be needed to deliver this strategy effectively.
- 5.3 Several actions under the action plan have been in areas where significant further opportunities have become apparent. This is the case under the Homes & Buildings category, where significant funding has become available from government to improve energy efficiency in the worst insulated homes in the borough. We are also in the process of applying for a substantial grant to support further activity under the Land Use category.

6.0 Implications for consideration

- 6.1 The situation appears to be broadly positive with delivery under way on most objectives. Where delivery has stalled, this has primarily been due to

circumstances beyond our control, and we have plans in place to correct any slippage.

- 6.2 Going forward, over the coming year we will be consulting with a wide range of partners and undertaking research to develop the key objectives and activities for a new action plan covering the period 2023-2027.

Document information

Report author	
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Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Detailed overview of action status