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| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Meeting date: | Thursday 26 September 2019 |
| Title of report: | Executive Response to the Climate Emergency |
| Report by: | Cabinet member environment, economy and skills |

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To approve the cabinet's response to the climate emergency resolution that was unanimously supported at the meeting of full council on 8 March 2019.

To approve the cabinet's response to the zero carbon citizen's assembly resolution that was passed by council at the meeting of full council on 12 July 2019.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The executive's response to the resolutions relating to the climate emergency passed by Council in March and July 2019 be agreed as detailed in Appendix 1.**

Alternative options

1. There were a number of alternative options associated with the resolutions. These included the following:
 - Not to aspire to achieve carbon neutrality

This is not recommended as the risk of not tackling climate change will have severe social, economic and environmental impacts. Additionally, achieving carbon neutrality will contribute to improvements in local air quality, enhancement of the natural environment and improved public health.

- Not to switch to renewable electricity and green gas supplies.
This is not recommended as switching to renewable energy supplies will significantly reduce the Council's carbon emissions. The estimated impact of switching both gas and electricity will improve the council's carbon reduction from 43% to approximately 63%.
 - To adopt a different carbon reduction target.
This is not recommended as the aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 is based on the recommendations within the most recent special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
2. The actions proposed in this report will include exploration of other options to address the climate emergency as the process progresses.

Key considerations

Background

3. In 2011, the council published its first Carbon Management Plan (CMP) committing to reduce emissions from the Council's operations.
- This committed the council to a target reduction of its own CO₂ emissions of 30% by 2015/16 against a 2008/2009 baseline.
 - After the successful delivery of a 29.4% reduction in 2015/16, a second Carbon Management Plan was published in 2017, which committed the council to a stretch target of a 40% reduction by 2020/21.
4. In 2013, the council jointly developed and became a signatory for a countywide carbon reduction target.
- "Re-energising Herefordshire" committed Herefordshire to reduce countywide carbon emissions of 80% by 2050 against a 1990 baseline, which mirrored the targets within the Climate Change Act 2008.
 - Signatories of this countywide commitment included public sector organisations, business, local communities and environmental groups.
5. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report clearly states the following:

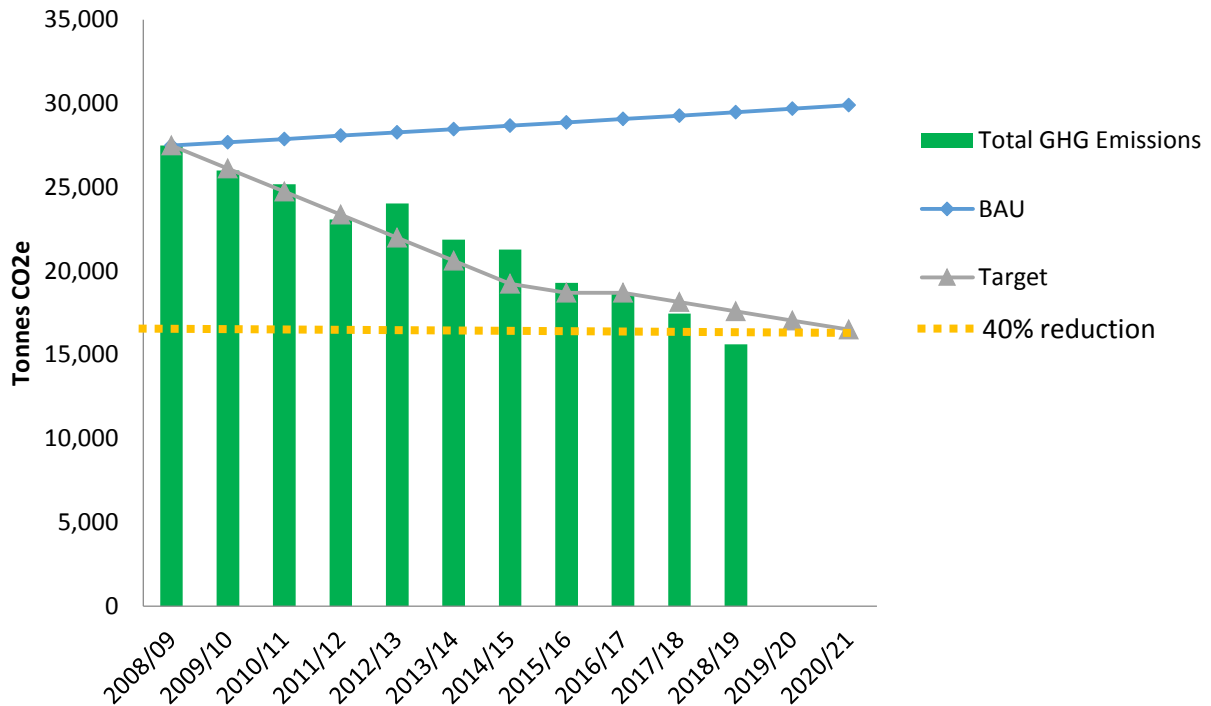
This Special Report also shows that recent trends in emissions and the level of international ambition indicated by nationally determined contributions, within the Paris Agreement, deviate from a track consistent with limiting warming to well below 2°C. Without increased and urgent mitigation ambition in the coming years, leading to a sharp decline in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, global warming will surpass 1.5°C in the following decades, leading

to irreversible loss of the most fragile ecosystems, and crisis after crisis for the most vulnerable people and societies. (Source: IPCC, 2018: Global Warming of 1.5°C.)

6. The government plans to legislate to achieve net-zero emissions in the UK by 2050. Recently, the UK was also confirmed as the joint hosts of the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2020.
7. At the meeting of full council on the 8th March 2019, the council declared a Climate Emergency and unanimously resolved to call on the executive to:
 - a. Commit to an accelerated reduction of its own carbon emissions, with the aspirations to be carbon neutral by 2030; and to change its energy supply to 100% renewable source;
 - b. Produce a successor to the current Carbon Management Plan (2019-2023) within the early months of the new council;
 - c. Work with partners to produce an action plan, covering all relevant council strategies, and to submit this plan via Scrutiny to Cabinet by the end of 2019;
 - d. Call upon our 'Re-Energise' partners to match or better the council's commitment; to publicise their response and to lead on working with the public to promote and encourage carbon reduction in all aspects of the county's life; and
 - e. Provide the necessary resource for officers to deliver on the council's carbon reduction commitments, and to monitor and report annually on the county position.
 - f. Arrange a full day interactive seminar for all councillors (as soon as possible) this year to be briefed on and discuss the options that might be open to Herefordshire Council to expedite its carbon footprint reduction aspiration and improve further the natural environment of Herefordshire
8. To date 94 local authorities (23%) of first and second tier councils in the UK have now declared a Climate Emergency, with 60 setting a target to become carbon neutral by 2030 or earlier. In addition, the LGA has established a 'Climate Emergency Network' as a dedicated special interest group.

Progress to date – Herefordshire Council Emission Reduction

9. The most recent carbon footprint report, published in August 2019, showed a tremendous reduction of a 43% reduction by the end of 2018/19. This performance exceeded the 40% reduction target two years early and has resulted in environmental improvements and significant financial savings.



10. In September 2019 the council switched its electricity supply to 100% renewable energy and is currently seeking quotations to switch its gas supply to renewable sources through our existing provider, West Mercia Energy.

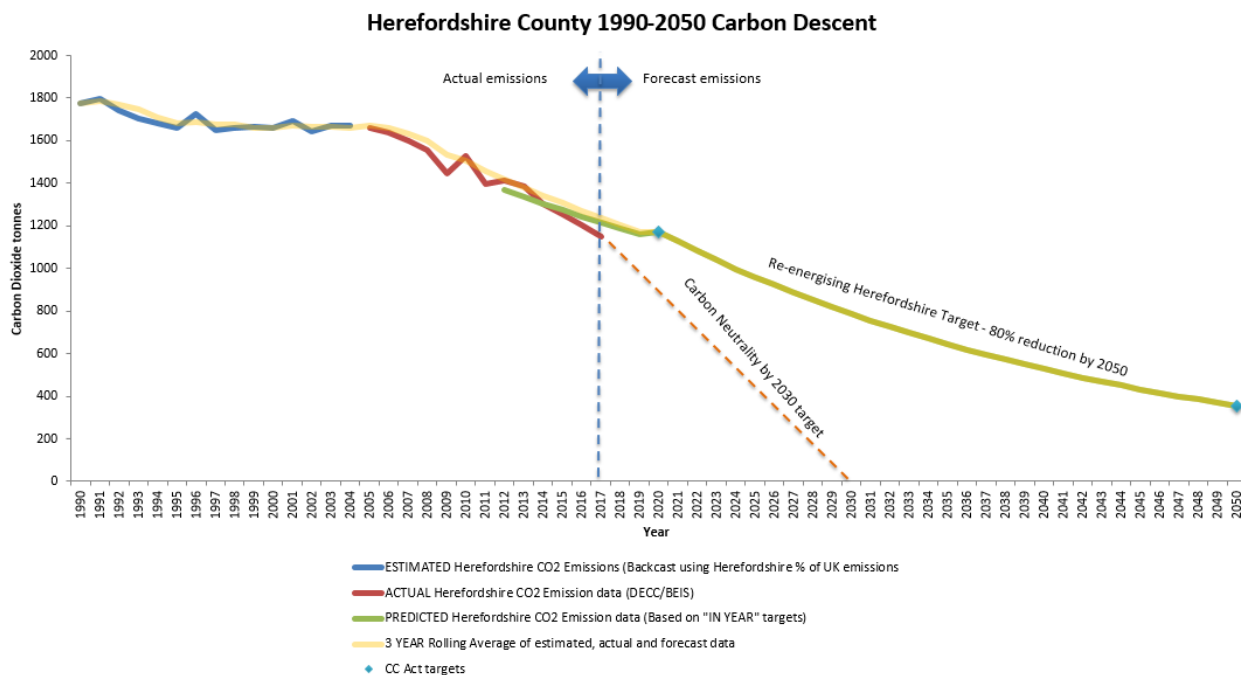
- Estimated annual emissions savings from the switch to renewable electricity equates to 2,974 tonnes of CO₂e.
- The saving from switching to renewable gas would be an additional 2,448 tonnes of CO₂e. The combined saving is, therefore, 5,422 tonnes of CO₂e.
- If 5,422 tonnes of CO₂e was removed from our latest footprint (2018/19), the result would be a 62.9% reduction in emissions from our baseline year of 2008/09.
- If only renewable electricity is purchased (as per the current arrangement), the change (based on the 2018/19 footprint) would result in a reduction of 54% from the baseline year.

11. Through the delivery of existing and planned carbon reduction projects including additional renewable energy projects, energy efficiency improvements and cleaner and low carbon vehicles, the council anticipates further carbon reductions before the end of the Carbon Management Plan 2 period which ends in 2020/21.

Progress to date – Countywide Emission Reduction

12. The most recent dataset for 2017, published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy show significant reductions in Herefordshire’s countywide carbon emissions. Here the data has a two year lag due to the complexities of collating such a comprehensive data set.

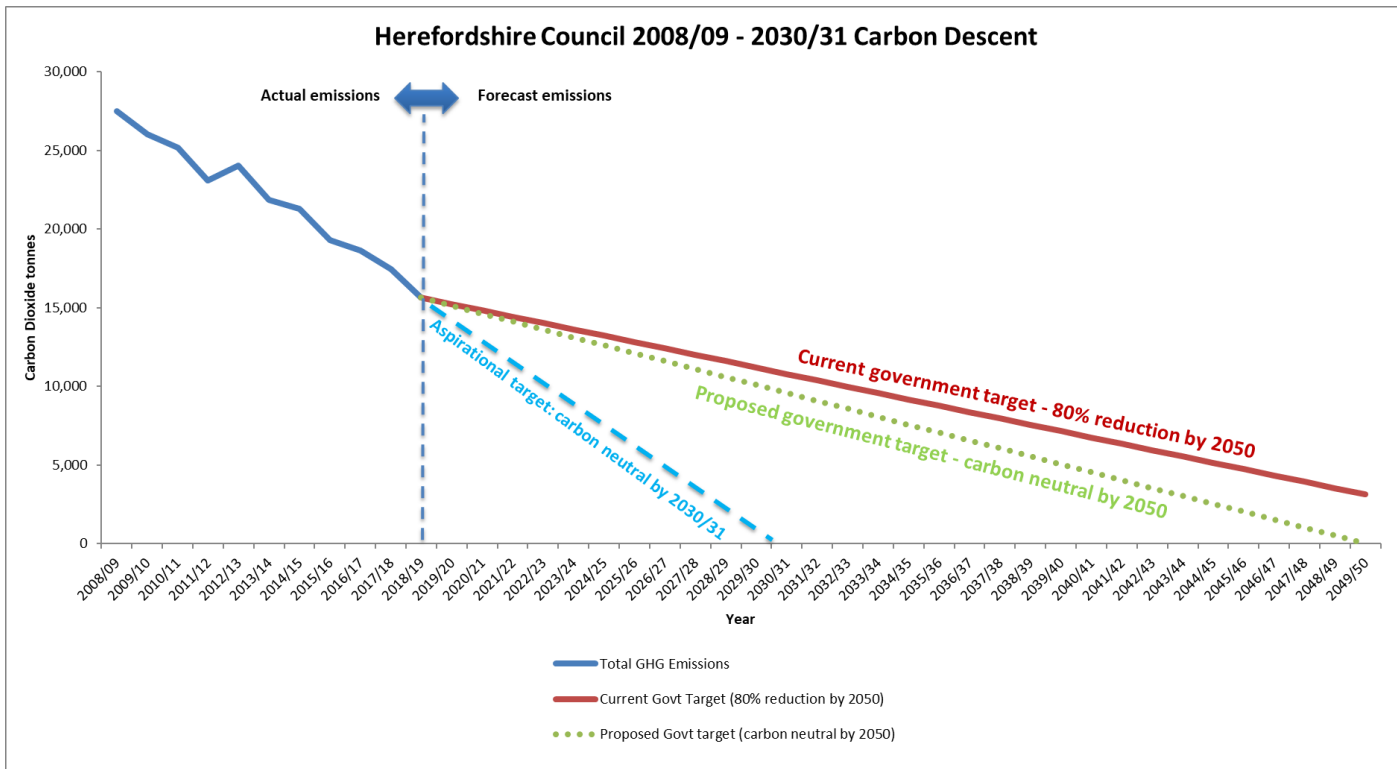
13. Against the 1990 baseline, this shows an overall reduction of 35.3% in countywide carbon emissions in 2017, which exceeds the 2017 interim target of 32.2% for the Re-energising Herefordshire target.



14. Due to the recent successes in a number of countywide carbon reduction projects such as the Business Energy Efficiency Programme, Keep Herefordshire Warm and Destination Hereford projects, in addition to the recent launches of the new Marches Renewable Energy project and Beryl Bikes in Hereford, further emission reductions are anticipated as the future data sets are published.
15. On 12th July 2019, the following subsequent motion was approved to encourage and facilitate public engagement in the council's transition to zero carbon:
- That this council asks the executive to conduct a citizens assembly on how Herefordshire can transition to zero carbon, timetabled to coordinate with the national citizens assembly on the same topic.

Proposed way forward

16. Following the climate motion in March, significant work is underway undertaking a best practice review to exploring new and emerging carbon reduction and invest to save opportunities to support and inform the development of the council's third Carbon Management Plan and for countywide carbon reduction.
17. In line with the two previous plans, it is recommended this updated Carbon Management Plan is developed to cover a five year window and that it outlines both interim annual targets and is accompanied by a comprehensive action plan. The below graph illustrates the ambition of the new carbon reduction target compared to progress to date and national targets.



18. In July, a members briefing session on climate change was undertaken and this will be followed up by a sustainable transport session and a full day interactive workshop in October.
19. An options appraisal is currently underway exploring different models for public engagement to further support the development of these plans. This appraisal will consider the options of a citizen's assembly, a citizen's jury, a citizen's panel and a local climate summit. The findings of this appraisal will be brought forward in a subsequent report to consider recommendations, timescales and resource implications.

Community impact

20. The resulting improvements in local air quality, improved public health and efficiencies from addressing the climate emergency will positively contribute towards the delivery of the council's corporate plan objectives of 'Securing better services, quality of life and value for money' and 'Enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives.'
21. The development of the new carbon management plan and associated action plan will be developed to jointly contribute to the delivery of the council's wider strategic aims including the Health and Well-being strategy, Local Transport Plan, Air Quality Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and Accommodation strategy.
22. Additionally local leadership on carbon reduction will promote healthy lifestyles through local food choices, will support business diversification into low carbon good and services, and will encourage active travel choices and the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles.

Equality duty

23. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
24. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
25. Not addressing carbon emissions will result in irreparable climate change, which will affect negatively impact all residents, the local economy and generations to come. By reducing local carbon emissions this will positively contribute towards improved local air quality and public health.

Resource implications

26. A full business case will be developed as part of the new carbon management action plan, which will consider both revenue and capital resource implications. This will be considered through the council's corporate budget planning process for 2020/21 and the development of the new corporate plan. The development of the new plan and options appraisals will be undertaken within existing resources and will help to inform future resources needs.
27. The current options appraisal for community engagement will consider the resource implications of each option.
28. Future project proposals will continue to be developed on an individual bases and business cases and capital bids will be considered on an invest to save basis.
29. The switch to renewable electricity (already in place) will cost additional £2,150 per annum. This is managed within existing budgets.
30. Due to limited availability, the additional cost of switching the council's gas supplies to renewable sources is currently estimated at £40,000 per annum. This will be monitored in partnership with West Mercia Energy and will be considered through the development of the carbon management plan and the council's budget planning process for 2020/21.

Legal implications

31. No legal issues arise from the response to the Climate Emergency Plan.
32. Implementation going forward may give way to procurement and other related considerations, which will be subject to further governance processes going forward.

Risk management

| Risk / opportunity | Mitigation |
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| Resources (risk) – In order to achieve the target, additional activity, projects and resources are likely to be required. | Building on the success of the previous two carbon management plans, a five year action plan will be developed to explore the resource requirements on an invest to save basis and will be brought forward in a subsequent decision report. The delivery of this commitment will be managed at service, directorate and corporate levels. |
| Reputation (both risk and opportunity) – There is a reputational risk of not adopting the proposed carbon reduction targets despite the unanimously supported motion at Full Council in March. | As a leading authority on successfully delivering a local carbon reduction, the council is well placed to build on and accelerate plans for local carbon reduction. The recommendations are to adopt the carbon neutrality targets and to develop robust plans to ensure the successful delivery of this commitment. |
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Consultees

33. None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Summary of executive responses to the Climate Emergency and Citizens Assembly motions to full council.

Background papers

- None