

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Councillor Helen Crane, Executive Member for Waste, Environmental Health, Licensing and Sustainability

To: Cabinet – 3rd July 2023

Author: Claire Burton, Organisational Development and Performance Manager

Subject: Breckland Council's 2022-23 Carbon Audit

Purpose: To update the Cabinet on the latest figures of the Council's Carbon Audit

Recommendation:

- 1) That Cabinet acknowledges the content of the report.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The earths average temperature has been increasing much more quickly than expected over the last 150 years. Scientists believe this is due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels for buildings, cars and so on. These activities create more carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases, which cause the atmosphere to trap more heat therefore making the earth warm up (also known as the Greenhouse effect). Some of the impacts we are seeing include rising sea levels causing flooding and wildfires, both we have seen have devastating effects within Breckland over recent years.
- 1.2 Given the effects being seen, nationally, in 2019, a net-zero target was set by the Government to ensure the UK reduces its greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050. At a local level, also that year, Breckland District Council was one of the first authorities in Norfolk to declare a Climate Emergency, committing to reduce the level of greenhouse gases within the organisation, striving to achieve net zero by 2035 and to lead and educate across the District.
- 1.3 In 2019/2020 the council approved to carry out a baselining exercise to understand its major emission sources. Since then, data has continued to be collected and shared each financial year to monitor and track progress. This latest report and the attached presentation provides an update on the organisations progress towards achieving a net zero position by 2035.

2.0 CARBON FOOTPRINT RESULTS 2022-2023

- 2.1 The 2022-2023 carbon footprint shows a positive direction of travel for the council with reductions across many of the areas (scopes) measured. The Council's emissions were 4,119.20 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent), totalling a reduction of 463.70 tCO₂e in the last year. This is a 10% reduction since the previous year and a 17.5% reduction since the baseline year in 2019/20. To help visualise the amount saved for example driving a car 2,500 miles releases one tonne of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, therefore the councils saving this year is the equivalent of 1.2 million miles driven.

2.2 Methodology - Organisations measures their emissions under 3 Scopes:

- Scope 1: Emissions from sources that we own or control directly for example burning gas to heat our buildings.
- Scope 2: Indirect emissions from energy we buy from energy providers (electricity)
- Scope 3: Emissions created by others in our supply chain.

A breakdown of how the emissions for each of the Scopes have changed now follows.

2.3 **Scope 1 – Gas burned from our buildings.**

2.3.1 Scope 1 emissions reduced by 15% since the previous year. This has been due to the occupancy of Breckland House in Thetford reducing by 20% given the lesser frequency of ARP staff working from the building. Dereham Business Centre has also been vacated by Norfolk County Council, meaning that in both cases less gas has been used to heat the buildings.

2.4 **Scope 2 – Electric we have bought to power our buildings, streetlights, and EV Charging Units.**

2.4.1 Within Scope 2 we have seen a 94% reduction in our emissions since the previous year. This includes a 100% reduction in carbon emissions for the electric we purchase both for use in our buildings and for the power used for street lighting within the District. This is following confirmation from our supplier that the electric we buy from our energy supplier, is on a Green Tariff (and certificated as such) and comes from 100% renewable sources such as wind, solar and hydro.

2.4.2 Pleasingly, we continue to see the increased use of the EV charging points across the district. While this does create an increase in our carbon emissions, seeing the increase in renewable energy being used for vehicle use is encouraging.

2.5 **Scope 3 – Serco contracted vehicles, Staff/Member travel, procurement spend, gas/water/electric use in tenanted buildings owned by the Council.**

2.5.1 Scope 3 emissions reminds us that we can't operate as a Council on our own, that we collaborate with partners and suppliers (and they have supply chains too!) all of which continue to make up a huge proportion, 95%, of our emissions – therefore reduction of Scope 3 continues to be our biggest challenge.

2.6 **Contracted Fleet Vehicles (Serco) emissions have increased**

2.6.1 These emissions include refuse, recycling, garden waste and business waste collections along with grounds maintenance make up 41% of our total carbon emissions. Last year we have seen CO2 emissions increase by 25% from the previous year, reasons include.

- New collection routes implemented, as a result of a new waste deposit depot. This required six additional vehicles during a four-month bedding in period until the rounds became efficient. The additional vehicles ensured contractual obligations were met on any missed bins. Two vehicles have remained, to deal with a change in the transfer station which occurred in March this year.
- The impact of the Depot moving in 2021 from two depots at each end of the to one centralised location.

- Housing Growth – resulting in more bins to empty. Therefore, trucks are working longer and travelling further.
- 2020/2021 was a challenging year for Grounds Maintenance due to staffing issues, however last year, they were back to being fully staffed so all vehicles were deployed.
- We also would expect an increase, given the growing business waste collection scheme.

2.7 **Tenanted buildings owned by the Council (Electric & Water) emissions have increased**

2.7.1 We have seen emissions increase similar to pre-covid figures following the buildings being re-occupied.

2.8 **Expensed Taxi's emissions have increased**

2.8.1 This emission is related to taxi use for use for those who find themselves homeless and needing transport to new temporary accommodation. The 41% increase is back to similar pre-covid figures and is reflective of the on-going demand on housing services.

2.9 **Procurement Spend emissions have increased**

2.9.1 Emissions include council contracts such as cleaning services, IT equipment etc. The increase since the previous year being 27%.

2.10 **Staff/Member Business Travel emissions have reduced**

2.10.1 Carbon emissions reduced by 34% last year. This is following the continuance of agile working and use of technology for business meetings.

2.11 **Tenanted buildings owned by the Council (gas) emissions have reduced**

2.11.1 The use of gas reduced by 20%. During the year, the council invested in pool covers and LED lights at our leisure centres to save which saved on heating costs and reduced carbon emissions.

2.12 **Staff Commuting emissions have reduced**

2.12.1 In 2022'23 staff commuting emissions reduced by 74%, a large proportion of this was due to the reduction in days in the office for Breckland employed ARP staff at Breckland House in Thetford.

3.0 **SUMMARY**

3.1 The council has seen a continuation of reducing carbon emissions during 2022/2023 and has made good progress in reducing those within Scope 1 and Scope 2 which are within our control. Scope 3 proves more of a challenge, and we continue to use our statutory powers and influence to educate and seek to change behaviours of those within our supply chain to be more considerate of climate change and sustainability to reduce the emissions further. Further exciting plans will come through the committee process over coming months how we can continue to reduce our emissions.

4.0 **OPTIONS/RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 Do nothing. Note the contents of the report.

5.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 The content of the report is to provide and update the cabinet on the progress in reducing the Council's organisational carbon footprint.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Data Protection; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

6.1. **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

6.1.1 This report sets out the current position of the Council's organisational carbon footprint.

6.2 **Corporate Priorities**

6.2.1 This directly links to the Council's Breckland 2035 corporate plan theme as set out in its Corporate Plan.

6.3 **Reputation**

6.3.1 The Council has made a commitment to strive towards achieving NetZero of its organisational emissions by 2035. There will be public interest in the progress that the council is making towards this commitment.

6.4 **Risk Management**

6.4.1 This directly links to one of the risks identified in the council's strategic risk register which is reported to and considered at the Governance and Audit Committee.

7.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

7.1 All wards

8.0 **ACRONYMS**

8.1 ARP – Anglia Revenues Partnership

Background papers:-

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A

Carbon Audit Presentation 2022'23