

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Transport & Sustainability Committee

## Agenda Item 27

**Subject:** Carbon Neutral 2030 Programme – Annual Report 2022-23

**Date of meeting:** 3 October 2023

**Report of:** Executive Director, Economy, Environment and Culture

**Contact Officer:** Name: Kirsten Firth  
Email: [Kirsten.firth@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsten.firth@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Name: Rachel Williams  
Email: [rachel.williams@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.williams@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Wards affected:** All

**For general release**

### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme is one of the council's key commitments with an ambitious target to become a carbon neutral city by 2030. The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme Annual Report 2022-23 at Appendix 1 updates on progress. The committee is asked to note progress to date, and proposed developments for 2023-24.

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 That Committee notes the progress made on the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme as set out in the Annual Report at Appendix 1.

2.2 That Committee notes the progress made on the Carbon Neutral Fund as set out in paragraphs 3.4–3.8.

2.3 That the Committee agrees the proposed developments to the Programme in 2023-24 as set out in paragraph 3.12.

### 3. Context and background information

#### Annual Report on 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme

3.1 In December 2018, Brighton & Hove City Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency with cross-party commitment. In Autumn 2020, the council held a [Climate Assembly](#) and local young people delivered a Youth Assembly, both on the topic of travel and transport. Ongoing development of climate action work was brought together in the [2030 Carbon Neutral Programme](#) and approved by Policy & Resources Committee in March 2021, with a commitment to bring annual reports to committee.

3.2 The strategic aims of the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme are to:

- Cut greenhouse gas emissions from across the city by 12.7% annually
- Enhance biodiversity
- Adapt to climate change

3.3 The current corporate programme is a range of projects which are owned by teams across the council. This broad approach has been important in embedding climate action in different services. The Sustainability Team supports, develops, manages and monitors the programme but does not directly deliver most projects. In 2022-23, highlighted achievements of the Carbon Neutral Programme include:

- Award-winning development of 42 energy-efficient council homes at Victoria Road in Portslade, specially designed with ground source heat pumps, solar panels and high levels of insulation, to keep residents' fuel bills low.
- Over 350 Electric Vehicle chargepoints now in place plus 3 on-street rapid taxi charging hubs, with rapidly increasing usage of all chargepoints; ongoing programme of actively pursuing funding for additional chargepoints. BHCC in top 5 councils across the country for expanding access to EV chargepoints. Four electric refuse trucks now in operation, with more on order. Switching to electric-powered vehicles is one of the most significant actions to cut emissions from transport and improve air quality.
- The Wilding Waterhall project to 'wild' a former council golf course, restoring fragile chalk grassland and improve habitats for wildlife, while improving access for local residents and visitors.
- Introducing new Environmental Sustainability and Social Value policies to be used in all procurement by the council of goods and services.

#### 3.4 **The Carbon Neutral Fund**

The Carbon Neutral Fund (CNF) is a strand of the Carbon Neutral Programme. Along with the one-off Climate Action Fund for transport and travel projects, and the previous Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Investment Fund (SCRIF), it has funded over £20 million of projects between 2019 and 2023.

3.5 This council capital funding has helped to develop and accelerate council projects to reduce carbon emissions, enhance biodiversity, and adapt to climate change. A list of the 2022/2024 projects can be found in the Background Documents to this report. Over the last year, there has been an increased focus on project monitoring, with enhanced 6-monthly progress reporting, the introduction of new funding conditions around spend, and the establishment of 6-monthly CNF project lead meetings. The next CNF project progress reports will cover the six-month period to November 2023.

Table 1: CNF allocations to projects with spend and commitments at May 2023

CNF Round	Allocated to projects	Spent at May 2023	Committed at May 2023	Spent or committed at May 2023	% Spent or committed at May 2023
2019/20 SCRIF	£0.382m	£0.329m	£0.022m	£0.351m	92%
2021/22 CNF	£3.118m	£0.969m	£0.462m	£1.431m	46%
2021/22 CNF- Transport & Travel	£3.900m	£2.561m	£0.201m	£2.762m	71%
2021/22 Climate Action Fund – Transport & Travel	£1.404m	£0.202m	£0.006m	£0.208m	15%
2022/24 CNF including ring-fenced allocations	£12.055m	£0.464m	£0.433m	£0.897m	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£20.859m</b>	<b>£4.525m</b>	<b>£1.124m</b>	<b>£5.649m</b>	<b>27%</b>

- 3.6 See Table 1 for allocations, spend and commitment data across the different rounds of the CNF at May 2023. The first round 19/20 SCRIF is close to being fully spent with 92% spend or committed. The CNF 21 spend or committed rate of 46% shows significant improvement on the previous 6-monthly reported figure of 24% in November 2022. The CNF Transport & Travel is well advanced with a spent or committed rate of 71%. The Climate Action Fund, supporting transport and travel measures addressing the 2020 city Climate Assembly recommendations, is less advanced at 15% spent or committed. Spend to date has included work on installing accessible bus stops, and development work for the Liveable City Centre project. Progress has been slower than anticipated due to the availability of staff resources, although the development and delivery of other schemes focused on active travel and public transport, which are consistent with the priorities of the Climate Assembly, has been achieved having secured other external grant funding.
- 3.7 Agreed in October 2022 most of the 22/24 projects are now underway; many of these projects needed more lead-in time as they are new projects. It should be noted that capital expenditure programmes are planned between six months and a year in advance. The 2022/24 CNF round involves projects that have more preparatory work to do before they can commit the spending. This includes project planning, undertaking audits, identifying staffing resources, as well as working through planning permission and procurement processes. Over the last year there has also been some reworking of projects due to cost inflation. It should be noted that new CNF criteria introduced in 2022 have precluded teams starting new projects until their previous CNF project(s) spend reaches 50%.
- 3.8 The 22/24 allocation includes the ring-fenced CNF allocations that were set out at Budget Council in February 2022, and agreed at P&R Committee on 7

July 2022 (see link in Background Documents below). Of these, £1.1m previously allocated to 'Expanding Liveable Neighbourhoods' was reallocated at February 2023 Budget Council to the public toilets capital programme. Similarly, the Hanover & Turner Liveable Neighbourhood Committee report on today's Transport & Sustainability Committee agenda proposes to seek Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration (SFCR) Committee approval to reallocate £0.4m from the CNF to the Local Transport Plan capital programme. It should be noted that the TBM 5 Budget report to SFCR Committee on 5 October 2023 seeks to approve £0.733m of the ring-fenced CNF for 'Carbon Reduction Measures to Operational Buildings' to fund roof mounted solar PV on corporate landlord and leisure sites.

### **3.9 Key Performance Indicator – City-wide Carbon Neutral target**

City-wide greenhouse gas emissions stood at 812,000 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2021, the most recent year for which data is available. This was a slight increase on the previous year 2020, which had shown a significant fall due to the restrictions on travel and economic activity imposed during Covid pandemic lockdowns. Across the city as a whole, carbon emissions have fallen by nearly half since 2005.

3.10 Emissions from the council's own corporate estate and operations were 16,078 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022-23, a fall of 12.8% on the previous year. Council emissions have fallen by more than 58% in the 10 years since 2013.

3.11 More information and graphs are available in the Annual Report at Appendix 1.

### **3.12 Development of Carbon Neutral Programme in 2023-24**

During 2023-24, key areas for future development of the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme include:

- Develop Decarbonisation Pathways to drive strategic planning and prioritise most impactful actions towards carbon neutral target (reporting Spring 2024)
- Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment to understand the local impacts of future climate change and prioritise actions to adapt and improve resilience (reporting Autumn 2023)
- Explore options for raising investment to deliver more local climate action projects.
- Develop evidence base for City Plan Part One review, to support new planning policies to cut carbon, enhance biodiversity, and adapt to climate change.

- Emphasise climate justice and social and economic co-benefits of climate action, such as tackling the cost-of-living crisis, and health benefits from clean air.
  - Develop strategic climate partnerships focused on reducing carbon emissions, with businesses, major institutions and organisations
  - As lead partner of The Living Coast Biosphere, work with partners to prepare our submission to UNESCO for the renewal of Biosphere status
  - Continue to develop specific communications campaigns and lines of engagement with our communities and residents to share information and encourage positive behaviour change
  - Investigate tools for monitoring carbon impact of Scope 3 emissions
- 3.13 Brighton & Hove City Council's corporate carbon emissions are only a tiny fraction (less than 2%) of the total for the city. Collaboration with businesses, institutions and communities is essential to reach our carbon neutral target. In 2023-24 the council, with community partners, will explore options for partnerships with city institutions, businesses and public sectors, to help coordinate a collaborative city-wide response.

#### 3.14 **External interest and scrutiny of BHCC's Carbon Neutral Programme**

There will continue to be great interest in BHCC's programme from local media, students, other local authorities, Freedom of Information enquiries, residents and community organisations but also national organisations like the Local Government Association which often seeks information via surveys and case studies, UK100, and Climate Emergency UK. Publishing an annual report on the programme demonstrates BHCC's commitment to continuing climate action.

### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 In 2023-24, the Decarbonisation Pathways study will develop several scenarios for achieving our goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The scenarios will include 'Business as Usual', 'Maximum effort' and other scenarios tailored to the unique qualities of Brighton & Hove's geography and communities. This will enable an evidenced assessment of options, taking into account funding, capacity and leadership.
- 4.2 Not taking action on the climate would leave the city vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as increased heatwaves, aridity, storms, heavy rainfall and flooding. These impacts are being examined in the Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and an Action Plan drawn up.

### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation took place on the Programme in 2020 and 2021 via BHCC's Climate Assembly and online consultation platform Bang the Table / Climate Conversations. The Carbon Neutral Programme is a corporate initiative which sits in different departments across the council. As projects are developed, council officers consult with residents and stakeholders as appropriate. Communication also takes place through the council's Brighton & Hove Connected partnerships.
- 5.2 The council's website includes a comprehensive Climate Hub with pages on all aspects of council action, and regular news items.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Publishing the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme Annual Report will demonstrate Brighton & Hove City Council's continuing commitment to climate action on carbon emissions, biodiversity and adaptation to climate change. It will help to engage public, press and campaigning organisations. It will raise the profile of BHCC's climate action work with other local authorities, NGOs, regional and national government and provide background evidence when seeking funding for additional climate projects.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 A total of £21.804m has been made available toward SCRIF, CNF and Climate Action Fund investments for the Council through capital borrowing. The cost of the borrowing has been incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy with some schemes allocated on a spend to save basis such as investment into carbon reductions on operational buildings. Allocation of these investments to specific schemes and programmes within the Council's Capital Investment Programme have been reported to Policy and Resources Committee for approval. Details and progress of the schemes from this fund are included in Appendix 1 of this report. The progress of spend against these budgets are monitored and reported in line with the Council's Targeted Budget Management (TBM). Future allocations to new schemes with any balances held from the Carbon Neutral Fund will be reported back to Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration in due course including the proposed £0.4m to the Local transport Plan and £0.733m to the solar panels project.

Name of finance officer consulted: Rob Allen    Date consulted 21/09/23

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Any relevant legal issues will be considered when individual Carbon Neutral Fund projects are brought forward for implementation.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert    Date consulted 13/09/23

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme Annual Report in Appendix 1 summarises actions and projects which address a wide range of inequalities, and this is built into project design in line with BHCC's commitment to be a fair and inclusive city and a healthy city where people thrive.
- 9.2 For example, help to tackle fuel poverty and cold homes addresses some of the worst impacts of cold homes for vulnerable people. Improving energy efficiency and installing solar panels and heat pumps in council homes increases access to renewable energy. Improving the convenience of public transport broadens travel options for residents on low incomes. Promoting the switch to electric vehicles through our EV chargepoint installations improves air quality and public health especially in the most congested streets. Circular Economy workshops on textiles promote reuse and repair. Tech-Takeback repairs electronic items and redistributes them via local community organisations, while also sharing repair skills.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 The 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme Annual Report 2022-23 provides an update on the council's progress towards its carbon neutral and biodiversity objectives. It will help to inform and engage local residents, communities, organisations and businesses in climate and biodiversity action.
- 10.2 The Carbon Neutral Fund will support delivery of the climate action projects included in the programme, many of which have co-benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, improved air quality and improved public health.

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Public health implications:**

- 11.1 The Carbon Neutral Programme has many co-benefits relating to public health. For example, tree planting and enhancing green spaces in the city has a beneficial impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing. Reducing emissions from transport helps to improve air quality and therefore people's health. Electric vehicle charging points also contribute to air quality improvements.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

- 1. Carbon Neutral 2030 Programme Annual Report 2022-23

### **2. Background documents**

- 1. 2030 Carbon Neutral [Programme](#)

2. Carbon Neutral 2030 Programme – [Carbon Neutral Fund update](#) and [Appendix](#) – report to Policy & Resources Committee March 2023
3. [Allocation of Carbon Neutral Fund 2022-2024](#) and [Appendix](#) – report to Policy and Resources Committee October 2022
4. [Carbon Neutral Programme Reporting and Carbon Neutral Fund](#) and [Appendix](#) – report to Policy and Resources Committee July 2022