

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>TO:</b> Babergh Cabinet	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> <b>BCa/2144</b>
<b>FROM:</b> Cabinet Member for Environment (Climate Change) – Elisabeth Malvisi (Babergh)	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 7 March 2022
<b>OFFICER:</b> Cassandra Clements, Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b> CAB333

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In July 2019, Babergh District Council declared a climate emergency and committed to investigating ways in which the council could reduce its own emissions and support the Suffolk-wide ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.2 The climate change and biodiversity annual report is the first of its kind for the council and presents an opportunity to showcase the progress and achievements made so far.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To not provide an annual report on climate change and biodiversity for Members and the public – this option was not taken up, due to the clear need for keeping members and the public informed.

#### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the contents of the report be noted
- 3.2 That a climate change and biodiversity report be produced annually each year going forward.

#### REASON FOR DECISION

**To ensure that members and the public are kept informed of progress and achievements with regards to the councils' climate change and biodiversity ambitions.**

## **4. KEY INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Since the council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 much progress has been made including the development of both a carbon reduction management plan and biodiversity action plan.
- 4.2 It is important to note that the carbon reduction management plan and biodiversity action plans are the starting point of a much longer journey. The council has adapted and will continue to update these plans regularly as research, technology and carbon reduction solutions develop.
- 4.3 The first climate change and biodiversity annual report sets out the significant progress and achievements being made across the district to reduce carbon emissions and ensure that Babergh is prepared for the impacts of climate change. A copy of the draft report can be located at Appendix A.
- 4.4 The councils work has a number of different strands and includes key areas such as reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, making homes more energy efficient, generating local renewable energy and protecting and enhancing our habitats and environment. The annual report highlights how the council is working with partners to support residents and communities to take action and make their contribution to tackling climate change.
- 4.5 Elements of the annual report were recently used to inform members as part of an all-member climate change briefing held on 20 January 2022. Feedback on the report was encouraged and relevant amendments have been reflected in this final version of the annual report before it is more widely publicised.
- 4.6 A further aspect of the annual report is the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) report 2020/21 which can be located at Appendix B of this report.
- 4.7 The GHG report provides a comprehensive carbon footprint for the councils' operations in 2020/21 and provides detail of the trajectory of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions since the establishment of a baseline in 2018/19.
- 4.8 The GHG report also provides supporting information for policy making and action planning to enable the councils to respond to the declaration of a climate emergency and the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

## **5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 5.1 The Joint Corporate Plan is designed to address the challenges and seize the opportunities facing the districts and their organisations for the foreseeable future. The Councils' vision is to have 'great communities with bright & healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home.'
- 5.2 The Joint Corporate Plan identifies six strategic priorities as set out in the visual below. Environment is one of those six, and the success of the councils' ambition on climate change is intrinsically interlinked with the strategies that underpin the other five priority areas of Housing, Communities, Well-Being, Economy and Customers.
- 5.3 The response to climate change is not just the business of Environment but of every part of the Councils' strategic framework. Conversely, Environment plays a key part in every priority within the Corporate Plan.



## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct financial implications as this report is intended to provide information only

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific legal implications.

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 18 - the councils will not be carbon neutral by 2030. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
The Councils do not meet their aspiration to become carbon neutral by 2030	Unlikely (2)	Disaster (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approaches are evidence based.</li> <li>The impact of initiatives is monitored closely.</li> </ul>
The Councils do not meet their aspiration to enable net biodiversity gain, habitat and species decline continues unchecked.	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The release of finance is based on business cases.</li> <li>Continue to work alongside our peers both in Suffolk and nationally, collaborating where appropriate and sharing best practice and lessons learned.</li> <li>An internal audit assessment on climate</li> </ul>

			change was undertaken in the autumn and the councils have received 'reasonable reassurance'.
The effects of habitat loss results in irreversible damage to numbers of native species and loss of biodiversity.	Unlikely (2)	Disaster (4)	

- 8.2 **Risks related to the transition to a lower-carbon economy** – this transition may entail extensive policy, legal, technology and market changes to address mitigation and adaptation requirements related to climate change. Depending on the nature, speed, and focus of these changes, transition risks may pose varying levels of financial and reputational risk to the Councils.
- 8.3 **Policy and Legal Risks** - policy actions on climate change continue to evolve. Their objectives generally fall into two categories - policy actions that attempt to constrain actions that contribute to the adverse effects of climate change or policy actions that seek to promote adaptation to climate change. The risk associated with the financial impact of policy changes depends on the nature and timing of the policy change. Another important risk is litigation or legal risk. Recent years have seen an increase in climate related litigation claims being brought before the courts by property owners and public interest organisations. Reasons for such litigation include the failure of organisations to mitigate impacts of climate change, failure to adapt to climate change and the insufficiency of disclosure around material financial risks. As the value of loss and damage arising from climate change grows, litigation risk is also likely to increase.
- 8.4 **Technology Risk** - technological improvements or innovations that support the transition to a lower-carbon, energy efficient economic system could have a significant impact on the Councils. For example, the development and use of emerging technologies such as renewable energy, battery storage or energy efficiency. New technology will replace old systems and may disrupt some parts of the Councils' business.
- 8.5 **Market Risk** - there may be shifts in supply and demand for certain services and products currently provided by the Councils.
- 8.6 **Reputation Risk** - climate change has been identified as a potential source of reputational risk tied to changing customer or community perceptions of an organisation's level of contribution to the transition to a lower-carbon economy.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken, however, discussions with the councils two Portfolio Holders for climate change, the senior leadership team and members, has taken place.

## 10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required.as there are no direct equalities implications from this report and this report is for noting only.

10.2 For individual project proposals that have the potential to impact any of the protected characteristics, the Assistant Director and Corporate Managers will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

## 11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific environmental implications.

## 12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
Climate change and biodiversity annual report - Babergh	Appendix A
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions report April 2020 – March 2021	Appendix B

## 13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BCa/19/57 Environment and Climate Change Task Force - proposals to Cabinet

BCa/20/06 Biodiversity Task Force - proposals to Cabinet