

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

14 June 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 CLIMATE CHANGE MONITORING AND REPORTING

To seek approval for publication of the Climate Change Action Plan Year 3 Progress Report (2022/23) and Carbon Audits for years 1 and 2

1.1 Background

1.1.1 TMBC has committed to producing annual climate change action plans, reporting on progress against these, and publishing our greenhouse gas emissions (Carbon Audits). This report summarises progress against the year 3 Climate Change Action Plan (2022/23) and key findings from Carbon Audits for years 1 and 2. July CESSC will consider the 2023/24 climate change action plan and the latest carbon audit (for year 3, 2022/23). The intention is for all climate change monitoring and reporting to be up to date and publicly available on the TMBC climate change website before the end of the summer.

1.1.2 The Climate Change Action Plan Year 3 Progress Report and both Carbon Audit documents are provided in Annexes 1 - 3 respectively.

1.2 Climate Change Action Plan Year 3 Progress Report

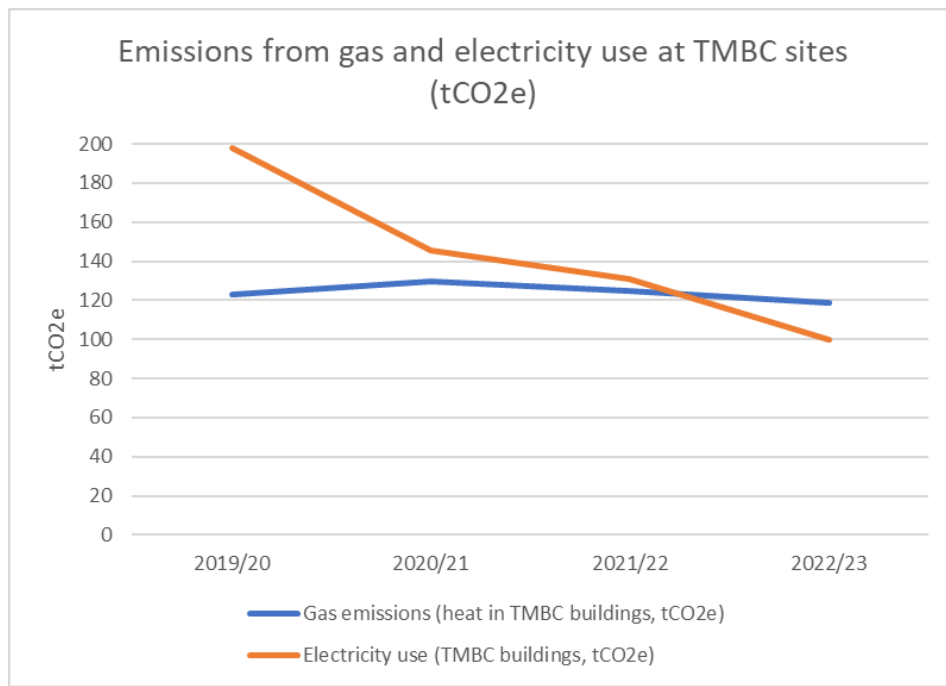
1.2.1 Progress was generally good across the 50 climate change actions for 2022/23, with around half rated as 'ongoing' due to either continuing collaborations or multi-year projects. Where actions have changed or are not fully completed an explanation has been provided. Annex 1 provides the Climate Change Action Plan Year 3 Progress Report that follows the same format as previous years. However, it might be helpful to publish a narrative or highlight report alongside the table to make it easier to track key areas of progress.

Policy and Engagement

1.2.2 As shown in Annex 1 a number of actions in the Policy and Engagement theme have been completed although outputs are forthcoming. For example, the carbon audits have been produced but not yet published, and carbon literacy training has been investigated but not yet rolled-out.

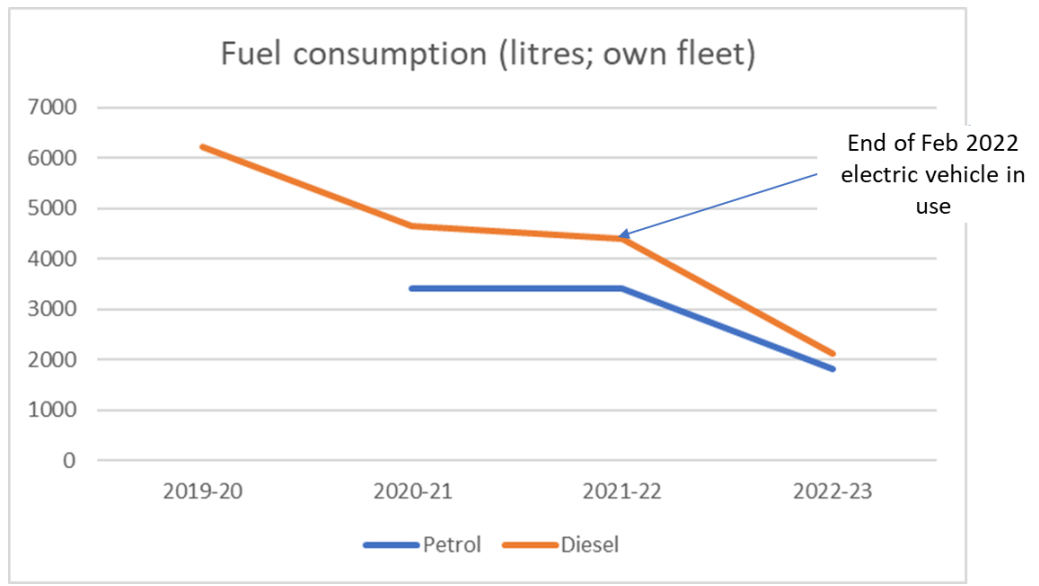
The Council's own estate and operations

- 1.2.3 The sources of greenhouse gas emissions that are under the greatest degree of Council control and/or are significant sources of emissions include our own estate, parking fleet and the Leisure Trust sites. There has been significant progress on energy efficiency, installing renewables and scoping decarbonisation opportunities during 2022/23, with much of this work ongoing in 2023/24.
- 1.2.4 The chart below shows that energy efficiency measures, remote working arrangements, consolidating workspace at the Gibson buildings in Kings Hill, and operational measures such as e-billing and energy-efficient IT equipment have reduced electricity emissions relative to the baseline. Increased homeworking will also be contributing to reductions in emissions from office buildings. The total reduction in office emissions will be over-estimated due to the transfer of energy consumption from the office to homes for remote working. Emissions from office equipment, heating and lighting used for remote working have not yet been calculated for TMBC.



- 1.2.5 Although electricity (national grid mix) emissions per kWh are reducing year-on-year due to an increasing proportion of renewables, the reduction in electricity emissions from TMBC sites out-strips this. Over half of the fall in emissions from electricity at TMBC sites can be attributed to efficiency measures in successive climate change action plans and changed working patterns, rather than grid decarbonisation. The action plan progress report (Annex 1) and the Carbon Audits (Annexes 2 and 3) highlight this trend.
- 1.2.6 A further success has been the addition of an electric vehicle to the TMBC owned fleet (see chart below). Emissions from parking vehicles halved in 2022/23 on the previous year due to the increased use of the electric BMW i3. A more detailed

report on emissions and the potential for reductions from the TMBC fleet, staff commuting to work, and business travel will be forthcoming.



- 1.2.7 The Leisure Trust sites consume significant amounts of gas and electricity, and are major contributors to TMBC emissions. Energy efficiency measures have been installed at Larkfield Leisure Centre and Tonbridge Swimming Pool, with further installation of LED lighting planned for 2023/24. A key success this year of the installation of 196 solar PV panels at Larkfield Leisure Centre (see Annex 1), which should reduce electricity purchased, and emissions, from 2023/24.

Borough-wide emissions

- 1.2.8 Progress on addressing emissions from the borough is a mixed picture. Steady progress has been made on tackling emissions through grant funding and other activities across the housing and business sectors as well as waste and resources. Housing measures include energy efficiency deep retrofit for 181 homes through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1, energy efficiency measures for 47 qualified low income homes through Sustainable Warmth Funding, financial assistance to 8 low income vulnerable to cold households and energy advice, and 165 accepted proposals for Solar Together in the borough. In the business sector, Green Business Grant funding has been allocated to 31 projects across the borough. In terms of new developments (the Local Plan and supporting evidence) and the transport sector, progress on emissions reduction has not progressed as rapidly. Updates for each action are provided in Annex 1. Many of these actions will be continuing in the 2023/24 climate change action plan.
- 1.2.9 It is not possible to attribute changes in Borough-wide emissions to these actions specifically, particularly as they target small numbers of homes and/or businesses. The latest available data for the Borough is for the year 2020. The next publication of Borough emissions will be in June 2023, and will provide data for 2021.

Biodiversity, air quality and the natural environment

- 1.2.10 On air quality the anti-idling project has made good progress, with sensors and signage installed at the five participating schools and engagement ongoing. To enhance the natural environment and support biodiversity, 1,000 trees or hedgerows have been planted (in addition to 1,000 planted the year before) and roadside nature reserves established.

1.3 Carbon Audits (years 1 and 2)

- 1.3.1 Carbon audits provide quality assured data for TMBC owned estate and operations. Section 7 in each audit report includes narrative on significant sources of emissions and key trends, including discussion of the impact of COVID and climate change measures. 2021/22 was the first year of the REGO contract for TMBC sites purchased electricity. This is shown the gross emissions and net emissions figures in the year 1 and year 2 carbon audits. Both audits show that indirect emissions from TMBC's estate and operations (scope 3) remain the most significant contributors to emissions.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The actions and activities in the progress report and carbon audits are ongoing or have been completed with relevant funding, grant monies and value for money assessments previously agreed with the relevant service.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 TMBC has committed to aiming for carbon neutral in 2030 and to annual reporting on action plan progress and monitoring emissions. There is a reputational risk of non-publication of the reports discussed in this paper.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Climate Change
- 1.8.2 Biodiversity & Sustainability
- 1.8.3 Communications

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the Climate Change Action Plan Year 3 Progress Report as set out in annex 1 of this report BE ENDORSED.
- 1.9.2 That the Carbon Audits for Year 1 and 2 as set out in annexes 2 and 3 of this report BE ENDORSED.

The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Annexes 1, 2 and 3

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive