

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**22 May 2024**

**Report of the Interim Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 DEVELOPING A PATHWAY TO CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2030**

**To present for information a modelled pathway of emissions reductions for major measures to 2030.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 The 2023-24 Climate Change Action Plan includes an action to “Produce a TMBC carbon emissions pathway report to inform policy planning for carbon neutral by 2030”. A pathway to 2030 would support delivery of the council’s corporate priority of ‘Sustaining a borough which cares for the environment’ and the climate change strategy.

1.1.2 An emissions pathway is a modelled scenario that shows a credible route towards a carbon reduction goal. A pathway is not a fully-costed, detailed action plan, but a tool to illustrate total emissions reductions that are achievable under reasonable assumptions. A pathway gives an overall picture of the direction of travel, helping to highlight priority areas for emissions reductions, and where ‘go further’ options will be needed in due course. In other words, a pathway brings together emissions reduction decisions taken service-by-service to present a picture of overall progress.

**1.2 Developing a credible pathway to 2030**

1.2.1 It is important to be transparent about the assumptions and level of uncertainty of any published pathway. It is possible to draw a line on a graph to 2030 and say that we need to decarbonise everything to get there. However, this is not a credible pathway without a realistic high-level judgement of how decarbonisation might be achieved, consideration of technical challenges, existing contracts, and cost.

1.2.2 The Annex to this report presents a TMBC pathway that shows a potential route towards the carbon neutral by 2030 aspiration. This pathway has been modelled using credible assumptions that remain high level at this stage and makes clear the level of uncertainty for major measures.

- 1.2.3 The pathway includes the recently completed installation of solar panels on Tonbridge Swimming Pool. Additional solar panels, energy efficiency measures and a heat pump at Larkfield Leisure Centre are fully funded actions that are in progress. These actions are being delivered through the £1.5 million in grants awarded to the Council through the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund, and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. Operational emissions savings at leisure facilities will be supported through the Leisure Trust's Climate Change Strategy 2024 -2027, and action plan.
- 1.2.4 Key milestones in tackling major sources of emissions have been given an initial RAG rating to show the current status and indication of feasibility. Some 'go further' options have been suggested but are not currently in development, as relevant services will lead on developing options in due course, and in line with current contracts, capital renewals, grant availability and Member decisions.
- 1.2.5 The pathway will change over time, as decisions are made and plans come into fruition. The pathway shows emissions cuts needed, it does not pre-empt the detail of how those emissions cuts 'must' be achieved. That remains a decision for Members on a service-by-service basis. However, the pathway will help Members understand the overall implications of those decisions with reference to the 2030 goal.
- 1.2.6 Other local authorities across the UK and more locally, such as Canterbury City Council, have published pathways and illustrated these in a visually engaging way. If a TMBC pathway is agreed, the intention is to develop a similar visual to communicate progress towards carbon neutral.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 None.

### **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.4.1 None. The pathway is not a commitment, detailed design, or action plan.

### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 TMBC has committed to publishing a pathways report. There is some reputational risk of not meeting commitments, and of not showing a credible pathway to carbon neutral.

### **1.6 Policy Considerations**

- 1.6.1 Climate Change.

Background papers:

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Annex 1 TMBC Pathway to 2030

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