

Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

16 July 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Cabinet - Non-key Decision



Cabinet Member	Cllr Robin Betts, Housing, Environment and Economy
Responsible Officer	Damian Roberts, Chief Executive
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Climate Change Monitoring and Reporting

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Annual reporting of progress against the climate change action plan 2024/25, to seek approval for the climate change action plan for 2025/26, and to report council emissions in the annual carbon audit.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Sustaining a borough which cares for the environment.
- 2.2 Reporting progress on actions by the council and monitoring emissions produced by the council's own estate and operations are essential for understanding and steering direction towards TMBC's 2030 carbon neutral ambition.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To approve the publication of:
 - a) Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 Progress Report
 - b) Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 2025/26
 - c) Carbon Audit 2024/25.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 TMBC has committed to producing annual climate change action plans and publishing our greenhouse gas emissions (Carbon Audits) to track progress towards the council's carbon neutral by 2030 aspiration. This report summarises progress achieved to date, the new action plan and trends in emissions from the Council's estate and operations. A Progress Report for the Climate Change Action

Plan Year 5 (2024/25), a Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 2025/26 and the Carbon Audit for emissions in 2024/25 are attached as Annexes 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

- 4.2 The most significant sources of emissions across TMBC's estate and operations remain leisure facilities and refuse collection vehicles. In the year ahead, continuing investments in renewable and low carbon technologies, part funded by grants awarded to the council, will tackle emissions from leisure facilities. Additionally, the new waste contract will offer an opportunity to take steps to reduce emissions from refuse collection vehicles as discussed at the February meeting of this Committee.

5 Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 Progress Report

- 5.1 The 2024/25 Progress Report is attached at Annex 1. Good progress has been made across all areas, with most actions either fully complete or ongoing (due to the continuous nature of the work). Only one action is red rated: progressing work to improve the environmental standards of licensed taxis in the borough. This work needs to be done in partnership with other Kent authorities, to reduce risk and increase the chances of facilitating environmental improvements to taxis. This action has carried forward to next year where we will seek opportunities to achieve this target.
- 5.2 We have been able to deliver energy efficiency measures at Larkfield Leisure Centre, due to external grant funding, this has allowed us to fund new solar PV installations. In addition, we have been able to support environmental and carbon reduction initiatives to businesses and community groups through various grant schemes, most of which have been externally funded.

6 Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 2025/26

- 6.1 Attached at Annex 2 is the 2025/25 Action Plan with key milestones for completion. Again, most projects are longer term and will be ongoing throughout the year and beyond. We have included actions that are planned at the current time, but it is important to highlight that additional measures will also be considered as and when funded opportunities arise.
- 6.2 Unfortunately, we have recently been informed that the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund has been withdrawn this year. This fund has been invaluable to the council and has allowed us to progress with the decarbonisation works to our own estate. It is not known currently, if this scheme will be replaced, but we will of course keep members of this Committee updated of any funding opportunities that we are able to apply for.

7 Carbon Audit 2024/25

- 7.1 The Carbon Audit (Annex 3) is a statement of the emissions produced by the council's own estate, operations, and activities for the year. The table on page 3

shows emissions each year since the baseline 2019, with detailed breakdowns shown in later tables. Section 7 provides a narrative of changes and drivers in emissions.

- 7.2 The Carbon Audit shows that emissions increased in the last year to 3,479.2tCO₂e. The small rise in emissions from Scope 1 and 2 represent emissions from heat and electricity at the council offices, Tonbridge Castle and other small sites (e.g. public toilets), and emissions from TMBC vehicles. The rise in emissions could be due to small increases in staff days in the office and/or seasonal changes that influence how much the heating is used in buildings. In terms of electricity (Scope 2), the increase in the use of electric vehicles will lead to higher electricity consumption for charging. TMBC is on a renewable electricity contract, so these emissions are recorded as zero in the 'net emissions' figure.
- 7.3 In terms of Scope 3 (indirect TMBC emissions, such as from leisure facilities and contracts), the rise in reported figures may also be due to data issues and lower readings during the baseline year. The leisure facilities are the largest emitters on the council's estate and operations but, for example, during the 2019 baseline year Larkfield Leisure Centre was partially closed for roofing and maintenance works, providing an unusually low gas use reading for that year. Additionally, the Leisure Trust took on management for Leybourne Lakes Country Park in November 2021, such that electricity use figures for this site are not reflected in baseline totals. As such it is reasonable to assume that Scope 3 emissions are broadly equivalent to their levels in the baseline year, with the latest reporting year 2024/25 offering a more accurate picture of emissions.

8 Other Options

- 8.1 The council has committed to monitoring and reporting on its climate change actions and emissions, so there is not a credible alternative option to producing and making the reports in the Annex publicly available.

9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 9.1 The activities in the climate change action plans and carbon audit are funded, or have been completed using funding, grant monies and value for money assessments previously agreed with the relevant service.
- 9.2 The Chief Executive confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

10 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 TMBC has committed to the aspiration of carbon neutral by 2030 and to annual reporting on action plan progress and monitoring emissions. There is a reputational risk of not publishing the annexes to this report.

11 Legal Implications

11.1 None.

12 Consultation and Communications

12.1 The reports in the Annex will be published on the TMBC climate change website.

13 Implementation

13.1 Each service leads on implementing the activities in the climate change action plan with support from the Climate Change Officer as relevant.

14 Cross Cutting Issues

14.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

14.1.1 Some impact on reducing emissions in support of carbon neutral by 2030 or enhancing the natural environment.

14.1.2 Climate change advice has been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

14.1.3 Together, the reports in the Annexes present a picture of progress on climate change actions and key sources of emissions as a 'snap shot' of the last year. It is important to read these with the ongoing large-scale investments in mind that will tackle key sources of emissions from leisure centres, waste collection, and at TMBC offices. The reports demonstrate that carbon neutral in 2030 remains a challenging ambition and inform further ambition and targeted actions to reduce emissions and increase the resilience of operations, including through energy efficiency and renewables measures which result in financial return to the council.

14.2 Equalities and Diversity

14.2.1 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.

14.3 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 Progress Report 2024/25; Annex 2 Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 2025/26; Annex 3 Carbon Audit 2024/25.