

REPORT TITLE: CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME - TRANSPORT
POLICIES/ACTIONS

30 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Martin Tod

Contact Officer: Andy Hickman Tel No: 01962 848105 Email
ahickman@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This paper considers progress towards reducing carbon emissions in relation to transport and the challenges in achieving the council's carbon neutrality ambitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the committee notes:
 - a. The progress made to date as set out in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.11; and
 - b. The intention to recruit a sustainable transport post, to be funded from the CNAP budget.
2. That the committee considers and provides comment on:
 - a. The limitation on the council's ability to drive change given Hampshire County Council's status as the Highways and Transport Authority;
 - b. The opportunity presented by the changed travel behaviour resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic; and
 - c. The particular challenge of decarbonising transport in the rural parts of the district.

IMPLICATIONS:1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 A budget of £850,000 was made available for delivery of the Council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) in 2019, of which £77,000 was spent by 2020/21 and a further £324,000 forecasted for 2021/22. This would leave £449,000 for future years but, with a programme of work required through to 2030 to achieve the ambition of a carbon neutral district by that date, the use of resources will need to be carefully considered to ensure maximum benefit is gained.
- 1.2 Significant work will be necessary to reduce the carbon emissions from transport [arising within the District] and this is likely to require external funding. Funding has been achieved in relation to property and energy projects, so there will be a continued focus on securing funding to enable transformational transport projects.
- 1.3 The transport and engineering team has been supplemented recently by the approval of a transport planner post to help deliver the Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS). While this post will progress projects that contribute to the decarbonisation of Winchester district, it will not have sufficient capacity to develop all transport related interventions required to achieve a carbon neutral district so further staff resources will be required to help with the delivery of sustainable transport projects. Proposals are being drafted for a sustainable transport post, to be funded from the CNAP budget.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:CNAP priorities

- 2.1 The council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) was approved by Cabinet on 23 December 2019 and identified four main priority areas of work, one of which was transport. The CNAP proposes the following priority actions for addressing transport emissions and some progress has been made:
- a) *Key studies which have a focus on achieving carbon emission reduction:*
- *Walking & Cycling Strategy*
 - *Freight Strategy*
 - *Parking & Access Strategy*

A local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) has been formulated for Winchester City Centre and an LCWIP will shortly be commissioned for the rest of the District.

A freight strategy has been formulated as part of the WMS, see link below to WMS Phase 2 studies report. Consideration needs to be given as to how this is now delivered in partnership with the County Council and the Winchester BID.

A district-wide Parking and Access Strategy has been agreed and work is underway to start to implement this. Meetings have been held with market towns in order to determine the priorities of their individual Parking and Access Plans. Over the coming months a programme of actions will be agreed with the Cabinet Member.

- b) *Develop an expanded network of EV charging points across the district – starting with up to 46 points on the council's own estate by 2024, adding to existing provision and working with partners to identify where more are needed.*

The Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy has now implemented all but two of the 33 electric vehicle charging points across its public car parking estate, with an additional 4 charge points installed as part of the new Leisure Centre offer. The remaining two sites are expected to be live by the end of September.

Additional EV charging points are also being brought forward at the Guildhall Yard (4 – shared staff and public use) and Cipher House (5 – staff use).

The council's new homes programme now includes EV charging points on all new developments. The first scheme with these incorporated has recently been opened at The Valley in Stanmore, where 4 EV charging points have been provided.

Hampshire County Council is looking to pilot on-street EV charging points and one of the two pilot areas will be the Hyde area of Winchester, where 22 street lighting columns in the area will be modified - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/electric-vehicles/pilot-schemes/winchester>.

- c) *Develop additional Park & Ride facilities.*

Developing new or expanded Park and Ride Facilities is part of the WMS. In addition, work has already commenced on a new park and ride car park in Bar End.

A summary report of setting out progress on the WMS has recently been published, see link below, and a joint Hampshire County Council / Winchester City Council members briefing was held on 27th July 2021.

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/WMS-Phase2-SummaryReport.pdf>

- 2.2 We know that transport remains a significant element of the district carbon footprint and one of the major challenges in achieving our ambition of becoming a carbon neutral district by 2030. The most recent district carbon footprint report published by WinACC (2018/19) reported that the greatest contribution to emissions in Winchester district since 2014 has been road transport. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed travel behaviour particularly in relation to commuting/ work based travel trips. Many people are still currently working at home which has eased travel pressures in the peak periods and it is likely that future work patterns will be that of hybrid office / home working for many.

Progress to date

- 2.3 The Parking and Access Strategy provided a framework for considering the future of car parks across the district and in the City together with the setting of new parking charges. It is intended that a report will be brought to Cabinet in the autumn considering these issues. Work is underway to make improvements to car parks as suggested by WinACC to improve signing and wayfinding from car parks. Resident's on-street parking permit charges are being increased in line with Hampshire County Council policy.
- 2.4 Measures being taken forward as part of the WMS, as referred to above, and by Hampshire County Council as part of their Active Travel Fund initiatives including low traffic neighbourhoods and school travel schemes. Work-place parking levies and congestion charging are not part of the WMS approach but are referenced as being measures to consider if the WMS measures being taken forward are not successful in achieving its set objectives. Bus gates are being considered on Chesil Street and Southgate Street as part of the WMS work. The WMS freight work stream will promote and seek to develop e-cargo solutions in the City. The existing work based travel plan network facilitated by the University is a good forum for promoting and developing such measures.
- 2.5 It should be noted that in the preparation and assessment of the WMS studies the climate emergencies declared by both the County and City Councils were taken into account so carbon reduction and air quality are clearly important issues which the WMS proposals are seeking to address. The County Council uses a two stage decision making process to assess carbon emissions to test the resilience of its projects and decisions. This relates to strategic programmes of work and individual projects named in the WMS will be assessed individually.
- 2.6 There are now two new fully electric vehicles being used by Biffa to deliver the waste service across Winchester. These are used by the supervisors as they out and about around Winchester and can be charged by the solar panels on the roof of the depot. We are reviewing options for 100% electric refuse trucks, but are waiting on government proposals for the future of waste, as this is likely to have a significant impact on funding and affordability of electric refuse vehicles.

- 2.7 The Council has a contract in place with Stagecoach until 2023 for the provision of park and ride services. Consideration is currently being given to the use of alternative fuel buses leading up to the contract renewal process. This is likely to involve some trials of alternative fuel buses in due course.
- 2.8 The City Council is working in partnership with the County Council on a number of the issues detailed above particularly through the WMS, such as reducing the levels of traffic through Winchester town centre and the Bus Service Improvement Plan. There will be opportunities to comment on the LTP4 and the Bus Service Improvement Plan as these progress.
- 2.9 A number of large organisations have developed Travel Plans and the travel plan network is a forum which can be used to encourage those organisations to ensure their Plans are reviewed and updated whilst encouraging those without Travel Plans in place to develop one.
- 2.10 Updating the Winchester Rail Station travel plan is supported, together with joint projects to deliver it along with Network Rail and South West Railways building on projects already delivered such as improved cycle links and the cycle parking hub.
- 2.11 Planning matters including new planning applications for airport expansions and other transport projects will be considered as these arise. The most recent of these was for an extension to Southampton airport runway, which the council opposed.

Further challenges

- 2.12 Despite the extensive work detailed above, there remains much that needs to be done to ensure that the council's carbon reduction ambitions are realised. Campaigners such as WinACC and Friends of the Earth have set out various ways in which they believe the council can and should do more. Unsurprisingly, this includes suggestions such as closure of city centre car parks and a move away from park and ride. WinACC Transport and Planning Action Group's paper to the council can be found in appendix 1.
- 2.13 There are a number of interesting policy questions raised, but they present economic, social and political challenges which cannot be answered immediately and which will need to be considered carefully.
- 2.14 The City Council's role is not Highways and Transport Authority, that responsibility sits with the County Council. The City Council therefore needs to work with the County Council on many of the points raised, It should also be pointed out that the WMS is largely focused on the City and therefore consideration and change in the wider district will come from interventions such as the Parking & Access plans and district-wide LCWIP; and the new bus strategy and Local Transport Plan update being considered by the County Council.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 3.1 Various matters raised by WinACC in its Transport and Planning Action Group paper are yet to be considered. These have not been rejected, but further work is required before any decision can be taken on their suitability.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

Other Background Documents:-

Greenhouse gas emissions in Winchester District: Part X - Estimates and trends (2005-2018); WinACC; 2020 - <https://www.winacc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/greenhouse-gas-emissions-in-winchester-district-2020-final-v2-1.pdf>

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: WinACC Transport and Planning Action Group paper.