

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

CLIMATE EMERGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

1. In May 2019, in response to growing evidence and public concern, Dorchester Town Council declared a Climate Emergency. This Response takes, as a given, the overwhelming evidence supporting the case for a change in attitudes and approach regarding how the earth's resources are used.
2. The Council has committed to a systematic review of the climate change impact of each area of its activities, including energy use, with the aim of being zero-carbon by, at the latest, the year 2030. This will in itself be a major undertaking and is likely to require significant financial investment and staff resource. The first section of this document, relating to Dorchester Town Council Operations, responds to the commitment made by Council in May.
3. Over the last few years the Council has increasingly worked to deliver services through partnerships with other bodies, mainly from the community sector. Our partners have taken on assets or responsibilities and we have often helped them, financially and with advice, to become established and to deliver discrete projects. Whereas the Council's original declaration did not refer to these bodies, who we ultimately cannot control, the Response indicates the Council's desire to work proactively with partners on projects to reduce their carbon footprints.
4. The community of Dorchester is already very engaged with the issue of the climate emergency and there are many examples of good practice. The Town Council will look to support groups to take practical steps either to deliver their own initiatives or to give them a voice to advocate changed behaviours to the wider population of residents, workers and visitors. The Town Council can also act as a broker between the community and larger service providers such as Dorset Council and the NHS.
5. Since declaring a Climate Emergency a number of organisations have gone on to declare an Ecological Emergency. The Town Council adopted a Biodiversity strategy in 2018, thrown its support behind initiatives to move the plastic free agenda forward and will quickly explore what the additional implications are of declaring an Ecological Emergency and then what additional steps it can take towards delivering against such a declaration.
6. The Town Council's staff have experience in delivering discrete elements which have already contributed towards reducing our carbon outputs. There are, however, gaps in our knowledge, new technology and solutions, new funding and partnering opportunities and a wealth of support from other agencies and it is important that the Council taps into these. In particular it would be advantageous to have specialist advice available to deliver energy efficiencies on our own and partner premises.
7. Finally, the way we respond to the climate emergency, both on the services we or partners provide and among our local community, is evolving rapidly. Any plan developed needs to be flexible and dynamic to adapt to fresh challenges and capture new opportunities as they arise.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Overview

8. To avoid delaying and overcomplicating our initial response to reducing our carbon footprint there are two major elements of our work which, if they can be altered, will have the greatest impact
 - The direct consumption of energy use and waste production from our activities
 - The carbon impact of bought in supplies and services
9. In the short term the focus will be on changing our direct consumption, while we undertake a fuller audit of the impact of our bought in supplies. Once these exercises are completed we will undertake a further review of our operations to identify any other changes in practices that would deliver benefits.
10. Appendix 1 provides a measurement of the carbon footprint of the Council's estate and equipment, using most recent (worst of 2017/18 or 2018/19) data. The Council is currently directly emitting c. 150 tonnes of CO2 each year.

Delivering Reductions on direct energy consumption

11. Appendix 1 also outlines a plan to reduce emissions by c. 80% over the next decade, the key components of which might be:-
 - Replacing the gas boiler heating system in the Municipal Buildings with a biomass system
 - Relocating the 19 North Square headquarters to another building, likely to be the Municipal Buildings
 - Introducing a range of modest onsite solar installations and seeking efficiencies in the use of electricity, as well as decommissioning facilities that are no longer required
 - Continuing the phased replacement of the Council's vehicle fleet and hand-held equipment from petrol/diesel to electric

The key risks associated with the above are

- Ensuring that biomass is suitable for the Municipal Buildings. An evidence gathering exercise has already commenced
 - A current lack of a suitable working alternative for the Council's larger vehicles, tractor and shredder, which are used extensively to maintain our greenspaces around the town
12. The Council's Budget process for 2020/21 will propose that funding is secured for both the Municipal Buildings heating (the Council also hopes to achieve a 40% grant towards this project) and also for a Climate Emergency Reserve Fund, in part to deliver minor projects. There are likely to be longer term budget savings as a result of the interventions.

Bought In Supplies and Services

13. The Council buys in a range of supplies and services, which broadly break down as follows
 - Regular services similar to those our own Grounds staff undertake – e.g. Cemeteries grass cutting, Walks Cleaning
 - Major one-off projects, e.g. Tennis Courts, Cemetery Infrastructure, Municipal Buildings reroofing
 - One off/Annual repairs or maintenance to Council buildings and equipment

- Consumables, including chemicals and single use plastics such as dog bags, bin liners, stationery, protective clothing, screws and fixings
- Costs associated with events, including payments for infrastructure (staging, lighting, toilets) and direct to artists

It is anticipated that action will be undertaken in two ways for these purchases

- Fully audit what we buy, whether we need it, how we buy it, and also consider the degree to which we may wish to focus on local suppliers and climate friendly work practices when we next undertake procurement
- Understand how our suppliers are modifying their work practices to respond to the climate emergency and encourage them to match our own ambitions

14. The Action Plan includes milestones for both of these actions.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL'S PARTNERS

15. Increasingly the Council is delivering services through partnership with local organisations, including cultural groups (Dorchester Arts, Dorset County Museum, Keep Military Museum, etc) sports clubs (Football, Cricket, Bowls, etc), community groups (Sawmills Association members, Dorchester Youth Club, Food groups, etc). Many of these groups have carbon footprints which are in part linked to their role as partners, influenced by the direction the Town Council has taken over the last few years.
16. Generally the groups do not have either the resource or technical knowledge to achieve reductions in their carbon footprint. The Council would look to provide support by brokering professional expertise, assisting partners to fundraise and also using its Climate Emergency Fund to assist partners to reduce their carbon footprint.
17. The Action Plan includes milestones for identifying partners and opportunities to assist them to reduce their carbon footprints.

THE TOWN OF DORCHESTER

18. Residents, businesses, workers and visitors in Dorchester can all make a contribution to reducing the town's overall carbon footprint. A growing number of groups are taking actions that contribute to an overall reduction in carbon emissions or mitigate the impact on the environment.
19. The Town Council will assist volunteer groups to promote their ideas to residents as they go about their daily life, with the aim of educating and changing mainstream behaviour. The Town Council will also work with, and challenge, the business community to implement initiatives that benefit the wider environment.
20. Milestones in the Plan cover the need for an audit of the work already underway at community level and a plan to promote it to the wider Dorchester audience.

ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

21. A number of public bodies, including Dorset Council, have extended their declaration of a Climate Emergency to include specific reference to the world's ecology, recognising the impact of the change in climate on the planet's flora and fauna.

22. In accepting a need to extend its own declaration the Council will review its existing Biodiversity Strategy and identify practical steps to contribute towards safeguarding the local ecology and include these in the Action Plan.

RESOURCES

23. In order to deliver change the Town Council will need to allocate officer time and cash resources to deliver the Response and, to deliver some parts of the Response, secure access to paid specialist technical advice.
24. The Council has some knowledge of some of the issues that need to be addressed in the Response and, should Members require it, can adjust their workloads to accommodate a greater workload in this area with only modest detriment to other services. There is no proposal to recruit additional in-house resource to deliver the Response.
25. Officers are aware, however, how limited any free access resources from other parties will become. They have made use of Low Carbon Dorset and also intend to liaise with others to identify whether there are projects on which we can work together to mutual benefit.
26. There is limited independent specialist advice available locally, with much of the available advice being linked to the marketing of specific products. Many of the suppliers have short track records and technology is evolving rapidly, while demand for suppliers is likely to grow to the stage where they might be able to choose which projects to bid for; while the nature of many of the solutions that we will be looking to deliver on are bespoke. The Council will need to decide whether to waive standing orders to develop a relationship with one or two local suppliers with a proven track record in Dorchester.
27. An Action in the Plan requires officers to report on available advice and delivery mechanisms.

CONSULTATION & REVIEW

28. There is a significant level of interest in the Climate Emergency and the actions that public bodies are taking to respond to it. There is also significant interest among peers about the actions being undertaken in similar organisations.
29. It is inevitable that this Response will have missed many good opportunities, so the potential for constructive feedback is significant. It is proposed that information is provided and consultation is undertaken during the spring, with peers, partners and the wider community, to provide initial feedback that can be incorporated into a refreshed document to be presented to Council in May 2020.
30. Community engagement will become a permanent feature of the Council's approach to this issue. It is anticipated that the preliminary feedback received will present opportunities to create a more permanent body to develop and monitor a longer term response to the Climate Emergency.

APPENDICES

1. Carbon Footprint from Council's own buildings and equipment
2. Preliminary Action Plan

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL CARBON FOOTPRINT

	Kwh	Current t/CO2	Current Plan	By 2030 t/CO2
Electricity (Kwh)				
Municipal Buildings	81,900	25.9	Solar & Efficiencies	10.0
Borough Gardens	31,800	10.0	Timers & Solar	5.0
Weymouth Avenue Cemetery	12,200	3.9	Decommision/Solar	-
19 North Square	12,000	3.8	Investigate relocation	-
Louds Mill Depot	11,500	3.6	Solar Installed - reducing	0.5
Poudbury Cemetery	4,200	1.3	Decommision/Solar	-
Other (3 sites)	2,200	0.7	-	0.7
	155,800			
Gas (Kwh)				
Municipal Buildings	258,200	59.6	Investigating Biomass	-
Borough Gardens	-	-	-	-
19 North Square	32,600	7.5	Investigate relocation	-
	290,800			
Diesel & Petrol (l.)				
Bins Flatbed	2,400	7.5	Replaced with Electric	0.5
Grounds Flatbed	1,700	5.3	Replace 2024	0.5
Grounds tractor	1,200	3.8	Replace 2029	0.5
Grounds Flatbed	1,100	3.4	Replace 2024	0.5
Grounds Flatbed	1,100	3.4	Replace 2029	0.5
Gardens Pick Up	700	2.2	Replaced with Electric	0.5
Equipment Petrol	700	2.2	Replacing with Electric	0.5
	8,900			
Water & Waste				
Water all sites		3.2	-	3.2
Waste all sites		3.5	-	3.5
Total t/CO2		150.9	Investigate Solar offset	26.4

APPENDIX 2

CLIMATE EMERGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE - ACTION PLAN

Section	Project	Likely Outcome	By	Lead	Reduction t/CO2	Est. Cost £000
T.C. Ops	Municipal Buildings Energy	Biomass Boiler system	Oct 21	SN/CD	50.6	100
	New Heating System	East/West solar on listed bldg.	Oct 22	SN/CD	20.0	10
	Roof Solar	Internal Fans, Lagging and int. Heat Pumps	Oct 21	SN/CD	5.9	15
T.C. Ops	Other					
T.C. Ops	Relocate HQ from 19 North Square	Relocated to Municipal Buildings	Mar 23	AS	11.3	Net 0
T.C. Ops	Minor Sites Electricity Generation	Solar & Heat Pumps solutions	Mar 22	CD	5.0	15
	Borough Gardens	Solar	Mar 22	CD	3.9	10
	Weymouth Ave Cemetery	Solar	Mar 22	CD	1.3	5
	Poundbury Cemetery	Battery storage	Mar 22	CD	3.1	10
	Louds Mill Depot	Solar	Mar 22	CD	0.4	3
	Skatepark	Solar	Mar 22	CD	0.3	3
T.C. Ops	Maumbury Rings					
	Vehicle & Equipment Replacement	Electric vehicles	Dec 24	CD	7.7	Net 0
	Replace Grounds Team flatbed x 2	Electric vehicle	Dec 29	CD	2.9	Net 0
	Replace Grounds Team flatbed	Electric vehicle	Dec 29	CD	3.3	?
T.C. Ops	Replace Grounds Team tractor	Electric equipment	Dec 29	CD	1.7	Net 0
T.C. Ops	Replace all Equipment					
T.C. Ops	Deliver Solar offset programme	Solar on roofs of partner buildings or in green spaces	Oct 25	AS	26.4	?

T.C. Ops	Audit bought in services Work with suppliers to minimise the impact of their contracts with us	List of services where suppliers will be challenged to deliver a no/low carbon service	Sep 20 tba	NH/CD CD	- -	0 ?
Partners	Identify partners and opportunities Assist them to develop their response to the Climate Emergency	Investment/grant support to enable partners to install solar and other solutions	Mar 21 Mar 25	AS/NH AS/NH	- -	Net 0 100
Wider Dorchester	Audit community involvement Support Community Groups to develop initiatives to enable residents and businesses to respond to the Climate Emergency Support Dorset Council to get key messages out to residents/businesses	Greater community engagement in the issue, leading to greater adoption of solutions at an individual level	Mar 21 Ongoing Ongoing	ES ES ES/AS	- - -	Net 0 50 Net 0
Ecological Emergency	Review current Biodiversity Strategy and implement any identified improvements	Modest changes to current operations Changes to management approach of individual sites, e.g. tree planting, wilding	Mar 21 Ongoing	CD CD	-	Net 0 20
Resources	Develop in house knowledge and skills relating to latest developments Identify new ways of procuring solutions which accelerate the response to the Climate Emergency	Staff better able to spot opportunities Better solutions installed more quickly	Ongoing Mar 21	All AS/CD	- -	Net 0 Net 0
Consultation & Review	Consult peers and community regarding our first Response Regularly review progress and introduce change as appropriate	Increased engagement, buy in and ideas Iterative improvement to the Response	May 20 Annual	ES/AS AS	- -	0 0