

Section 4.9 – Overarching climate impact assessment of OCC 2022-23 revenue budget proposals

This overarching climate impact assessment provides a high-level assessment of the potential impact of proposed changes to the revenue budget on the council's ability to meet climate action commitments. It does not cover the ongoing revenue budget or capital budget proposals.

Context

In 2019, OCC declared a climate emergency and committed to prioritising climate action in decision making. More recently, a climate action framework was approved that commits the council to:

- Being carbon neutral in its operations by 2030
- Enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire by 2050.

What is a Climate impact Assessment

The assessment is intended to ensure that our decisions are aligned with climate action commitments, that the impacts of revenue budget proposals are considered, with the potential benefits maximised and possible challenges mitigated, to the extent possible within overall funding available

Services are asked to assess how their revenue budget proposals affect the council's ability to reduce emissions from our buildings, our fleet, staff travel, purchased products and services (including construction), and to enable emission reductions in maintained schools and at a county level.

High-level assessment of climate action impact of revenue budget proposals

Some of the revenue proposals put forward were deemed by services to not impact the council's ability to meet its climate action commitments and, as such, were not assessed.

Revenue proposals were identified that will help reduce carbon emissions, particularly those relating to increased support for community action.

A new climate outreach post will provide decarbonisation advice to council staff, schools, local businesses, parish and town councils, and local groups, while additional funding for the Community Action Groups Oxfordshire programme will help residents to step up action on waste reduction, recycling, energy, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.

Further specific positive climate impact is assessed for the expansion of the environment team to respond to the new Environment Bill, namely through the development of the local Nature Recovery Strategy (NRS). Measures arising from the implementation of the NRS will be beneficial in sequestering carbon in natural features and habitats.

Changes to on-street parking fees in Oxford could reduce carbon emissions by encouraging drivers to walk, cycle or use public transport. The repurposed funding for obesity and physical activity is also expected to promote active travel as a way of embedding physical activity into every day life.

Finally, the adoption of a digital post room will allow the council to reduce staff travel and the carbon footprint of its estate.

No negative climate impacts were identified for the revenue budget proposals submitted.