

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Environment and Climate Action Plan

Foreword

Local authorities have a key role to play in helping to achieve the UKs 2050 Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions target. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) note that “Many of the changes observed in the climate are unprecedented in thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years, and some of the changes already set in motion—such as continued sea level rise—are irreversible over hundreds to thousands of years.”

However, they also state that “strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases would limit climate change.”¹



The Authority recognises that as a fire and rescue service, we have a unique and essential role to play in the adaptation to, and mitigation of climate change. The way in which we will respond to the already unavoidable impacts of climate change is already detailed within our current Public Safety Plan.

The Authority also recognises the need to assist with mitigating future climate change by reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions and using its influence to encourage employees and the community to do the same. The Authority has already taken several steps to reduce our environmental impact, but we recognise there is still more we can do.

This Environment and Climate Action Plan shows our commitment to addressing the issue of climate change, as we continue to work towards our vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.

Councillor David Hopkins

Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security, IT and Climate Change

Definitions

Zero carbon means that no carbon dioxide emissions are being produced from a product/service e.g. zero-carbon electricity could be provided by a 100 per cent renewable energy supplier.

Carbon neutral means that while some carbon dioxide emissions are still being generated by a building/process these emissions are being offset somewhere else making the overall net carbon dioxide emissions zero. This is also termed net-zero carbon dioxide emissions.

Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions means that while some greenhouse gas emissions (not only CO₂) are still being generated by a process, these emissions are being balanced by forestry or removed by technologies making the overall net emissions zero.

¹ https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2021/08/IPCC_WGI-AR6-Press-Release_en.pdf

Introduction

Our Environment and Climate Action Plan sets out how Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will respond to climate change through:

- Adaptation – optimising our response to extreme weather events such as flooding and wildfires
- Mitigation - taking action to reduce our own carbon emissions, while encouraging our staff and communities to do the same

The principles that we will follow in relation to each of these are set out below:

Adaptation

Prevent, Protect, Respond

- Work with our communities to identify those most vulnerable from climate change risks and to prevent harm from occurring
- Work in partnership with other organisations to protect our communities and businesses from the risks of climate change
- Ensure areas vulnerable to extreme weather events are identified in our Public Safety Plan and the Local Resilience Forum's Community Risk Register, and the appropriate level of resources and training are in place to respond to the identified risks

Mitigation

Buildings and Energy

- Improve the energy efficiency of our buildings
- Investigate the use of renewable energy in our buildings
- Encourage energy saving amongst our own staff and communities

Transportation

- Start to replace diesel vehicles with electric vehicles where practicable
- Encourage car sharing by staff (subject to prevailing internal Covid-19 guidance)

Waste Reduction

- Improve our recycling rates
- Reduce paper waste by using electronic systems

Supply Chain

- Work with suppliers to reduce carbon emissions in our supply chain

The Service will also look at the financial aspects of climate action, such as investing our money in sustainable investment products, potentially establishing a climate action fund (subject to the level of available funding) and investigating potential grant funding that may be available to help further mitigate our carbon emissions.

Within all the above principles and where it is beneficial to do so, the Service will seek to work collaboratively with other emergency responders, councils and appropriate organisations.

Current Actions and Future Aims

For each area listed on the previous page, the table below shows the current actions being taken and the future aims:

Current Actions	Area	Future Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Safety Plan identifies key risks • Extreme weather events included on Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum risk register • Staff appropriately trained, including water rescue capability • Advice to communities and businesses provided in relation to extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flooding 	<p>Prevent, Protect, Respond</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate ways to improve assistance to individuals and business most at risk • Identify potential partners to support our work in relation to climate change • Increase public awareness of potential risks associated with climate change through existing media channels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of energy efficiency measures have been implemented, such as solar panels and LED lighting • The Blue Light Hub utilises a number of energy efficiency measures, including a combined heat and power (CHP) plant 	<p>Buildings and Energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the energy efficiency of our buildings and include actions to improve this within the next Property Strategy refresh • Investigate the use of renewable energy in our buildings • Look to establish a group like the Green Action initiative (see case study on page 4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicle charging points at the Blue Light Hub, shortly to be installed at Aylesbury and Marlow • Four electric vehicles purchased for the Prevention team, with four mild hybrids on order • Review commenced of continued use of working from home, remote meetings etc. • Promotion of the Cycle to Work scheme • End of life vehicles and equipment donated to Fire Aid if unable to be sold 	<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunities to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points at our buildings • Investigate the user of alternative fuels for current vehicles • Monitor developments in electric pumping appliances • Look at ways to promote car sharing amongst staff • Investigate ways to support staff moving to ULEVs • Use existing telematic data to optimise driving behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Business and Systems Integration project replaced the use of paper with electronic methods for a number of key processes (e.g. payslips, expenses claims, invoicing) • The Blue Light Hub utilises advanced rainwater harvesting to reduce water usage 	<p>Waste Reduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at ways to increase recycling • Look at ways to reduce water consumption (e.g. use pressure washers to clean vehicles instead of fire hoses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific action taken to date 	<p>Supply Chain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with key suppliers to identify opportunities to reduce emissions from their products/services • Incorporate sustainability requirements into new contracts

Other actions that have already been taken, or are scheduled to be taken are:

- Embed climate change and air quality considerations in policy and decision making. The cover paper for board and committee meetings has already been updated to ensure that the environmental impacts are considered when making decisions. This will help to ensure the alignment of policy, spending and functions with this Environment and Climate Action Plan
- Sustainable investments – we will investigate the potential to move some of our investments to dedicated sustainable investment products.

Monitoring

The Local Government Association (LGA) has teamed up with Local Partnerships to offer local authorities a free Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool to help local authorities establish their baseline greenhouse gas emissions over a single reporting year.

The Authority will commit to completing this tool to record our emissions baseline, and report progress on work to reduce this on a regular basis. We will also consider what other information it may be useful to capture and report on.

Case Study – Green Action

The initiative began with conference call meetings between the sustainability representatives of the initial five participating FRs to shape the campaign. In the first instance calls identified precisely what would be asked of crews (better energy management on stations), how long the first phase of Green Action Energy Savers should run for (four months), what data should be collected (gas and electric meter readings) and how performance would be monitored (kWh consumption compared to the same sites use the previous year). The group also agreed a common approach to weather correction (using heating degree day analysis) and accounting for any other factors that that would skew the data, e.g. station refurbishments. Further to this both internal and external communication channels were utilised to publish results of the competition.

[Source: LGA Climate emergency - fire and rescue services (Report). 10 March 2020.

Communications and Training

Relevant staff are already aware of the need to consider the environmental impacts of all decisions that required board or committee approval.

Once the Environment and Climate Action Plan is approved, this will be communicated to all staff, and our communities, via current media channels.

As well as considering the environmental impact of significant decisions, we are also aware there are a number of day-to-day changes that can be made to reduce negative impacts on the environment. The action plan on page 5 includes actions to communicate with our staff and the wider community, as well as train our staff on how they can make a positive difference to the environment. This includes the potential to start a group like the Green Action initiative (see case study above).

Environment and Climate Action Plan Timeline

The table below looks at the future aims on page 3 and shows when and in what context action is scheduled to be taken:

Year	Action	Objective
2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Procurement Strategy • Update Fleet Strategy • Investigate the use of renewable energy in our buildings (current energy contract ends 31 March 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the future aims in the Supply Chain area • Address the future aims in the Transportation area • Reduce CO2 emissions from current levels of energy usage
2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Carbon Accounting Tool • Review engagement and communications plan for climate change issues • Review potential use of sustainable investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline current emissions and highlight other areas for further improvement • Increase public awareness of climate change through existing media channels • Reduce the environmental impact of our investment portfolio
2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Property Strategy • Produce training for staff on climate change and the Environment and Climate Action Plan • Look at ways to further reduce waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the energy efficiency of our buildings and include actions to improve this, a key element of the Buildings and Energy area • Look to establish a group like the Green Action initiative to encourage energy saving among our own staff • Address the future aims in the Waste Reduction area
2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Prevent, Protect, Respond area in readiness for the Public Safety Plan 2025+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate ways to improve targeting of individuals and business most at risk • Identify potential partners to support our work in relation to climate change

The timeframe above aligns the Environment and Climate Action Plan with the timeframe of our Public Safety Plan. Where possible, updates of existing strategies have been aligned with their current validity periods.