

Minute Extract – Executive Committee – 8 July 2025

Minute No. 57 - Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections to 2030

The Executive received the report presenting a summary of the “Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections to 2030”, study carried out by the University of Exeter.

Particular reference was made to:

- that this had been a truly groundbreaking study, and had been able to highlight the true cost of decarbonising put services;
- the report considered three scenarios- business as usual (BAU), Mid-term and Max-term net zero;
- scope 1 and 2 emissions were direct emissions such as fleet vehicles, and indirect emissions such as when buying electricity;
- business as usual were measures that were already being taken or committed to, to reduce carbon emissions. Retrofit within Council Housing was given as an example;
- the mid and max terms required much larger reductions to be considered. New technologies would be required for homes. Fundamentally it would be switching from gas to electric, this would cause energy prices to go up;
- most mid and max measures were unaffordable currently;
- the next stage would be to understand how the council could explore additional BAU measures;
- BAU would be challenging, and additional funding would be required; and
- to escalate to mid and max, significant capital investment would be needed.

During discussion, Executive Members raised the following points and questions:

- the Council were very lucky to have this incredible knowledge on their doorstep;
- BAU was a misnomer and suggested that nothing was being done which was not the case;
- integration across the council was needed;
- the opportunity for scrutiny to look at this report in September was welcomed;
- the report was extremely useful to be able to refer to and provided a sounding board;
- would the next report go into the detail of service-led prioritisation?
- BAU was dismissive of the amount of work which had been carried out by officers;
- Exeter had the first Passivhaus swimming pool in the country;
- could officers provide more information about decarbonisation of the national supply?
- carbon footprint could indicate running cost, and the cost of running a swimming pool was high, how can we decrease?
- it was incredibly difficult to retrofit and bring down the carbon footprint of a building such as the RAMM;
- the Leader was interested to know if the report should have provided more information on investment in trees.

Councillor Moore as an opposition group leader raised the following points and questions:

- she hoped government would be lobbied for funding to undertake this work;
- would the next report set out the savings to the council in terms of the return on the investment being made?
- would there be benefits for taxpayers and residents as bills to the Council would decrease?
- when looking to continue BAU route, there were many areas which either did not show reductions or they were minimal by 2030;
- if BAU was pursued, when would reductions in carbon emissions be evident? And
- would the Executive include investment in nature as one of their priorities?

In response to questions raised, the Strategic Director for Place and the Net Zero Project Manager advised that:

- the next report would cover in detail the service-led prioritisation;
- there were a range of things which could be done under BAU, such as building more council houses, if these were built to a certain standard it would reduce the carbon footprint;
- St Sidwell's Point was a groundbreaking project, but it was a large building and did consume a lot of energy;
- there was an aspiration to add Solar PV at the site; and
- at Riverside a large amount of emissions were from the gas heating and the swimming pool which the heat pumps would remove and therefore show a huge improvement;
- trees related to sequestering or off-setting carbon emissions.

The Leader moved the recommendations and Councillor Wright seconded, were voted upon and CARRIED.

Agreed:

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Carbon Footprint Projections, study including associated challenges and cost to the City Council, are noted and this information will be reported to Strategic Scrutiny Committee in September 2025.
- (2) Members note progress to date and further carbon reduction potential under the assessment of Scope 1 and 2 carbon reduction scenarios available to achieve net zero.
- (3) A further report is considered by Executive, which identifies options for how Business as Usual (BAU) carbon reduction measures can be incorporated into annual Service Plans, to enable prioritisation of service led GHG emission reduction measures.
- (4) The Net Zero team works in collaboration with relevant Services to plan future funding bids to secure additional resources, prioritising social housing, buildings and transport services to support emission reductions.