



**Monmouthshire County Council
Response to the Climate Emergency
September 2019 (Unapproved Draft)**



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Title	Response to the Climate Emergency
Purpose	This plan outlines the council's response to the climate emergency declared in May 2019
Owner	Monmouthshire County Council
Approved by	Not yet approved
Date	September 2019
Version Number	0.6
Status	Draft – For Scrutiny
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	September 2020
Consultation	Internal officer consultation only at this stage.

Draft - For Discussion

Decarbonisation

Why this matters?

By 2030 this council aspires to reduce its net carbon emissions to zero. Tackling climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing our planet and our county. Rising temperatures bring increased risks to society and the economy as well as long-term or irreversible damage to our planet's eco-system¹. More locally we can expect to see impacts such as flooding, drought and species loss.

Carbon emissions from fossil fuels is one of the main causes of climate change. The scientific consensus is that human activity since industrialisation has been the major factor in the recent warming of the Earth's surface and that this will continue into the future.

Climate change, deforestation and agriculture mean the ability of the planet to lock up carbon is reducing. Farming is eroding soil at a quicker rate than new soil can be formed while melting ice is contributing to rising sea levels and releasing carbon previously trapped beneath frozen land. These changes result in feedback loops where rising temperatures accelerate the degradation of land and soil through drought, desertification and rising sea levels. This in turn, increases the volume of greenhouse gases being released by land, which further accelerates global warming.



Time to Act

If we are to stand a chance of addressing climate change and slowing the rise in the Earth's temperature there is a narrow window of opportunity to take action. The International Panel on Climate Change has indicated that rises above 1.5 °C will affect the ability of the planet sustain human life as we know it and that crucially, without significant change, that figure will be passed by 2030. In short we don't have long to act.

In May 2019 Monmouthshire County Council unanimously passed a motion declaring a climate emergency². This sets out a clear policy commitment for the council to:

- strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030;
- encourage and support resident and businesses to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions;
- Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 °C.

Responsibility for climate change and decarbonisation sits with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services.

The Benefits of Action

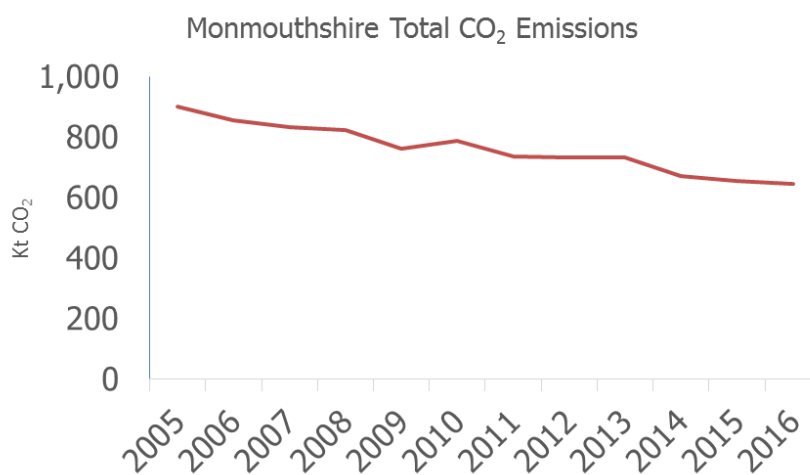
As well as the global and moral imperative to act on climate change we can also expect to see local benefits from moving to a lower carbon society:

- Lower energy bills for residents and businesses.

- Better air quality and the resulting health benefits
- Shorter commuting times between home, work and school
- Increases use of active travel like walking and cycling which can help improve peoples' health
- Less damage to the local environment from drought, floods and fire
- Increased demand for green technologies and the resulting potential for job growth in these sectors.
- Better habitat management, increased biodiversity and creation of green space
- Increased connectivity between people and the environment and more globally responsible citizens.

Local Carbon Emissions

Climate is a global issue but we all have a part to play. If we are to reduce our net emissions we need to understand what they are now – both in our county and our organisation. Emissions per head of population across Monmouthshire are above UK levels. Since 2005 net carbon emissions in the county have reduced by 28% from 903 kilotonnes to 648 kilotonnes while our population has increased by 7%³.

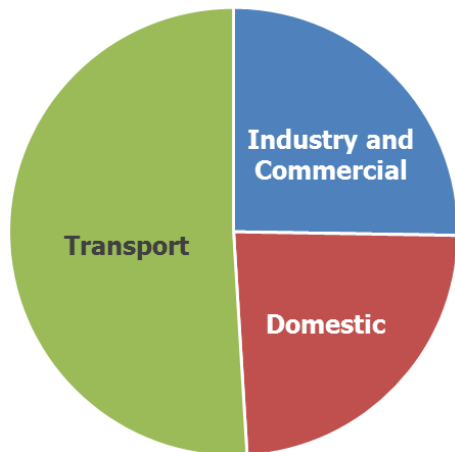


(Source: UK local authority dioxide emissions, National Statistics)

The downward trajectory mirrors a similar trend that across the UK as a result of things like an increase in the use of cleaner energy. Over this time we have also seen an increase in carbon captured from 17 to 43 kilotonnes but the amount captured is less than 7% of the total CO₂ produced in the county⁴. If decarbonisation were to continue at this rate we would not be carbon neutral until after 2050, too late to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Carbon emissions in the county come from a range of sources including industry, agriculture, road transport and domestic heating. The biggest single contributor is transport and in particular road transport. This is shown in the chart below⁵:

Source of Monmouthshire Emissions



Selected Detail	Kt
Industrial energy use	143
Agriculture	32
Domestic energy use	164
Road Transport	338
Rail	6

(Source: UK local authority dioxide emissions, National Statistics)

Monmouthshire County Council will strive to reduce its own emissions while working with partners, including members of the public service board, local businesses and community groups to reduce emissions and improve carbon capture across the county as a whole from things like trees, vegetation and green infrastructure which help to sequester and store carbon.

Data from our own organisation shows that we generate approximately:

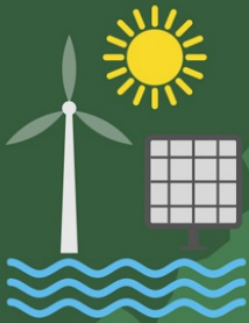
- 8,700 tonnes from static assets such as buildings and street lighting
- 3,000 tonnes from council vehicles like buses and refuse trucks, plus cars driven by officers and councillors in the course of their work
- 15,000 tonnes of emissions from the manufacture of the good and supplies we buy

This is still an incomplete picture and we will increase our understanding as our work develops.

The Council are already taking steps to reduce our carbon emissions. The following infographic shows some of the work that is already underway, using Council data for 2018/19.

TAKING ACTION ON CARBON

WE'VE MADE A START...



19.3%

of the electricity we use has come from our own renewables including our solar farm



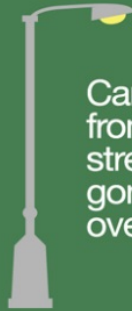
99.5%

of the energy the council buys comes from renewable sources



64%

of household waste is recycled



Carbon emissions from buildings and streetlights has gone down by **28%** over the last 5 years



We are working with Riversimple to pilot **20 hydrogen powered cars** in Abergavenny



Our pension fund is reducing the amount it invests in fossil fuels



Our renewable energy generation brings in over **£650,000** of income every year



2 million

square metres of grassland managed in a sustainable way to encourage pollinators



11,000

tonnes of waste are composted each year

...BUT WE HAVE A LOT MORE TO DO.



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Our Objectives at a Glance

Our action plan will cover ten broad objectives that will deliver a net reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Each of these objectives will contain actions for the local authority which will reduce the council's own emissions, as well as actions that will reduce county wide carbon emissions which will need to be taken forward in partnership with the community plus steps that everyone can do.

Select Committee will be presented with a series of policy choices as part of pre-decision scrutiny, to inform the development of the action plan. The action plan will then be updated and reported on annually, but the actions will be continuous, as we look globally for examples of leading edge practice that can help us accelerate our progress. We will then prioritise these and put our energy and investment into those that offer the most advantageous balance of carbon reduction and feasibility. We also need to ensure some early actions to get the maximum cumulative benefit over the next twelve years.

Energy and Buildings Reduce the amount of energy that is used for buildings and street lighting	Renewable Energy Speed up the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy
Green Spaces Create and manage green spaces to absorb carbon & provide resilience to climate change	What we Buy Reduce carbon by thinking carefully about when and what we buy and the whole life costs
Waste Reduce waste by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more	Active Travel Encourage and make it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive
Greener Transport Reduce the impact of vehicles and encourage the use of electric and hydrogen vehicles	Public Transport Encourage people to use public transport rather than cars
Education and involvement Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference	Climate Adaptation Preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change.

Playing your part

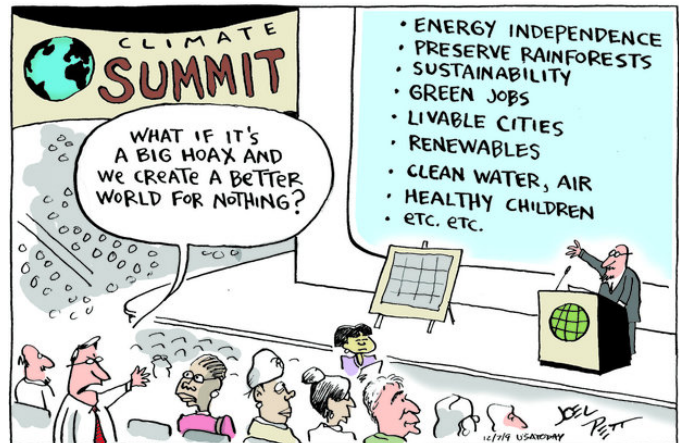
The Climate Emergency Action Plan cannot be delivered by the Council alone. We need other partners to join us in helping to reduce carbon emissions across the county. To that end, we will be working with Public Service Board partners over coming months.

We hugely value the enthusiasm, energy and expertise of the residents of Monmouthshire who have such a lot to contribute and plan to collaborate with our communities and other partners to work together on our action plan. This process began at the end of July 2019 with a Community Climate Champions workshop to begin to identify where they can help us deliver.

There are things that every resident, visitor or worker in Monmouthshire can do to play their part in reducing carbon emissions and helping to slow down climate change. We are all part of the problem, but can all be part of the solution too. The action plan gives some ideas we can all try to do our bit.

Climate Adaptation

Even if we were to stop all carbon emissions today, we will still have to face the impacts of climate change that is already happening. Over the next few decades we are facing some level of climate change regardless of any action to reduce our emissions now. The 2012 Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales forecasts hotter, drier summers, warmer, wetter winters and more extreme weather events.



There are lots of things that the council is doing to make sure that we are prepared for the impacts of climate change. In recent years, council services have thought about what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start thinking about how to adapt to these risks. The Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure that our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

With an increase in winter rainfall and rising sea levels, flooding is likely to increase, and this will be a particular concern in parts of Monmouthshire. Much of the work to co-ordinate emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We will continue to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.

If you live somewhere prone to flooding, make sure you know what to do. Find out more at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/services/planning-for-emergencies/flooding/>

Keeping tabs on how we are doing

It is important that we know whether the actions we will be taking to reduce climate change are making a difference to our emissions. We can measure how much carbon some of the actions will save. However, we will not be able to measure carbon savings from some of the actions, but we can at least make sure that we are doing what we have said we will do.

We will be starting a member led working group, to be chaired by the cabinet member (with community and officers) which will meet quarterly. Updates on progress against the actions will be collated every three months and reported to the working group to make sure that we are making good progress.

Longlist of Potential Activity

This is a long list of some of the potential activity that could contribute to the council's response to climate change. It will form the basis for the development of the council's action plan. The list is not exhaustive and further options will be added as they are identified. There will be a mix of short, medium and longer term impacts with the eventual action plan being clear what we will achieve within 12 months, 3 years, 5 years and 10 years..

Reducing energy use Reducing the amount of energy that is used for buildings and street lighting
MCC emissions
All bulbs within council owned buildings will be LED
All street lighting will be converted to LED
Require new council buildings to be zero carbon by 2025 or use carbon offsetting where this cannot be achieved
Evidence and understand our baseline CO2 emissions, and measure the impact of carbon reduction initiatives
Implement energy efficiency improvements across the existing council estate by 2022
Continue to reduce CO2 emissions from our energy supply
County emissions
Mandate higher energy standards for new buildings
Work with PSB partners to reduce carbon emissions across all public service buildings in operation in the county
If a new development company is formed ensure it operates on a carbon neutral basis
Promote minimum energy standards in private owned accommodation
What can I do to play my part?
Make sure you have got draft-proofing and loft insulation in your home – save money and energy. https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation
Simple things like switching off the lights, not leaving things on standby and only boiling the water you really need in the kettle can really make a difference. https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency
Understand how your heating controls work and using thermostats properly can save energy.
If you use a dishwasher, make sure you only use it when full.
Make sure your washing machine in full and dry clothes on a line rather than tumble dry if you can.

Using renewable energy

Speed up the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Build and operate two new solar farms – subject to national grid capacity

Explore the feasibility of a green energy company

Develop a feasibility study for district heating schemes

Install photovoltaic canopies at council owned car parks to power electric vehicle charge points with renewable energy

Action to reduce County emissions

Require renewable energy on private sector developments

Identify land for renewable generation in the new Local Development Plan

What can I do to play my part?

Switch your energy supplier to a renewable energy contract.

<https://www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/green-energy-tariffs/>

Find out whether you could install solar panels or another renewable energy in your home.

<https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/renewable-energy>

Consider what you want your savings or pensions to be invested in.

<https://www.finder.com/ca/ethical-savings-accounts>

Managing green spaces

To reduce energy use, to absorb carbon and be resilient

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Eliminate the use of peat based compost by our grounds maintenance teams

Expand pollinator-friendly management work

Increase the use of pollinator friendly plants and reduce annual bedding plants

Reduce grass cutting frequency/extent where appropriate and safe to do so

Introduce a cut and collect scheme to generate renewable energy from grass cuttings through anaerobic digestion

Use our county farms as exemplars for sustainable agriculture.

Plant 10,000 new trees by 2022

Use and promote low carbon building technologies like green walls and roofs

Research low carbon and local procurement public realm schemes

Action to reduce County emissions

Promote sustainable land management and agricultural practices, including nutrient/soil management and natural flood management

Maintain and enhance biodiversity and make ecosystems more resilient

Plant more trees and increase area of woodland, improve and increase woodland management and retain existing woodland

Secure more green infrastructure through development

Promote and support local food growing

Reduce food miles by work with local famers to market local food

Ensure permeable materials and water storage is incorporated into new car parks

What can I do to play my part?

Leave part of your garden wild, make habitats for wildlife and plant trees to absorb carbon dioxide. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions>

Join a "Friends of" group to get involved in sustainable green space management, or find out about local groups who are doing community gardening and growing. <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>

Try and reduce your food miles by buying food which is locally grown where possible and in season.

Think about where meat you buy comes from and have a varied diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables

Get involved in community allotments or establish a new allotment and have a go and growing your own fruit and veg. <https://www.theallotmentgarden.co.uk/Easier-grow/>

What we buy

Reducing carbon by thinking carefully about when and what we buy and whole life costs

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Continue to phase out single use plastics within the council

Continue to work with the Gwent Pension Fund to phase out fossil fuel investments

Ensure that the local authority is represented on regional procurement networks to ensure appropriate consideration of climate emergency considerations

Ensure that all specifications, tender documents and award criteria address climate emergency commitments

Engage and consult external advisors to ensure that climate agenda considerations are incorporated within strategic procurement collaborations

What can I do to play my part?

Think about how much you buy and whether you really need it.

When you are buying food think local, in season, reduced and recyclable packaging.

Support your local charity shop and buy second hand, or use schemes such as Freecycle <https://www.freecycle.org/>

Consider buying "experiences" for people as gifts, or charity gifts that support sustainable projects, rather than buy gifts that aren't wanted or needed. <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/oxfam-unwrapped>

Reducing waste

By encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Reduce waste and increase recycling in all public spaces including retail centres

Reduce food waste in schools

Action to reduce County emissions

Make all of our buildings water refill stations

Explore regional collaboration for Household Waste sites

Continue to support, promote and expand the Repair Cafes and Upcycle movement

Roll out re-use shops at Household Waste sites, and use revenue to fund tree planting

Increase 'reduce re-use and recycling' across the county

Ensure that all new housing developments have on-site recycling

Build a new high quality recycling facility in central Monmouthshire

Continue to target education at households who do not recycle

What can I do to play my part?

Find out about and use all the different types of recycling that Monmouthshire does.

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/>

Get recipes and tips for using food and reducing food waste. <https://lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

Use refillable water bottles, and reusable containers for your lunch. <https://refill.org.uk/>

Try and cut down on single use plastics. <https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-communities/>

Look after your clothes and don't buy disposable fashion. <https://www.loveyourclothes.org.uk/>

Donate unwanted clothes, bric a brac, books, furniture etc to your local charity shop to reduce landfill and help raise money.

Walking and cycling

Encouraging and making it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Divert funding from highways maintenance to cycle path and footpath creation

Fit bike carriers to our buses to encourage cycling

Develop a bike share scheme

Introduce cycling mileage rates

Develop a bike to work scheme

Get electric bike taster session at County Hall

Reduce business miles travelled by 25% by 2023 through use of technology

Action to reduce County emissions

Develop an e-bike hire pilot in a town

Increase walking and cycling to school

Pilot walking bus schemes in school

Have "no idling" stickers in contract buses/cars

Have no idling near schools, and other appropriate locations

Maximise opportunities for active travel, ensuring routes are safe and convenient

Enable the building of more off road cycle routes

What can I do to play my part?

Try and walk for short journeys, and reduce carbon while getting fit at the same time!

Find out about local cycle routes and cycling groups and get on your bike.

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network/>

Team up with parents and your local school to develop a walking bus to walk your little ones to school.

Get involved with local public rights of way volunteering opportunities.

<https://volunteer.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>

Ask your employer if they can provide showers and lockers so that you can cycle to work.

Greener vehicles

Reducing the impact of vehicle use and encouraging use of electric and hydrogen vehicles

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Introduce a green travel plan for staff and councillor travel

Support the development of staff car sharing

Encourage staff to lease of electric vehicles

Increase the mileage rates payable for people who use electric vehicles and reduce the rates paid for petrol and diesel cars after 2023

Install EV charging points at all larger council buildings

Offer free car parking in MCC owned car parks for electric and hydrogen vehicles until 2025

All fleet vehicles bought after [feasible date] will be hybrid, electric or hydrogen powered

Develop an electric vehicle strategy, covering fleet and the county

Action to reduce County emissions

Introduce differential charging for parking with ultra-low emission vehicles charged less

Explore ways to encourage taxis to be electric or hybrid

Use parking enforcement to prevent traffic congestion and air pollution

Launch and continue to support the Riversimple hydrogen car pilot

Explore the potential for EV charging in street lights, new development and new builds

What can I do to play my part?

Try and car share when you can, to save fuel and money. There are schemes to help.
<https://liftshare.com/uk>

If you are thinking of replacing your vehicle, think about whether an electric car would work for you. There are grants which can help. <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/transport/electric-cars-and-vehicles/electric-vehicles>

Public transport

Encouraging people to use public transport rather than cars

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Explore feasibility of electric buses

Encourage staff to make increased use of public transport

Action to reduce County emissions

Invest more in local authority controlled public transport

Encourage modal shift through the South Wales Metro

Increase availability and knowledge of public transport

Lobby for better train service and station provision

Use Leader funding for a rural Uber scheme linked to train stations

Implement successful concepts identified by GovTech Catalyst project

What can I do to play my part?

Find out about public transport options that could work for you. <https://www.traveline.cymru/>

If you are 16 to 21 you can get bus travel discounts. <https://mytravelpass.gov.wales/en/>

If you are 16 to 25 you can apply for a young persons railcard. <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>

Concessionary bus passes are available from Transport for Wales. <https://tfw.gov.wales/>

Education and involvement

Helping people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference

Action to reduce MCC emissions

Make energy data available to schools to help them reduce energy

Introduce carbon literacy training for all staff

Change the council's default search engine to Ecosia to contribute to tree planting globally

Run Evolve staff training to focus on an aspect of climate change

Action to reduce County emissions

Explore an Internet of Things sensor network to inform decisions and educate local communities

Start local growing and cooking schemes in schools

Use the One Planet Centre as a focus for climate change education

What can I do to play my part?

Get involved with your school's Eco Committee, or if your school isn't an Eco School, find out more and ask them if they would consider it. <https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/pages/category/eco-schools>

Does your workplace have recycling or other environmental issues in place? Why not try and start something.

Get involved with one of the many voluntary groups in Monmouthshire doing great work on climate change. <https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/> <https://transitionmonmouth.org/> <http://abergavennytransition.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/AbergavennyExtinctionRebellion/>

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

² <https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=3758>

³ UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2016, full dataset and methodology available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics>

⁴ LULUCF Net Emissions (land use, land use change and forestry) total. Ibid

⁵ 2016 data for Monmouthshire. Ibid