

Carbon neutral Bruton by 2030: The Plan

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Terms of Reference for the Climate Emergency Working Group require it to

To develop a rolling plan to “to make Bruton carbon neutral¹ by 2030” – first draft and proposals for adoption to be presented to Full Council by September 2019.

- 1.2 This document is that first draft. The plan is for Bruton as a community, not for the Town Council itself, though clearly the Town Council has a significant role in putting this plan into action.
- 1.3 This document focuses on carbon-neutrality, because that is what the Group has been asked to do. However, carbon-neutrality is just one aspect of developing Bruton to become a truly sustainable community. Following the Council’s adoption of the One Planet Living principles, the Working Group would wish to see this plan developed to encompass the wider set of principles.
- 1.4 **It is recommended that the Town Council adopts this plan, and that it asks the Climate Emergency Working Group to take the plan forward.**

2 Reducing net carbon emissions to zero

- 2.1 Reducing net carbon emissions to zero means making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables. In terms of travel and transport, it means reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport, and offsetting any carbon impacts. We should also consider the embodied carbon emissions in the products that we consume and waste that we produce and aim to reduce consumption, reusing and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution.
- 2.2 There is a wide body of research into the sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and the means by which emissions may be reduced. Some aspects are still hotly debated, but there is solid consensus about many of the steps that need to be taken.

¹ Carbon Neutral means net zero annual anthropogenic (human caused or influenced) CO₂ (and other greenhouse gas) emissions by a certain date. By definition, carbon neutrality means every ton of anthropogenic CO₂ (and other greenhouse gas emissions) emitted is compensated with an equivalent amount of CO₂ removed (e.g. via carbon sequestration).

2.3 National guidance is available from numerous organisations:

- The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)'s Zero Carbon Britain² research project shows that a modern, zero-emissions society is possible using technology available today.
- Locally the Somerset Climate Action network has recently published a range of steps that local authorities can and should take to reduce emissions³.
- The University of Leeds and the Economic and Social Research Council have published similar guidance which also estimates the achievable reductions in emission by local authority area⁴.
- More recently Friends of the Earth have published a document setting out the steps each local authority should take if it is do its fair share in combatting climate change⁵, with targets.

2.4 The Working Group thinks that whatever the research says is likely to be effective nationally is also likely to be effective in Bruton, and that we should simply take and use this research as best we can.

2.5 To summarise, the approach should be:

- Reduce demand for energy
- Supply energy from renewable resources
- Offset any shortfall between supply and demand, or
- Export any excess renewable energy

2.6 We cannot and should not wait for other tiers of government to lead the way, or for other local councils to set an example. It is up to us to do everything that we can, using the best available knowledge, and it is imperative that we make a start, now.

3 Immediate actions

3.1 Every organisation and business in Bruton, including the Town Council, should:

- Take steps to reduce demand for energy used in buildings and manufacturing / business activities. This means considering demand for electricity for lighting and appliances (sometimes also heating and hot

² <https://www.cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain/> (Accessed: 16 September 2019)

³ Somerset Climate Action Network, 2019, *The Somerset 2030 Carbon Neutral Target – Local Authority Actions*

⁴ Economic and Social Research Council and the University of Leeds, *Carbon Accounts and the Scope for Low Carbon Development – South Somerset*, www.candocities.org viewed on 2 September 2019

⁵ <https://takeclimateaction.uk/climate-action/how-climate-friendly-your-area-enter-your-postcode-see-results-your-community> accessed on 20 October 2019

water), and demand for heating and hot water (generally supplied by gas-fired boilers)

- Ensure that its electricity supply is on a 100% renewable tariff, and (as far as possible) its gas supply is from less carbon-intensive sources and/or offset (via local carbon sequestration initiatives such as tree-planting, or by using a Gold Standard⁶ offset such as those offered by ClimateCare and other offset providers);
 - When considering any future policy or service development take into account the likely impact of that development on emissions and consumption of resources.
- 3.2 The Town Council should encourage local businesses and organisations to pledge commitment to the carbon neutral by 2030 target (and / or pledge to the One Planet Living principles)
- 3.3 The Town Council should use its statutory status as a consultee in planning law to maximum effect.
- 3.4 The Town Council should request that South Somerset District Council commission a renewable energy opportunity assessment and implementation plan for the District.

4 First two years

Zero carbon energy

- 4.1 The Town Council should investigate upgrading its offices to reduce electricity and heating demand.
- 4.2 The Town Council should develop proposals and / or establish arrangements with renewable energy providers to install renewable energy (primarily PV) across the town.
- 4.3 The Town Council should explore opportunities for micro-hydro on the River Brue, upstream of Bruton.

⁶ <https://www.goldstandard.org/> (Accessed: 16 September 2019) The Gold Standard sets the standard for climate and development interventions to quantify, certify and maximise their impact.

- 4.4 The Town Council (or One Planet Bruton) should develop a programme to promote the Energy Savings Trust Community Home Energy Checker (HEC) to households. This is a tool to help communities provide home energy advice. As well as providing a tailored report on energy saving for everyone who uses it the community HEC enables community groups to track how many people they have advised and gain an overall picture of home energy efficiency in their area. Communities can use this tool to collect pledges of energy saving behaviour and to gauge levels of interest in energy saving measures within their area. The programme could include an energy roadshow with information for businesses and householders, organised in conjunction with neighbouring communities.

Travel and transport

- 4.5 The Town Plan 2017 requires that proposals are developed for ‘a wide network of safe and easy walking routes to the town centre’ (thus encouraging more people to walk or cycle instead of using their car). The Council’s Transport committee has recently agreed that this work should be taken forward from September 2019. (Experience suggests that development and improvement of routes will take more than two years).
- 4.6 The Town Council should promote car sharing and encourage a car club to start in Bruton (formal, community or informal).
- 4.7 The Town Council should support the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points.

5 Longer term

- 5.1 TO BE ADDED TO LATER ITERATIONS OF THIS PLAN

6 Implementation

- 6.1 Unless otherwise indicated, any organisation or business in Bruton could start to take some of the steps described above.
- 6.2 One Planet Bruton has been established as the community’s response to the Town Council’s declaration of an emergency and will be the organisation that takes forward or co-ordinates any community-led initiatives.
- 6.3 The Town Council’s Climate Emergency Working Group, which is made of up of both Town Councillors and nominees from One Planet Bruton, will assist the Council and others by tracking progress by annual review, further development of this plan, and by making further recommendations to the Council about the steps it should be taking.