

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

24 MAY 2022

REPORT – CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr C R Slade - Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change.

Responsible Officer(s): Andrew Busby - Corporate Manager Property, Leisure & Climate Change.
Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

Reason for Report: To receive an update on the Climate Change Action Plan from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

Recommendation: That the Environment PDG notes and accepts this report as an update on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency – documenting progress with the Climate Action Plan (to reduce the Council's carbon footprint) and the wider Climate and Sustainability Programme.

Financial Implications: The financial implications associated with this report are the overall costs of the Climate and Sustainability Programme, budgets specifically linked to the Council's Corporate Plan, Climate Strategy and Climate Action Plan (CAP).

Budget and Policy Framework: Budgets specifically linked to the Council's Corporate Plan, Climate Strategy and Climate Action Plan (CAP).

Legal Implications: Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019. The Environment Policy Development Group (PDG) is responsible for developing relevant council policies; considering how best to implement the Council's approved policies; and for making informed recommendations to Cabinet on the matter. [Link to declaration decision.](#)

Risk Assessment: Progress on Performance Indicators (PI) is provided separately by Performance and Risk Reports. There are 2 main risks (to the Council): 1) that the Council does not take sufficient actions to enable it to meet its Climate Emergency declaration ambitions; and 2) that the financial implications of Climate Change are not adequately measured and reflected in the Council's decision making.

Equality Impact Assessment: There are no equality impacts associated with this report. (No recommendations.) Specific projects and policies are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. (Assessing the equality impacts of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is not only a legal requirement, but also a positive opportunity for authorities to make better decisions based on robust evidence.)

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Please refer to **Annex A** which shows the Council's Corporate Plan Aims (Table 1) and Climate Strategy priorities (Table 2).

Impact on Climate Change: The role of the Climate and Sustainability Specialist in support of the corporate officer team is central to the Council's Climate and

Sustainability Programme by actions such as the development of strategic positions and delivery of projects through internal, community and partnership work.

1.0 Introduction / Background

1.1.1. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and aims to be climate neutral by 2030. Climate neutrality is a term used to describe the achievement of a balance, for any given period, for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into or removed from the atmosphere; because of the actions taken by organisations, businesses and individuals. The goal of climate neutrality is to achieve a net zero climate impact.

1.1.2. This report is divided into **community** and **corporate** strands (some overlap is possible). Aligned with the climate change declaration across Devon, climate action for the Council falls into two work streams:

- an internal organisation focus to cut corporate greenhouse gas emissions to net zero;
- the wider agenda to enable emission reductions across Mid Devon communities.

Clearly, the first is a process the Council can manage / monitor and control to a significant degree, as it relates to our own assets and operations. For the wider agenda linked to the whole Mid Devon area, we will work as a partner with local businesses, organisations, community groups and other residents to support the district's journey to achieve net zero.

1.1.3. Throughout each priority area within our Corporate Plan, there is a strong emphasis on local level sustainability. Environmental sustainability matters in all aspects of the Council's work, linked to everything from procurement to promoting nature recovery.

1.1.4. The Climate and Sustainability Specialist - leads the development of the Council's *Climate and Sustainability Programme*, working with colleagues and Councillors, particularly the Corporate Manager Property, Leisure & Climate Change; and Cllr Colin Slade - the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

2.0 Performance

2.1.1. Progress on Performance Indicators (PI) is provided separately.

2.1.2. Tables in this report's **Annex A** briefly summarise actions in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan *aims* and Climate Strategy *priorities*.

2.1.3. Corporate Plan mid-point actions have been reviewed between the Corporate Manager Property, Leisure & Climate Change and the Portfolio Holder.

2.2. Climate Action Plan (CAP).

2.2.1. The Council's CAP collates projects and activities to address climate change (mitigation and adaptation). The Climate and Sustainability Specialist has coordinated a review of the CAP to cost it, identify additional funding required, address gaps, develop the plan, and extend it to 2030.

2.2.2. Corporate Management Team (and their officers) have been tasked with maintaining the CAP as a live management tool to enable budget planning and ensure a timely cycle of reporting. Teams will prioritise the most imminent opportunities and impactful projects.

2.2.3. The CAP comprises both **corporate** and **community** work streams.

2.2.4. Estimated costs thus far (April 2022) total £25,539,343, split as follows:

- Estimated costs thus far for the Internal Structures and Processes workstream are £282,638.
- Estimated costs thus far for actions within the *Housing Energy and Assets* work stream is £18,444,210. (This includes HRA planned works and estimates for retrofitting and decarbonising the Council's facility buildings.)
- Estimated costs thus far for the *Transport and Vehicles* workstream are £6,180,495.
- Estimated costs thus far for the *Community and Wider Context* workstream are £542,000.

2.2.5. Cost estimates may already be allocated within existing budgets, or may be additional; the CAP format shows where additional funding is required in order to enable fundraising and budget planning.

2.2.6. Proposals could save an estimated 61,415 tCO₂e between now and 2030.

2.2.7. **Caveats.** Robust caveats must be provided with any reporting on the CAP to cover factors such as estimation, forecast uncertainty and data gaps. Examples below.

- Analysis gap. We do not yet have a comprehensive list i.e. we have not identified all the projects required to reach Net Zero.
- Data gap. The majority of the CAP items require more information. Details will be enhanced by lead officers assigned to each prioritised project.
- Estimates. The majority of the costs are estimated. The majority of carbon savings are estimated, and not always based on an assessment.
- Forecasting. The further a project is planned, the less certain we can be about future costs.
- Scope. Many items show capital costs but do not always forecast running costs e.g. of new installations or vehicles, or disposal costs. Business cases for each project / activity must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis (do not assume projects have been approved simply by being listed as an option in the CAP).

3.0 Community and partnership activities

3.1. Devon Climate Emergency

3.1.1. The Council is a partner within Devon Climate Emergency Response Group (DCERG) and a signatory to the Devon Carbon Plan (DCP). The Climate and Sustainability Specialist role includes working with the DCERG Tactical Group and the over-arching Response Group (the Chief Executive also receives Response Group communications).

3.1.2. Partnership work serves 2 main purposes:

- Seek to ensure strong strategic alignment.
- To facilitate cooperation, learning and communication e.g. updates on current projects, consultation and the DCP.

3.1.3. The partnership continues to develop and implement the Interim Devon Carbon Plan (iDCP) which is subject to ongoing public consultation.

3.1.4. The most recent public consultation stage followed up the 2021 [Devon Climate Assembly](#) (Citizen's Assembly) whose Resolutions responded to 3 challenging topics: retrofitting homes; the role of onshore wind power; and decarbonising transport (particularly with regard to encouraging less car use).

The C&S Specialist circulated [the Assembly report](#) and consultation materials to all Council Members and Cllr Colin Slade initiated the response debate via NZAG, with member views given to the C&S Specialist. Views from across the partnership informed [DCE responses](#) to the Climate Assembly [open to public consultation](#) in March and April 2022 (now closed).

3.1.5. Update: Consultation results, now being collated, will inform the next iteration of the DCP. The draft Final Carbon Plan will be published in August 2022.

3.1.6. Update: Devolution recently raised the possibility of a Devon *county deal*. Climate was central, so ideas were discussed (at short notice) by Chief Executives and the DCE Tactical Group. The C&S Specialist liaised with Portfolio Holder Cllr Colin Slade, Chairperson of Environment PDG Cllr Josh Wright and the Chairperson of NZAG Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd to coordinate our feedback on proposals. All partner ideas on net-zero were reviewed and a shortlist submitted to the Devon County Council Economy and Enterprise team who are leading the process. These were considered by Team Devon and a final application has been submitted to government.

3.1.7. Update: The C&S Specialist has joined Sustainable Tiverton volunteers to collaborate with artists to create a "Net Zero Vision" public artwork to inspire local communities. This is part of a Devon Climate Emergency project.

3.1.8. Update: The Devon Climate Emergency team has published a [Carbon Footprint for Devon](#) (split into district data). This relies on national datasets published 2 years in arrears - so the latest report is for 2019.

Note: Also a useful resource for Mid Devon communities - the Impact Tool [estimates a community's Carbon Footprint](#) and provides an interactive graphic for local authority areas including [Mid Devon](#).

3.2. Engagement: State of the District Debate 2022 – Mid Devon's Communities and Climate Change.

3.2.1. On 5th April the Council hosted a public [State of the District Debate](#) online. The theme chosen by the Leader of the Council was *Mid Devon's Communities and Climate Change*, and the aim was to listen to community perspectives on ways to address climate change. Over 50 people from local households, businesses, farms, community groups engaged in the debate.

3.2.2. The event was preceded by extensive officer preparations and engagement with local environment champions. The C&S Specialist would like to thank all

who organised, shaped and joined in with the debate, particularly ‘topic specialists’ who gave their time and expertise to benefit the debate.

- 3.2.3. Mid Devon environment champions included home energy advisor Tara Bowers, organic farmer Liz Bowles, campaigner Roger Stickland and we learned of green projects at Heathcoat Fabrics Ltd, presented by Energy Manager Alison Kitchener and Environment Manager Victoria Pelaou.
- 3.2.4. Guest speaker Mukti Mitchell from Carbon Savvy shared his top ten tips for choosing (and enjoying) a range of ways to cut carbon in our everyday lives.
- 3.2.5. Update: The C&S Specialist will support the Portfolio Holder and officers to take forward arising actions by Council and in partnership with the community.

3.3. Engagement: The Mid Devon climate and sustainability website. (Corporate Plan aim: env 10.)

- 3.3.1. The Climate and Sustainability Specialist curates our dedicated website www.SustainableMidDevon.org.uk as a Mid Devon community resource. The role of the website is to: 1) share updates on the Council's carbon reduction work; 2) provide information to residents, businesses, members and others; and 3) share and signpost resources, opportunities, events and local groups active on the climate, sustainability and ecological agenda.
- 3.3.2. Community contributions of resources, news, events and ideas are welcomed from parish and town councils, sustainability groups, eco champions, businesses, farmers and growers, etc.
- 3.3.3. Recent updates include *Tips for Tackling Climate Change* and an improved interactive [map](#) of Mid Devon sustainability resources / projects.

3.4. Engagement: groups and partnerships. (Corporate Plan aim, env 10.)

- 3.4.1. Update: The C&S Specialist has continued outreach work through events, meetings and workshops, for example: preparations for the 2022 State of the District Debate (climate change themed); meetings and correspondence with partnerships e.g. Blackdown Hills AONB, Connecting the Culm; work with eco champions and green groups e.g. Blackdown Hills Transition, Uffculme Green Team, Sustainable Bradninch, Sustainable Crediton and Sustainable Tiverton.
- 3.4.2. Other recent work includes: helping to coordinate with Tiverton Tree Team, a display at Phoenix House reception area with ‘top tips’ for householders, COP26 workshops and post-event discussions, webinars with Newton St Cyres parish council, local enterprise liaison e.g. Planet and People CIC.
- 3.4.3. Liaison with parishes, ward members, and officers at Devon County Council / other local authorities has included: knowledge sharing, calls for project ideas e.g. tree planting and aftercare, biodiversity, energy saving campaigns, green innovation, EV chargepoints and other green transport.

3.5. Research and Expertise Support.

- 3.5.1. The Council now benefits from membership of South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEEG). This membership will give the Council

discounted access to University of Exeter Consulting services, and officers can access data, past reports and fellow expertise through the network.

3.6. Strategic Project: Housing Advisors Programme. (CS priority: 1. CP aims: env02, env 05, h01, h02, h03, c04.)

3.6.1. The Forward Planning team secured £20k funding through the LGA's Housing Advisors Programme to develop an assessment tool to model low carbon interventions and consider how they can be implemented at scale.

3.6.2. Update: project complete. Arron Beecham - Principal Housing Enabling & Forward Planning Officer – and the C&S Specialist worked to develop this tool with University of Exeter Consulting. (Adding value via SWEEG membership.) A workshop on its use has been held for key planning officers.

3.7. Strategy. Housing sustainability. (CS priority 2+3. CP aims h01, h03.)

3.7.1. Mid Devon Housing Strategy published: the C&S Specialist is now involved in delivery and monitoring.

3.8. Strategic Project: Archetype housing - energy efficiency and low carbon performance. (CS priority: 2. CP aim: env01, env02, c04.)

3.8.1. Prospect Way in Lapford. The housing team completed a retrofit demonstration project at a pair of Council-owned houses. This shows how we can achieve the lowest carbon footprint possible, with a reasonable available retrofit, for this archetype. We have a live data feed to monitor energy performance over 12 months (2022). This project will inform costed plans to improve the rest of the Council stock of this type.

3.8.2. The package included fabric improvements such as new double glazed windows and doors, wall cavity insulation, and loft insulation improved to 300mm. A carefully specified heat pump (reversible) feeds a coil heat exchanger for air to air winter heating and summer cooling. Fresh air is filtered and circulated around the home for consistent ambience.

3.8.3. Following this success, in future the Council's in-house team can deliver most of the works to save costs, with the main heat pump system installed by an external specialist contractor. Training is now being organised.

3.9. Bid update: Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. (CS priority: 2. CP aim: env01, env02, c04.)

3.9.1. Update: bid rejected.

3.10. Strategic Project: Electric Vehicle charging points. (CS priority: 3. CP aim: env 02.)

3.10.1. As part of the Council's Climate Strategy 2020-2024, the Council seeks to facilitate the roll-out of electric vehicle (EV) charger locations across the district. Current EV charger provision can be viewed on this map: www.goultralow.com/ev-charging-point-map/

- 3.10.2. The C&S Specialist worked with colleagues and councillors to develop and assess a list of potential EV locations for fast chargers or rapid chargers (rapid chargers can top up a modern EV by 80% in 40 minutes). A report to Cabinet presented 3 main options to facilitate decision-making. Each of the options would be powered by renewable electricity. Cabinet on 13th May 2021 decided to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (S151), Cllr Colin Slade (Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change) and Cllr Andrew Moore (Cabinet Member for Finance) as follows: *RESOLVED that: delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive (151) and the Portfolio Holder(s) for the Environment & Climate Change and Finance, in consultation with Property Services to facilitate the installation of additional electric vehicle charging points on Council land and across the District.*
- 3.10.3. The C&S Specialist coordinated teamwork to enable actions delegated by Cabinet e.g. partner liaison, officer liaison, seeking legal team advice on agreements and the lease, clarifying fee policy, assessing viability risks, and finalising charger locations. Western Power Distribution (WPD) was informed of potential extra capacity needs.
- 3.10.4. All 5 Council-owned candidate sites for 10 fast charger points under the Deletti scheme were approved, and funding was secured. These car parks are: High Street and Market Street in Crediton; Forge Way at Cullompton; Westexe South and William Street in Tiverton. The Environment and Enforcement Manager has been briefed. The operator will hold a lease and shall be responsible for installation, power supply, customer service, operation, care and repairs; the Council will earn a percentage of unit income.
- 3.10.5. Update: The C&S Specialist supported lead partner Devon County Council in project procurement, now being completed. The installation phase should start in May 2022 and be completed December 2022.

4.0 Corporate activities

4.1. The Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG). (CS priority: 1. CP aim: none.)

4.1.1. This advisory group set up after Cabinet approval on 23 April 2020 continues to consider topics including, but not limited to, climate and biodiversity. Chaired by Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd, NZAG meetings take place on alternate months to the Environment PDG to enable a regular feedback cycle.

4.1.2. The most recent meeting took place 08 February 2022. Discussion included:

- The need to move forward with a selection of opportunities to invest budget in addressing climate change. For example, the proposal for a 'Community Climate & Biodiversity Support Fund'.
- The Sustainable Procurement Review. How to further develop policies and procedures to support local sustainability and prosperity through decision making e.g. aligned to Doughnut Economics.
- How to promote and celebrate sustainable farming practices.

4.2. Working across service areas. (CS priorities: all. CP aims: all.)

4.2.1. As previously noted, the Climate and Sustainability Specialist agreed, in consultation with Andrew Jarrett, Andrew Busby and Councillor Colin Slade, to

apply a Programme Management approach to develop and deliver the cross-cutting *Climate and Sustainability Programme*. This has now been initiated with the Corporate Management Team and will be developed.

4.2.2. Update: Recently the Climate and Sustainability Specialist has worked with and offered support to teams and officers e.g. Development Management, Forward Planning, Street Scene, Transport, Property Services.

4.2.3. Update: At the request of Interim Development Management Manager the C&S Specialist initiated monthly training workshops for planning officers.

4.2.4. Update: Recently the C&S Specialist facilitated between MDDC officers and Exeter Community Energy (ECOE) to trigger staff awareness workshops with energy advisors. This fed into cooperative outreach 'roadshows' in parishes.

4.3. Greener Procurement: Renewable Electricity. (CS priority: 2. CP aim: env02.)

4.3.1. The LASER Framework delivered renewable electricity to 50% of corporate supply as of October 2021; with the other 50% to be secured during 2022.

4.3.2. Update: Corporate Manager Property, Leisure and Climate Change will confirm LASER's date for the switch to 100%. The aim is to secure supply ahead of current market volatility.

4.4. Ongoing energy efficiency work at Council-owned facilities. (CS priority 2+3. CP aims env01, h01, h03.)

4.4.1. Spend-to-save projects include lighting and water saving projects. (See also: PSDS below.) Occupancy-responsive lighting has been installed at Tiverton Multi Storey Car Park. Water use monitoring systems are being investigated.

4.4.2. Update: Phoenix House started a successful trial of new occupancy-responsive light fittings to save money; emergency lighting included in solution; the aim is to continue installation in batches.

4.4.3. Update: Coming soon - Phoenix House Building Management System will become remotely controllable.

4.4.4. Update: We have signed up to a LASER energy data analysis service, which will indicate consumption issues / faults and identify opportunities for savings.

4.5. Project: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS). (CS priority: 1, 2. CP aim: env01, env02, ec01.)

4.5.1. A brief update.

- Phase 1: Heat Decarbonisation Plan. Report completed: to assess and devise solutions for Phoenix House, and the 3 leisure centres.
- Phase 1: £310,821 grant funded works. **Almost completed:** low-carbon technology and responsive low-energy lighting at the 3 leisure centres.
- Phase 2: no bid; grant fund exhausted within 2 weeks.
- Phase 3: bid submitted and accepted; update due very soon.

4.5.2. Phase 3 overview: Tim Powell - Property Services Corporate Projects Officer - submitted a bid on the day the fund opened to place us at the front of the queue (bid accepted, followed by evaluation calls). The Heat Decarbonisation Plan (funded by Salix grants) helped to inform our Phase 3 bid detail.

- The bid is to “decarbonise” heating at Exe Valley and Lords Meadow Leisure Centres, primarily by replacing gas boilers with air-source heat pumps. Total bid value is £3,079,032 (of that £1,986,771 is for Exe Valley and £1,092,261 for Lords Meadow).
- Should we succeed, the grant does not require match funding, however the Council would be required to contribute the cost of what it would have been to replace gas boilers like-for-like. That value has been estimated at a total of £176,602 (£101,452 Exe Valley, £75,150 Lords Meadow).

4.5.3. Further assessments will be commissioned to inform future bids and works e.g. building fabric improvements.

4.6. Priority: tree planting and aftercare. (CS priority: 2. CP aim: env07.)

4.6.1. Property Services continue to work closely with Tiverton Tree Team, Sustainable Tiverton, Sustainable Crediton and others to engage the community in planting and aftercare.

4.6.2. Update: The C&S Specialist secured a role for the Council as a strategic delivery partner for Devon County Council’s [Emergency Tree Fund](#) generously financed by the Woodland Trust. The Council was awarded a grant of £2,511.77 through the fund towards last winter’s trees and materials. We are grateful for the help of local volunteers who helped the Council to plant 615 trees on Council land by March 2022.

4.6.3. The officer team has outline plans to plant more trees in winter 2022-2023 subject to consultation. We continue to liaise with other landowners to expand planting on a wider scale where possible, subject to future agreements.

4.6.4. Update: On Good Friday 15th April, Tiverton Tree Team launched the new Tiverton Community Orchard hosted on Council land at Mountbatten Way (planted December 2021). [The event](#) was attended by Cllr Ray Radford in his official capacity as Chairman of the Council, also Cllr Les Cruwys, Cllr Ben Holdman, Cllr Elizabeth Slade, Cllr Colin Slade and the C&S Specialist.

4.6.5. We are grateful for the neighbour cooperation and for the support of Tiverton Tree Team and Sustainable Tiverton volunteers. (Tiverton Tree Team has an online fundraiser for their work including the community orchard project.)

4.7. Project: Mid Devon District Council’s proposals for hydro-electric power on the River Exe at Tiverton. (CS priority: 2. CP aim: env02.)

4.7.1. The C&S Specialist has set up a project board and met with Environment Agency officers. Western Power Distribution has been informed of the plan to connect 150kWp generation capacity.

4.7.2. Work is in progress to address the need for evidence and to resolve issues behind planning objections e.g. flood risk assessment modelling. An update will be provided at the next Environment PDG.

4.8. The Council's vehicle fleet. (CS priority: 2. CP aim: none).

- 4.8.1. To reduce fleet emissions (Scope 1) in line with Council Net Zero 2030 policy and to save on fuel costs, the Transport Manager and the Climate and Sustainability Specialist wrote a 2021 report to promote adoption of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) onto Council fleet when suitable vehicles were due for replacement; or when new vehicles are taken on. Relevant managers and the Deputy Chief Executive were consulted on costed options, prioritising small and medium payload vans (and looking ahead to larger vehicles).
- 4.8.2. Further specialist-supported work between teams led to a decision to replace 8 small vans (diesel) with ULEV in 2022*. Property Services has been tasked with EV charger installation.
- 4.8.3. The C&S Specialist highlighted this decision and presented outline costs to the January 2022 Environment PDG (Budget Options for Climate Investment).
- 4.8.4. Managers are now encouraged to adopt ULEV to the fleet, and asked to assess all fleet decisions to ensure alignment with Net Zero policy. Cost and supply constraints apply. Options are considered on an ongoing basis, facilitated by the Operations Manager - Street Scene and Open Spaces.
- 4.8.5. Update: *This order grew to 10 electric vehicle replacements.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1. That the Environment PDG notes and accepts this report as an update on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency, documenting progress with the CAP (to reduce the Council's carbon footprint) and the wider Climate and Sustainability Programme.

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Circulation of the Report: Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change, Leadership Team.

List of Background Papers: The previous climate change and sustainability report provided to the [Environment Policy Development Group](#) on [11 January 2022](#). Link to [Report](#). Link to [Appendix A](#).