

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

13 SEPTEMBER 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 (C&S) 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. Throughout each priority area within the Council's Corporate Plan, there is a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability matters in all aspects of our work, linked to everything from procurement to promoting nature recovery.

1.1.2. The Climate and Sustainability Specialist (C&S Specialist) leads development of the Council's *Climate and Sustainability Programme*, working inclusively with all colleagues and Councillors, particularly the Corporate Manager Property, Leisure & Climate Change; and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

1.1.3. **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.

1.1.4. With regard to addressing the climate change crisis - 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.

1.1.5. This report emphasises activity and progress ***updates** for brevity. For background details, please refer to previous reports, all archived online.

2.0 Performance

2.1. Aims, Priorities and Performance Indicators

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

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

2.2. Audit: Climate Change.

2.2.1. Internal Audit for 2022-2023 was carried out July-August (report in draft). The recommendations Action Plan is being developed along the following lines.

2.2.2. Audit recommendation: Introduce a Climate Statement for all Business Cases. Action proposed: Consideration by Environment PDG (autumn 2022);

consultation with by Corporate Management Team (CMT); followed by PDG recommendation to Cabinet. MDDC could consider a broader statement to cover 3 key aspects: scope, measurability, and decision-making.

- Scope. Consider how best to use a “climate and environment statement” on business cases and decision briefing papers to support joined-up thinking on environmental sustainability issues (often interlinked).
- Measurability. Where relevant, the statement would provide estimated climate impacts (aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions) in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e); plus a qualifying note for other impacts e.g. “saving *** litres of water”.
- Decision-making: a brief explanation of whether other options were considered and a comparison of the likely environmental outcomes / climate impacts of the main alternatives.

2.2.3. Audit recommendation: add informal training opportunities. Action proposed: The Training Manager and the Climate and Sustainability Specialist will look into informal methods such as short, online modules.

2.2.4. Audit recommendation: The Climate Action Plan (CAP) could include cost savings. Action proposed: MDDC will consider how best to identify financial / resource savings, in addition to greenhouse emissions saved.

2.2.5. Audit recommendation: stakeholder engagement strategy. Action proposed: The Climate and Sustainability Specialist will consult with colleagues on the communications and stakeholder engagement strategy (and plan) for the Climate and Sustainability Programme. (Particularly the Communications Team and the Corporate Manager for Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement.)

2.2.6. Audit recommendation: update the MDDC website details and improve linkage between the MDDC website and the climate and sustainability website. Action proposed: As above – this action is linked to the communications and stakeholder engagement strategy (and plan).

2.2.7. Audit recommendation: a broader approach to officer involvement. Action proposed: The Corporate Manager Property, Leisure and Climate Change - and the Climate and Sustainability Specialist will consult with colleagues on internal stakeholder engagement including the Energy Champions campaign.

2.2.8. Audit recommendation: Risk and Opportunities Register. Action proposed: The Climate and Sustainability Specialist will consult with colleagues on the risks and opportunities strategy for the Climate and Sustainability Programme.

2.2.9. Audit recommendation: Climate Adaptation could be more prominent in the CAP. Action proposed: The Climate and Sustainability Specialist will:

- Emphasise and enable clear identification of the “Adaptation” category or activities in the Climate Action Plan.
- Consult with colleagues on adaptation opportunities for the Climate and Sustainability Programme.

2.2.10. Audit recommendation: Consider a wider measure of performance indicators. Action proposed: The Climate and Sustainability Specialist will:

- Work with the Corporate Manager for Finance and Procurement on the best ways to collate and communicate climate-related expenditure and fundraising / income.
- Work with the Corporate Manager for Finance and Procurement to complete the Sustainable Procurement Review, implement actions and devise meaningful monitoring / quality management cycles.
- Work with the Corporate Manager for Finance and Procurement to support Environment PDG influence and understanding of the budget management process.
- Consult with colleagues on target setting and monitoring opportunities for the Climate and Sustainability Programme – linked to the activities of Business Change Managers.

2.3. Climate Action Plan (CAP).

2.3.1. ***Updates.** Audit opinion very positive. The C&S Specialist offers a monthly Q&A support call for all Operations Managers and Corporate Managers (since June 2022). CAP updates requested from all. Totals updated below.

2.3.2. The CAP comprises both **Corporate** and **Community** work streams.

2.3.3. ***Updates.** Estimated costs thus far total £146,027,543, split as follows:

- For the Internal Structures and Processes strand, £532,638.
- For the *Housing Energy and Assets* strand, £138,520,450. (This includes HRA planned works and estimates for retrofitting and decarbonising the Council's facility buildings.)
- For the *Transport and Vehicles* strand, £6,342,455.
- For the *Community and Wider Context* strand, £542,000.

2.3.4. 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.

2.3.5. The “estimated total tCO₂e saved 2020-2030” indicates that proposals could save 19,277 tCO₂e in the **Corporate** work stream and 66,438 tCO₂e in the **Community** work stream.

2.3.6. **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. (Corporate impact.)
- 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 Response Group

3.1.1. ***Updates.** The final version of the Devon Carbon Plan has been produced (publication due August 2022). On the climate adaptation front, the Climate Impacts Group continues to work on the Climate Adaptation Plans for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (Scilly section completed).

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

3.2.1. ***Updates.** Sustainable Tiverton kindly involved the C&S Specialist in their “Net Zero Visions” project - a creative collaboration of community members, experts and artists devised a public artwork to inspire action for a net zero carbon future. [The completed mural](#) by Dr Kate Crawford and her assistants is hosted on a Council-owned wall at Tiverton Pannier Market. Property Services supported the works significantly. Part of a Devon-wide [project](#).

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

3.3.1. Our website www.SustainableMidDevon.org.uk is a community resource.
***Update.** An enhanced [map](#) of sustainability resources e.g. food and farming.

3.4. Engagement: outreach. (Corporate Plan aim: env 10.)

3.4.1. ***Update.** The sustainable community theme at Mid Devon Show went well, with excellent teamwork - featuring the recycling team and truck (Bin It 1-2-3 promotion / education), Carbon Ambassadors engaging people on carbon footprints, a cycling rehabilitation / active lifestyles exhibit, Farming Advisers talking about nature-based solutions to climate adaptation (Connecting the Culm project, display boards on the Council’s [Passivhaus affordable housing and social housing development](#) proposals, a Visit Mid Devon food promotion, and Councillors joining the officer team.

3.4.2. ***Update.** An energy-saving campaign is planned with Exeter Community Energy, as a continuation of our work with them to support communities.

3.5. Strategic Project. Non-Statutory Interim Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency (CS priority: none. CP aims: h01, h03, co1, c04, env01, env02, env03, env05.)

3.5.1. ***Update.** The Planning Policy Advisory Group has been briefed on the draft Non-Statutory Interim Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency. Programmed for Cabinet agenda. Teamwork led by Forward Planning,

Development Management and the C&S Specialist. Policy context and local consultation indicates a compelling case for action to address the climate emergency at a faster pace. The statement will emphasise that the climate change emergency is a material consideration to the planning process, to which significant weight should be attached.

3.5.2. Guidance and resources include 3 key elements:

- Guidance on the Validation Checklist for all development proposals;
- Guidance in the form of a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit;
- The MDDC Net Zero Housing Assessment Tool, to compare the costs and benefits of 'low carbon' standards for new residential development.

3.5.3. Opportunities

- Allows the Council to set out expectations to applicants
- Supplements adopted Local Plan policies
- Will inform new policies for Plan Mid Devon

3.5.4. Constraints

- Guidance only, not statutory requirements
- Cannot introduce new policy until Plan Mid Devon is adopted (2025).

3.5.5. This interim statement highlights the most relevant current legislation and standards and explains how these relate to Council policies.

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

3.6.1. ***Update.** The Net Zero Housing Assessment Tool has been improved by Arron Beecham - Principal Housing Enabling & Forward Planning Officer - and the C&S Specialist and University of Exeter Consulting. An updated training workshop will be held for the planning team.

3.7. Strategy. Housing sustainability. (CS priority 2+3. CP aims env 01, env 02, env 05, h01, h03.)

3.7.1. ***Update.** Zed Pods. The delivery programme at St Andrews Estate (Cullompton) and Shapland Place (Tiverton) is on target with no aspects outstanding. The former approximately 3 weeks ahead of the latter. Module manufacture and site works activity September - December.

3.7.2. ***Update.** The Council has put forward its Post Hill proposals for a [Passivhaus affordable housing and social housing development](#).

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

3.8.1. ***Update.** Procurement by the Lead Partner Devon County Council completed (supported by the C&S Specialist). OZEV funding was not required for the winning contractor bid by Gamma Energy (supplier/operator) so will not be drawn down. Rapid 50kW chargers agreed as a cost-free upgrade. The Mid

Devon project team considered the best potential for additional capacity (more chargers) and potential additional sites with a view to gaining the best possible benefits from the Deletti partnership Phase Two project. Regular partnership meetings restarted after a pause May-August. MDDC officers have initiated work direct with Gamma Energy to plan and manage delivery. Site assessments and agreements imminent.

3.9. Options for green travel hire schemes. (CS priority: 3. CP aim: env 02.)

3.9.1. ***Update**. Environment PDG requested an outline of options for a green travel share/hire scheme e.g. Electric Vehicles and e-bikes. A few options are set out below, with a view to more detailed proposals being brought to committee at a later date.

3.9.2. Potential **phases** could include:

- Research phase to evaluate demand, external funding, capital investment required, business case, operating model, consultation etc.;
- Procurement to attract proposals from specialists and/or operators;
- Fundraising and resourcing e.g. for a research or trial phase;
- Trial project and practical evaluation;
- Partnership work, skills and infrastructure capacity building.

3.9.3. Potential **benefits** could include:

- Community access to hire vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions;
- Council access to hire vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions;
- Discounted hire rates to enable the Council to encourage a shift to ebikes or other vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions - in order to decarbonise business travel (Scope 1 on our corporate carbon footprint);
- Discounted hire rates to enable the Council to encourage a shift to public transport and green travel options - in order to decarbonise commuter travel (Scope 3 on our corporate carbon footprint);
- Special incentives for personal membership made available to staff to support a broader uptake of greener travel choices;
- Lever investment in green travel / mobility hubs at strategic locations.

3.9.4. Option **A**: A partnership approach with other Mid Devon employers (private or public sector) to procure a suitable hire arrangement with a supplier-operator. Seek opportunities for sound capital investment such as EV charging infrastructure to support strategic aims and overall viability (e.g. rural sites or air quality priorities) - shared ambitions, shared investments.

3.9.5. Option **B**: A focus on Community needs e.g. green travel hubs. Unilateral or public sector partnership approach e.g. Deletti / Devon county council / inter-county to procure from supplier-operator with the most advantageous tender.

3.9.6. Option **C**: A focus on Corporate needs e.g. ad-hoc business travel. Unilateral procurement from supplier / operator of the most advantageous tender.

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. ***Updates.** Discussion at the most recent meeting 09 August 2022 included:

- A Carbon Challenge for all Policy Development Groups.
- How to promote and celebrate sustainable farming and food.
- The need to prioritise ways to invest budget in addressing climate change.
- The interim planning policy statement: Climate Emergency.
- The Net Zero Housing Assessment Tool.
- A dual question had been posed on our Carbon Footprint report and about forecasting progress towards Net Zero. All data is with Exeter University and we await the 2021-2022 Carbon Footprint report. The C&S Specialist has shared notes with Cllr C Slade, to outline potential ways to plan progress and forecast progression.

4.2. Climate knowledge, literacy and capacity. (CS priority: 1.)

4.2.1. ***Update.** The C&S Specialist and the Training Manager completed their Carbon Literacy Trainer course. Aiming for MDDC materials to be ready for first workshops in early autumn for Members and officers.

4.2.2. Details of other climate and sustainability learning have been circulated to Council members and officers, opportunities e.g. by Carbon Savvy, LGiU and the free LGA Carbon Literacy courses for managerial staff.

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

4.3.1. ***Update.** The Corporate Manager Property, Leisure and Climate Change awaits LASER framework projected costs for the 'Green Basket' after October 2022. Our aim was to secure 100% renewable electricity. We have requested details on the likelihood and timing of a viable option, but market volatility threatens viability. Meanwhile LASER seek to add REGO certification to 50% of our consumption, in order to maintain progress to date.

4.4. Energy efficiency at Council facilities. (CS priority 2+3. CP aims env01, h01, h03.)

4.4.1. ***Updates.** A new LASER energy data analysis service has begun for 6 key automated meters, to help indicate consumption issues / faults and identify opportunities for savings. Phoenix House continues with the fitting of new

occupancy-responsive light units, and its Building Management System will become remotely controllable.

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

4.5.1. *Update. The £2.8m Phase 3 [project](#) has started.

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 was provided to the [Environment Policy Development Group](#) on [19 July 2022](#). Link to [Report](#). Link to [Appendix A](#).