

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

08 NOVEMBER 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 Action Plan (CAP) and the wider Climate and Sustainability Programme.

Recommendations:

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 Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the wider Climate and Sustainability Programme.
2. That the Environment PDG recommends to the Cabinet that the team with delegated authority (13 May 2021 Cabinet decision) lead next steps with regard to Environment PDG input regarding options for green travel hire schemes.
3. That Environment PDG consult with Corporate Management Team (CMT) to formulate a method for a Climate and Sustainability Statement that can be consistently applied to all business cases. Feedback to inform a Recommendation to Cabinet.
4. That Environment PDG and Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG) consult with CMT and the C&S Specialist to devise a consistent approach to climate change impact statements noted on committee reports. Feedback to inform a Recommendation to Cabinet.

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 CAP.

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

1.1. Report context and format

1.1.1. The Council's Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability matters in all aspects of its work, linked to everything from procurement to promoting nature recovery.

1.1.2. The 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. The Council's work to address the climate change crisis aligns with the climate emergency declaration across Devon, and the Devon Carbon Plan. Council actions with regard to **climate mitigation** (reducing greenhouse emissions) and **climate adaptation** (resilience to climate change risks) can be split into two work streams:

- an internal organisational / corporate focus for the Council;
- the wider agenda to enable actions across Mid Devon communities.

Therefore this report is divided into **corporate** and **community** items (some overlap is possible). Clearly the Council can monitor and manage matters related to our own assets and operations to a significant degree. For the wider agenda linked to the whole Mid Devon area, we will work as a partner with local businesses, organisations, community groups and residents.

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 reported positively with 'Reasonable Assurance' and direction of travel as 'Good Progress has continued'. Now delivering on the recommendations Action Plan.

2.2.2. Audit recommendation 1.1: 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. Please refer to Recommendations in this report.

2.2.3. MDDC could consider a broader Climate and Sustainability 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 'x' 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.

2.3. Climate Action Plan (CAP).

2.3.1. ***Updates**. Audit opinion very positive. The C&S Specialist hosts a monthly Q&A support call for all Operations Managers and Corporate Managers. Updates requested from all. Totals updated below.

2.3.2. ***Updates** The NZAG requested an update to the January 2022 Environment PDG briefing paper on budget item proposals that might be prioritised, to help move ahead with the Council's CAP. Please refer to Annex B: Options for Climate and Sustainability Investment.

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

2.3.4. Estimated costs thus far total £145,807,118, split as follows:

- For the Internal Structures and Processes strand, £632,638.
- For the *Housing Energy and Assets* strand, £138,273,450. (This includes HRA planned works and estimates for retrofitting and decarbonising the Council's facility buildings.)
- For the *Transport and Vehicles* strand, £6,290,030.
- For the *Community and Wider Context* strand, £521,000.

- 2.3.5. 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.
- 2.3.6. The “estimated total tCO_{2e} saved 2020-2030” indicates that proposals could save 15,273 tCO_{2e} in the **Corporate** work stream and 66,438 tCO_{2e} in the **Community** work stream.
- 2.3.7. **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. (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 Devon Carbon Plan was published September 2022. Endorsed by Cabinet Member Cllr Colin Slade, this partnership document sets out a county-wide plan that identifies what Devon needs to do to reach Net Zero emissions. On the 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. ***Update.** Sustainable Tiverton worked with the Council to prepare for the 5th November official opening of their popular “Net Zero Visions” [mural](#) by Dr Kate Crawford next to Tiverton Pannier Market.

3.2.2. ***Update.** Participation by officers on the Connecting the Culm steering group. Promotion of community events such as the fifth public forum by Connecting the Culm, a free event 17th November at Cullompton Community Centre.

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.** Enhanced signposting on energy saving and sustainable farming.

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

3.4.1. ***Update.** Officers and Councillors joined stakeholders for the 19th October Culm Garden Village Supplementary Planning Document consultation call. The C&S Specialist joined the recent launch of the new Mid Devon Parish Wildlife Wardens Project.

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.** Cabinet approved going to public consultation ([now live](#)) with the draft Non-Statutory Interim Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency. The statement emphasises that the climate change emergency is a material consideration to the planning process, to which significant weight should be attached; it also provides guidance and tools to support planners and applicants involved in new build and retrofit.

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

3.6.1. ***Update.** The Planning Committee approved the Council's proposals for a [Passivhaus affordable housing and social housing development](#).

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

3.7.1. ***Update.** Gamma Energy site assessments and lease agreements imminent.

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

3.8.1. Environment PDG requested an outline of options for green travel share / hire schemes e.g. Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) and ebikes. A brief update below with regard to next steps. Please refer to Recommendations in this report.

3.8.2. Feedback from this PDG in October suggested 4 key elements:

- ways for ULEV share / hire to deliver a combination of benefits for communities and a greener local economy, potentially through a partnership approach by the Council such as with other local employers;
- ways for the Council to address its travel-related carbon footprint;
- building on progress at towns and promoting rural ULEV opportunities;
- a research phase with regard to demand and suitability of novel solutions such as ebikes.

3.8.3. ***Update.** Officer communications with members of the Rapid Charging Devon consortium (RCD includes Gamma Energy and Co-Cars), helped identify potential ways forward on car-share, subject to business case etc.

3.8.4. Previous related decision: on [13 May 2021 Cabinet decided](#) to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (151) and the Portfolio Holder(s) for the Environment and Climate Change, and for Finance, in consultation with

Property Services, to facilitate the installation of additional electric vehicle charging points on Council land and across the District.

4.0 Corporate activities

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

4.1.1. *Updates. Discussion at the most recent meeting 25 October 2022 will be noted verbally (it did not take place in time for this report).

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

4.2.1. *Update. The C&S Specialist and the Training Manager are now inviting the first Carbon Literacy workshops for Members.

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

4.3.1. *Update. Our aim was to secure 100% renewable electricity. REGO certification continues for approximately 50% of our power consumption. The Corporate Manager Property, Leisure and Climate Change awaits projected costs arising from the government's price relief (details expected during November 2022). The LASER framework 'Green Basket' now delayed from October 2022 to October 2023.

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

4.4.1. *Update. The £2.8m Phase 3 PSDS [project](#) has begun, setting boreholes for the Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) heat exchange systems for Exe Valley and Lords Meadow leisure centres. A new £350k bid for Culm Valley Sports Centre has been submitted for PSDS round 3b.

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, progress with the CAP 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 [13 September 2022](#). Link to [Report](#). Link to [Appendix A](#).