

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

10 JANUARY 2023

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.**

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 (CP) *aims* and Climate Strategy (CS) *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. Action 1.1: Recommendations by PDG accepted at Cabinet. Consultation initiated with Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG) regarding sustainability statements for decision making, etc.
- 2.2.3. Action 2.4: The C&S Specialist launched a staff Energy Champions group.
- 2.2.4. Action 4.2: Climate Adaptation emphasis added to Climate Action Plan.
- 2.2.5. Action 5.1: The PDG and NZAG held a special session on budget options and priorities, with points later passed from PDG to Cabinet. A new MDDC Procurement Strategy is imminent, and will align with [Devon County Council's Procurement Strategy](#).

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 Environment PDG Recommendation on prioritised budget item proposals (Options for Climate and Sustainability Investment) was accepted by Cabinet 29 November 2022.
- 2.3.3. The CAP comprises both **Corporate** and **Community** work stream items**.
- 2.3.4. Estimated costs identified 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 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. Cost savings might also be possible.
- 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 have not identified all the projects required for the Council to achieve Net Zero. (Corporate impact.) Therefore we do not yet have a comprehensive carbon reduction plan.
 - **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 costs are estimates. The majority of carbon savings are estimated, and not always based on an assessment.
 - **Forecasting.** The further ahead 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 partnership is reshaping governance to support Devon Carbon Plan engagement and delivery.

3.2. Engagement: partnerships, groups, local economy. (CP aims: env 10, env 08, ec 02.)

3.2.1. Our website www.SustainableMidDevon.org.uk is a community resource.
***Update.** Continued sharing of local activities and signposting to resources.

3.2.2. ***Update.** Connecting the Culm held their fifth public forum (community event) 17th November at Cullompton Community Centre.

3.2.3. ***Update.** Local groups such as Uffculme Green Team, Sustainable Crediton and Sustainable Tiverton, plus contacts and partners on social media, helped the C&S Specialist spread the word about the Council's consultation on its Climate Emergency Planning Policy Statement.

3.2.4. ***Update.** Planning teams and the C&S Specialist worked on shaping practice to align with policy e.g. biodiversity enhancement, applicant evidence.

3.2.5. ***Update.** Economy officers and the C&S Specialist working on a joined-up approach to local farming and food promotions.

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

3.3.1. ***Update.** [Public consultation](#) on the draft Non-Statutory Interim Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency included an agents forum. 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.

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

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

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

3.5.1. ***Update.** Site assessments completed, lease agreements being checked and finalised by Council officers (at the time of writing), delivery schedule expected soon thereafter.

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

3.6.1. Recommendations in the previous report were noted by Cabinet.

4.0 Corporate activities

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

4.1.1. ***Updates.** Feedback from the meeting 06 December 2022 (discussion covering many points in this report) will be noted verbally.

4.2. Sustainability in Procurement Strategies. (CS Priority 6.)

4.2.1. ***Updates.** A new MDDC Procurement Strategy is imminent, and will align with [Devon County Council's Procurement Strategy](#). The strategy will support actions to achieve Net Zero policy and co-benefits such as social gains.

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

4.3.1. ***Update.** Carbon Literacy workshops for Members for 17th and 24th January 2023. Manager workshop dates to follow (some have already completed the free training with the Local Government Association). Led by the C&S Specialist and the Learning and Development Specialist.

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

4.4.1. ***Update.** Requested 50% of electricity consumption to be a renewable tariff backed by certification, but market volatility is a problem. The LASER framework 'Green Basket' is now delayed until October 2023.

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

4.5.1. ***Update.** The £2.8m PSDS [project](#) continues good progress at Exe Valley and Lords Meadow leisure centres. Heat exchange boreholes complete; proactive public communications reduced disruption to customers, the vast majority of feedback is highly positive.

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](#).