

**ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
14 MARCH 2023**

**CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Mrs Chris Daw - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Continuous Improvement.

**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:** 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 linked specifically 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.

**Risk Assessment:** Progress on Performance Indicators (PI) 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 Climate Change and Continuous Improvement.

1.1.3. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and aims to be climate neutral by 2030. The term 'climate neutrality' describes a balance achieved, for any given period, for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into or removed from the atmosphere; related to the actions taken by organisations, businesses or 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: [Cabinet 07 February](#) approved the new **MDDC Procurement Strategy**. The strategy cites the MDDC Climate Emergency declaration and has guidance on supporting delivery of environmental and social benefit.

## 2.3. Climate Action Plan (CAP).

- 2.3.1. **\*Updates.** The C&S Specialist hosted team meetings for all Operations Managers / Service Leads and Corporate Managers; and hosts a monthly Q&A support call. Updates requested from all. Corporate projects checked against Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Totals updated below.
- 2.3.2. The CAP comprises both **Corporate** and **Community** work stream items\*\*.
- 2.3.3. Estimated costs identified thus far\*\*\* total £117,155,857 split as follows:
- For the Internal Structures and Processes strand, £643,138.
  - For the *Housing Energy and Assets* strand, £108,515,689. (This includes HRA planned works and estimates for the Council's facility buildings.)
  - For the *Transport and Vehicles* strand, £6,405,030.
  - For the *Community and Wider Context* strand, £1,511,000.
- 2.3.4. Cost estimates may be allocated within existing budgets, or may be additional; the CAP format shows where additional funding is required (or cost savings) in order to enable fundraising and budget planning.
- 2.3.5. The "estimated total tCO<sub>2e</sub> saved 2020-2030" indicates proposals could save 22,792 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in the **Corporate** work stream and 38,622 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in the **Community** work stream.
- 2.3.6. **Caveats.** Robust caveats must be provided with any CAP reporting to cover factors such as 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 Partnership**

3.1.1. **\*Updates.** Partnership governance adjusted to support Devon Carbon Plan engagement and delivery. An adaptation plan will be circulated to members of this PDG for consultation.

#### **3.2. Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency (CS priority: none. CP aims: h01, h03, co1, c04, env01, env02, env03, env05.)**

3.2.1. **\*Update.** Being prepared for Cabinet to consider for approval (at the time of writing). Emphasises the climate change emergency is a material consideration to the planning process; promotes better, more consistent application evidence; provides guidance and tools to support planners and applicants involved in new build and retrofit.

#### **3.3. Electric Vehicle charging points. (CS priority: 3. CP aim: env02.)**

3.3.1. **\*Update.** Leases for 4 sites being finalised; delivery schedule to follow.

#### **3.4. Devon bid to Innovate UK's Net Zero Living - Fast Followers. (CP aim: env01, env08, ec01, ec03, ec04.)**

3.4.1. Officers have supported a joint Devon bid for a funded innovation project to address barriers to Net Zero economy / green growth.

### **4.0 Corporate activities**

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

4.1.1. **\*Updates.** Feedback from NZAG 07 February 2023 to be noted verbally.

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

4.2.1. Environment PDG tasked NZAG with the Review of Procurement Strategies.

4.2.2. **\*Update.** [Cabinet 07 February](#) approved the new MDDC Procurement Strategy. Noted as a positive step forward, as the new strategy cites the MDDC Climate Emergency declaration and includes key guidance on supporting delivery of environmental and social benefit.

4.2.3. Next steps: Devise meaningful indicators for social and environmental impact.

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

4.3.1. **\*Update.** Carbon Literacy workshops were delivered for 4 Members in January 2023. Manager workshop dates to follow (some have already completed training with the Local Government Association).

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

4.4.1. **\*Update.** The £2.8m PSDS [project](#) nears completion at Exe Valley and Lords Meadow leisure centres. Each system element being connected.

## **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 Climate Change and Continuous Improvement, Leadership Team.

**List of Background Papers:** The previous report was provided to the [Environment Policy Development Group](#) on [10 Jan 2023](#). Link to [Report](#). Link to [Appendix A](#).