

Report for: Environment Policy Development Group

Date of Meeting:	10 October 2023
Subject:	Climate and Sustainability Update
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Natasha Bradshaw - Cabinet Member for Climate Change.
Responsible Officer:	Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist. Paul Deal - Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change.
Exempt:	None. which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Wards Affected:	All.
Enclosures:	Annex A. Guidance: climate and environmental sustainability statements.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To receive an update on the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the wider Climate and Sustainability Programme.

Recommendation(s):

- 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 Cabinet the adoption of the attached guidance for officers and Members regarding climate and sustainability statements. This guidance relates to business cases and committee reports. Guidance was developed in consultation with the Net Zero Advisory Group and Corporate Managers and should now be used and maintained to help shape decisions and delivery in line with policy and statutory obligations.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 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.
- 1.2 The Climate and Sustainability (C&S) Specialist leads development of the Council's Climate and Sustainability Programme, working inclusively with all colleagues and Councillors, particularly the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change; and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change.
- 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 This report emphasises activity and progress updates for brevity. For background details, please refer to previous reports, all [available online](#).

2.0 Performance

- 2.1 Aims, Priorities and Performance Indicators
 - 2.1.1 Progress on Performance Indicators (PI) related to the Corporate Plan is provided separately; [available online](#).
- 2.2 The Council's Carbon Footprint
 - 2.2.1 Annual carbon footprint reports (greenhouse gas accounting) are published on the Council's [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website: [Our Plan](#).

3.0 Community and partnership activities

3.1 Community engagement.

3.1.1 The C&S Specialist and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change welcome opportunities to liaise with local groups to understand their priorities and to seek partnership opportunities such as events, projects or community engagement. Recent interactions include being kindly invited to a Sustainable Tiverton meeting, and a Sustainable Crediton meeting.

3.1.2 Housing teams have worked with tenants on environmental sustainability through activities and topics that are engaging and important to residents. Such as:

- Energy saving advice.
- Mid Devon in Bloom. Tenants entered into our gardening competition (March-July). A wildflower garden with a pond and vegetable patch won the prize for most sustainable garden. Other category prizes included best communal garden, best baskets and containers and best overall garden.
- Willand Wildlife Garden. Surveys in spring and summer helped plan for new plants and bulbs to be planted this autumn. Wild flora recorded has included bluebell, cuckoo flower and Ficaria verna. Hedgehog houses have been built by a volunteer.

3.2 Promoting local events, exemplars and projects

3.2.1 Online promotion continues through the Council's social media channels, engagement platform and the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website. Examples:

- [Free energy efficiency upgrades](#)
- [Mapped - Devon's Community Fridges](#)
- [EV Charge Points at Home and Work](#)

3.3 Bin-it-123. (CP aim: env06.)

3.3.1 Council teams are running a proactive educational campaign to inform households that recyclable and residual waste must be in the right containers (residual waste left on the side will not be taken). Since the Bin It 123 launch in October 2022, the district's recycling rate has increased by 9% compared to the same period last year. The amount of residual waste collected during the 12 month period up to May 2023 reduced by 1,491 tonnes; again a significant positive change achieved by Mid Devon households.

3.3.2 Anyone requiring more recycling containers can [request additional containers](#) online and can also [request additional black bins on the Council's website](#).

3.4 Devon Energy Planning Group

3.4.1 The C&S Specialist is involved in establishing a partnership approach to energy action planning and preparedness. By setting up a local modelling capability the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) will provide a pipeline of

investable projects that will act at a local level to achieve Net Zero energy systems for the full range of energy uses and types.

3.5 Sustainable Economy

(CP aims: Env01, Env02.)

3.5.1 The C&S Specialist supported the Economy Team bid for an extra £24k towards green business grants. This will, if approved, boost the Council's Shared Prosperity Fund from April 2024 so we can support local resource efficiency projects, energy saving investments and renewables.

3.6 Electric Vehicle Chargepoints: Delivery via the Deletti Partnership.

3.6.1 Leases have been agreed at the first 3 of 6 public car parks where the Council will host rapid vehicle chargers and will earn revenue as a small percentage of operator income. At no capital cost to the Council, these fully funded units will be owned and operated by Wenea / Gamma Energy (contract procured by lead partner Devon County Council).

3.6.2 The first phase is: Market Street at Crediton, Forge Way at Cullompton and William Street at Tiverton. The next phase will be: St Saviour's Way at Crediton, Westexe South at Tiverton and the Pannier Market at Tiverton.

3.7 Devon's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) working group.

3.7.1 We are actively involved in the Devon's county working group that will help deliver the [£7million LEVI funding](#) investment in more EV chargers (attended by the C&S Specialist). [The draft Devon EV strategy](#) 'solution hierarchy' prioritises different charger roles to meet local needs, and this will be reflected in the scheme.

3.7.2 The county council plans to run a consultation for town and parish councils. Therefore now seems a good time for local councils to consider how to influence 'best practice' and where communities would like to see investment targeted e.g. trials of on-street slow charger installations.

4.0 Corporate activities

4.1 The Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG).

(CS priority: 1.)

4.1.1 An advisory group of the Environment PDG. NZAG met on the 22nd August and has a strong support from a wide range of Members, who expressed a wish for the NZAG to facilitate community engagement, local action and projects that link with other PDG committees. Cllr Beckett Fish agreed to be NZAG Chair.

4.2 Sustainability appraisals for decision-making and reports.

(CS priority: 1.)

4.2.1 Cabinet endorsed Environment PDG recommendations, for the PDG and NZAG to liaise with Corporate Management Team (CMT) to:

- formulate a method for a Climate and Sustainability Statement that can be consistently applied to all business cases

- devise a consistent approach to climate change impact statements noted on committee reports
- 4.2.2 This was carried out and final draft guidance was circulated to this PDG and all PDG Chairs. Environment PDG may now recommend it to Cabinet. The guidance would be a 'living' corporate reference document for the Council, helping to support and monitor delivery e.g. towards the 2030 net zero target.
- 4.3 Sustainability in Planning and Development.
(CS Priority 1.)
- 4.3.1 Zed Pod installations at Cullompton have begun. The Council was named Highly Commended in the "Client of the Year" in the Offsite Awards 2023, for its Zed Pod social housing schemes on brownfield sites. Zed Pods are superbly well-insulated and energy-efficient housing units with a Net Zero carbon performance powered by solar PV panels, constructed off-site and installed with the help of local contractors.
- 4.4 Project: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).
(CS priority: 2, 3. CP aims: env01, env02, ec01.)
- 4.4.1 A capital funding bid for PSDS funding for Culm Valley Sports Centre is being prepared. The Council had submitted a PSDS bid for funds to carry out a detailed design in advance of the capital bid, but this did not succeed due to over-subscription for PSDS on a national level.
- 4.5 Renewable Energy for Council Consumption
(CS Priority 2 and 3. CP aims: Env02, Ec01.)
- 4.5.1 The decision by [Cabinet 04 July 2023](#) sought to achieve 100% renewable electricity supply within 2 years, to avoid carbon emissions of circa 560 tCO₂e annually. Arrangements have been initiated to secure fully renewable supply when we commence the October 2024 to September 2028 contract.

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.

Legal Implications: The Council's environmental sustainability duties are underpinned by legislation e.g. [Environment Act 2021](#). All local authorities have obligations under the [Climate Change Act 2008](#) with regard to climate change adaptation (resilience) and mitigation (emission reductions). [Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019](#).

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.

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.

Equalities 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).

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date:

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date:

Chief Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date:

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 28/09/2023

Cabinet member notified: Yes.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist: Email:

JBall@MidDevon.gov.uk Tel: 01884 255255.

Background papers: Related papers: The previous report was provided to the [Environment Policy Development Group](#) on [15 August 2023](#).