

Report for: Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group

Date of Meeting: 18 June 2024

Subject: Climate and Sustainability Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Natasha Bradshaw - Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

Responsible Officer: Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

Paul Deal - Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Resilience.

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: None.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To receive an update on the Climate and Sustainability Programme.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group (PDG) notes and accepts this report as an update on the Council's Climate and Sustainability Programme, and progress on its response to the Climate Emergency.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability matters woven into all aspects of its work, from procurement to promoting nature recovery. The Climate and Sustainability (C&S) Specialist leads development of the Council's C&S Programme, working inclusively with all Councillors and colleagues and particularly service leads, the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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;
 - Efforts to enable and facilitate actions across Mid Devon communities.
- 1.4 Therefore this report is divided into **corporate** and **community** items (some overlap is possible). Clearly the Council can monitor and manage matters related to its 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.
- 1.5 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 Corporate Plan Performance Indicators (PI) is provided separately in [Performance reports to Audit Committee available online](#). Progress notes on our overall Corporate Plan aims and Climate Change priorities are also [available online](#). (<https://sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/our-plan/#aims-priorities>)

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. 2023-2024 in assessment.

3.0 Community and partnership activities

3.1 Community engagement.

3.1.1 The Council hosted its Annual State of the District Debate 20 March 2024 themed on working collaboratively with town and parish councils. Topical tables included the partnered subjects of climate change and sustainability, alongside waste and recycling, which helped raise ideas for teamwork across the district.

3.2 Sustainability in the Local Economy, Planning and Development.

3.2.1 Preparations have been completed to enable registered 'biodiversity banks' to be secured in Mid Devon to offer offsite [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) (BNG) units for developments unable to achieve on-site gains at 10% or above.

3.2.2 The Economy Team and the C&S Specialist developed [Green Enterprise Grants](#) for Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Mid Devon. The scheme offers capital grants from £500 to £5,000 towards investments that save resources and cut carbon. The first applications have been received. This complements the [Prosper business support programme](#) that provides SMEs with advice and support to identify and reduce their carbon footprint.

3.2.3 The Council's Economy team has secured [Shared Prosperity Funding](#) towards the new flexible workspace at Tiverton town centre, set to be transformed into a vibrant co-working hub.

3.3 Decarbonising travel

3.3.1 Devon County Council (DCC) was allocated £7m by the Department for Transport's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund and have worked with Mid Devon District Council and others to develop the scheme. This will deliver Electric Vehicle chargepoints across the county over coming years, including at on-street locations, rural parish and community car parks, and local authority car parks.

3.3.2 The new DCC procurement process for LEVI scheme delivery has begun with market engagement, and will go live for bids in July. The opportunity comprises 6 lots, covering different charger types, each with different levels of subsidy for the private sector partners. The majority of subsidy will benefit on-street residential areas and parish / community car parks.

- 3.3.3 At least 10 Mid Devon communities responded to DCC's call for sites - asking towns and parishes to register interest in hosting chargers. If a parish is keen to host an EV chargepoint on their own land (those owned by community trusts are also eligible) they should please complete the form linked below. DCC will then assess candidate sites and provide feedback. An outline of the proposed chargepoint type, site requirements, etc, is included in the link. At this stage, no binding commitment is needed by parish councils or community groups as it is only a call for sites. However, they aim to complete the list this month (June). The form and more details are provided at: <https://forms.gle/Y72qpbDrm85tBGiX7>
- 3.3.4 The current 'Deletti Phase 2' EV charger partnership scheme is under way and installation works have begun at 3 MDDC owned car parks in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton.
- 3.4 Promoting local events, exemplars and projects.
- 3.4.1 Online promotion continues via social media, the [Let's Talk Mid Devon](#) engagement platform and the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website, with local events, activity ideas, funding sources (e.g. grant pots) and themed campaigns such as [Food Waste Action Week](#).

4.0 Corporate activities

- 4.1 Sustainability in Corporate Culture and Operations
- 4.2 Team meetings will now feature climate and sustainability as a regular agenda item. C&S Specialist support continues to be available to all teams.
- 4.3 The C&S Specialist has:
- Provided secretariat support for Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG).
 - Worked to support and brief the Corporate Management Team, service leads and others on corporate environment aims, goals and policies.
 - Held monthly calls for all operations managers to support climate action.
 - Met quarterly with key operational managers to support communications, teamwork and help prioritise actions to cut our climate impact.
 - Consulted with Procurement to identify ways to reduce emissions linked to spending (scope 3 emissions).
 - Coordinated energy data problem solving, monitoring and energy saving workshops for Property Services and Leisure staff.
 - Led a site meeting on biodiversity enhancement and options for land management decisions.
 - Coordinated teamwork on LEVI charger sites and kept Mid Devon at the forefront of charger delivery through Deletti Phase 2 (mentioned above).
 - Fed into partnership groups such as the Devon Climate Emergency to draw on best practice, share progress on delivery that contributes towards the Devon Carbon Plan etc.

4.4 NZAG meetings chaired by Cllr Beckett Fish have identified priority areas of action, community engagement, partnership and teamwork. Councillors have volunteered as 'champions' for each theme.

Financial Implications. The financial implications associated with this report are the overall costs of the C&S 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 C&S Specialist in support of the corporate officer team is central to the Council's C&S 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 Section 2, paragraphs 2.1 - 2.2.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off / mandatory checks

Statutory Officer:

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151.

Date: 10.06.2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes.

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. No.

Appendix: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. No.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist: Email: JBall@MidDevon.gov.uk Tel: 01884 255255.

Background papers: The previous report was provided to this [PDG](#) (formerly the [Environment Policy Development Group](#)) on [12 March 2024](#).