

Environment Theme 2023/24

Aim: Encourage retro-fitting of measures to reduce energy use in building

| Performance Indicator | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Target (2023/24) | Performance |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| Corporate Renewable Energy Projects | 1 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 2 | Green |
| Housing Assistance Policy (Retro-fit schemes supported) | 5 | 28 | 11 | 1 | N/A | N/A |
| Home Improvement Loans sanctioned | 10 | 5 | 14 | 16 | 10 | Green |

- From October 2023, the Council switched all electricity supplies to renewable tariff backed by REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin).
- Two projects to decarbonise heating and cooling systems at Exe Valley and Lords Meadow leisure centres were completed. These projects used combined arrays of ground-source and air-source heat pumps to capture renewable heat. At Lords Meadow leisure centre the wood biomass renewable heating system was also upgraded. Extra renewable power will now be generated by new solar photovoltaic panel arrays - roof mounted at Lords Meadow, and solar car ports at Exe Valley. Efficiency gains will be achieved with integrated new building management systems. New systems being commissioned and tested to the required standards.
- Retrofit LED lighting units were installed for the remaining all-weather pitches at leisure centres.
- The Housing Assistance Policy (retrofit schemes) grant scheme has ended.
- Home Improvement Loans worth £107,116 were drawn down in 2023/24 to cover a range of home improvements, including disabled adaptations and energy efficiency measures as well as general home repairs

Aim: Encourage “green” sources of energy, supply new policies and develop plans to decarbonise energy consumption in Mid Devon

| Performance Indicator | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Target (2023/24) | Performance |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| Electric Car Charger usage (Number of uses) | 1,867 | 4,639 | 4,716 | 4,353 | 4,000 | Green |
| Electric Car Charger Units | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8 | Red |

- There are six electric car charger units installed at council leisure centres: Culm Valley, Exe Valley, Lords Meadow. These are owned and operated by Instavolt through a lease with the council.
- During 2022 by participating in Devon's DELETTI partnership, and through negotiation by the Climate and Sustainability Specialist, the Council secured 6 rapid chargers - each with 2 charge points (total = 12 new charge points). The installations are expected during 2024 at Council car parks: Crediton Market Street, Crediton High Street, Cullompton Forge Way; Tiverton William Street; Tiverton Pannier Market; Tiverton Westexe South. These will be owned and operated by Wenea/Gamma through a lease with MDDC. Civil engineering works completed at the first phase of three sites. Leases finalised for three sites in the second phase of installations.

Aim: Identify opportunities to work with landowners to secure additional hedgerow planting, biodiversity and reforestation

- Community climate and biodiversity grants: Funding now agreed, grant scheme being developed.

Aim: Consider promoting the designation of the Exe Valley as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- This aim was determined as not deliverable within the period of the Corporate Plan as part of the Mid-Point review.

Preliminary research project could be devised to understand the scope and scale of the challenge, albeit early estimates suggested a timeframe of many years and a cost in excess of £250k. No budget or resource has been identified for this work and it is not currently being progressed.

Aim: Encourage new housing and commercial developments to be “exemplars” in terms of increasing biodiversity and reducing carbon use.

- Officers are preparing a Draft Policies and Site Options report for Plan Mid Devon (the new local plan). Once completed, it is intended this will be published for public consultation in the autumn 2024. The report will include draft policies for responding to the climate emergency and moving to a new zero-carbon future through the development and use of land and buildings. A suite of 11 emerging draft policies in relation to climate change and zero carbon were presented to the Planning Policy Advisory Group meeting on the 11th March 2024. The Draft Policies and Site Options report will also include one or more policies for the purpose of securing biodiversity net gain in new development. The national mandatory requirement for securing at least 10% biodiversity net gain in new development came into force on 12th February 2024. The Council's Planning and Legal Services teams are working together to implement this national mandatory requirement, with support

from Devon County Council's Ecologist through a three year Service Level Agreement. Costs associated with this work that have been incurred by the Council have been recovered through DEFRA grant funding.

Aim: Increase recycling rates and reduce the amounts of residual waste generated

| Performance Indicator | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Target (2023/24) | Performance |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| Household waste collected per household (kg) | 364.5 | 364.5 | 327.3 | 313.3 | 330.0 | Green |
| Household recycling rate | 53.5% | 53.4% | 55.4% | 57.9% | 56.5% | Green |
| Households on Chargeable Garden Waste | 11,653 | 11,882 | 12,009 | 12,239 | 11,800 | Green |
| Missed refuse/food/garden collections - collection crew error | 0.02% | 0.02% | 0.04% | 0.03% | 0.03% | Red |
| Missed Recycling/Food Collections - collection crew error | 0.02% | 0.03% | 0.05% | 0.04% | 0.03% | Red |
| Fixed Penalty Notices Issued (Environment) | 10 | 0 | 37 | 50 | N/A | N/A |

- Over the past year the amount of household waste collected per household has decreased from 327.3 kg to 313.3 kg.
- The household recycling rate has increased to 56.5% (2023/24).
- Missed bin collections were lower in 2023/24 than in the previous year, however did slightly exceeded our performance target.

Aim: Explore large-scale tree-planting projects and re-wilding to enhance biodiversity and address carbon pressures

| Performance Indicator | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Target (2023/24) | Performance |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| Corporate Tree Planting Scheme | 0 | 650 | 1,192 | 560 | 500 | Green |

- During 2023/2024, the Council planted 56 large 'standards' - these are tall trees, placed at wide spacings to allow for growth. Standards are equivalent to 10 'whip' sized tree saplings, so 56 is equivalent to 560 whips. This means the Council met the annual tree target in 2023/24 (500 whips).

Aim: Promote sustainable farming practices in partnership with local farmers, district and county councils; including research into best practice re better soil management and animal husbandry

- Farmer engagement supported through joint work e.g. partner organisations at the Mid Devon Show and the Devon County Show; also through partnership schemes e.g. Creedy Catchment Crayfish Conservation Project, and Connecting the Culm.

Aim: Work with parish and town councils to promote the development and retention of parks and play areas across the district

- Work on this continues and talks with Town and Parish Councils are on-going. This was included as a topic for the annual State of the District Debate that took place on 20 March 2024. We are following up on the issues and opportunities raised.

Aim: Support community activities that improve the environment such as litter picks, guerrilla gardening, or community adoption of assets.

| Performance Indicator | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Target (2023/24) | Performance |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| Community Schemes (Environmental) | 0 | 8 | 14 | 20 | 4 | Green |

The majority of the activities listed below were undertaken by our Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

- Actively engaging with community projects/ networks/ groups/ individuals - also local farmers and other enterprises with a green agenda/ project/ exemplar. Proactively promoting the sustainability projects and activities of community schemes on the Sustainable Mid Devon website (resource map, events and news, etc.).
- Community liaison a range of stakeholders, including: Aggregate Industries UK (community tree planting); Blackdown Hills Transition; Connecting the Culm; Creedy Catchment Crayfish Project; Exeter Community Energy; Mid Devon Parish Wildlife Warden Scheme; New Prosperity Devon; Newton Environmental Wellbeing; Sustainable Bradninch; Sustainable Cridton; Sustainable Tiverton; Uffculme Green Team; Community Action Groups (CAG) Devon, the Recycle Devon team, and tenants of Mid Devon Housing.
- Attended Devon County Show 2023: Worked with Devon Climate Emergency and liaised with Recycle Devon and CAG Devon. Topical theme: net zero visions.
- Devon Local Nature Partnership 2023 Spring Conference: liaised with Mid Devon Parish Wildlife Warden Scheme; Connecting the Culm; Creedy Catchment Crayfish Project; Sustainable Bradninch; Uffculme Green Team.
- Liaised with nature campaigners to review and promote nature-friendly management of Council green spaces.

- Liaised with a number of Parish and Town Councils on the topic of Biodiversity, as part of the State of the District Debate.

Other Performance Indicators

| Performance Indicator | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Target (2023/24) | Performance |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------|-------------|
| Council Carbon Footprint (tCO ₂ e) | 14,717 | 16,415 | 17,730 | TBC | 17,187 | TBC |

The council's carbon footprint report is commissioned in May (work completed by University of Exeter) and data will be available later in the financial year. The increase in the carbon footprint in 2022/23 is largely due to investments in renewable technologies, which will reduce our climate impact in future years.