

**Report for: Planning, Environment and Sustainability  
Policy Development Group (PDG)**

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Date of Meeting: 11 March 2025

**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 - Head of 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 2024-28 places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability matters woven into all aspects of its work, from procurement to promoting nature recovery.
- 1.2 The Climate and Sustainability (C&S) Specialist leads the 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.
- 1.3 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;
  - Efforts to enable and facilitate 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 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.
- 1.6 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 [Corporate Plan Performance Indicators](#) (PI) is provided in quarterly reports to [Cabinet](#) (Scrutiny Committee every 6 months).
- 2.1.2 Quarterly [Performance Dashboards](#) share data on e.g. greenhouse gas emissions avoided by generating solar power and using electric vehicles.

- 2.1.3 Progress notes on Corporate Plan aims, the Climate Change Strategy priorities and the current Climate Action Plan are [available online](https://sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/our-plan/#aims-priorities). (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. A [carbon footprint](#) measures emissions in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). Net emissions for the 2023/24 financial year totalled 16,454 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.
- 2.2.2 Reports from the 2018/19 baseline year onwards have been produced by the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy and the Environment (CEE) via the South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEEG). Analysis was based on BS EN ISO 14064-1 and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.
- 2.3 The Council's Climate Strategy and the Climate Action Plan.
- 2.3.1 Cabinet 10 December 2024 [approved](#) the latest Climate Change Strategy and Climate Action Plan. Aligned to the 2024-2028 [Corporate Plan](#), the Council will complement the Strategy annually with a carbon reduction plan ('roadmap to 2030') aiming to deliver corporate net zero at the soonest opportunity. Each will reflect current budgets and capacity. As with the Corporate Plan, each PDG and team must drive and monitor their remit, and operations, with regard to climate adaptation and mitigation.

### **3.0 Community and partnership activities**

- 3.1 The Climate Change Strategy provides a starting point for engagement between the Council, local communities, businesses and partners which seek to co-create community climate action planning for adaptive resilience and ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions for the district.
- 3.1.1 Collaborative work will generate more detail and research such as joint and community action programmes, sometimes led by others. An engagement plan is being developed.

#### Strategy Themes

- Vibrant landscapes at the heart of Devon
  - Climate Resilient Communities
  - Healthy Homes
  - Green Growth and Bright Futures
  - Sustainable Services and Spending
- 3.2 Vibrant landscapes at the heart of Devon
- 3.2.1 Devon's [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS).

- 3.2.2 The Council is a Supporting Authority for the LNRS, a statutory requirement in England (defined in [Sections 104 to 106](#) of the Environment Act 2021). Due to be published imminently by Devon County Council (the Responsible Authority) with public consultation to begin April 2025. When available the draft LNRS will be shared for comment and presented to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity for consultation.
- 3.2.3 The LNRS will inform nature recovery at a local level, by mapping habitats, features and key species to identify opportunities and priorities to boost ecological connectivity, diversity and abundance. Online resources aim to help everyone to play a role in nature recovery, and will include a sophisticated, interactive map.
- 3.2.4 The Local Plan must 'have regard' for the Strategy, and relevant development proposals will need to demonstrate consideration of it.
- 3.2.5 Co-benefits to nature recovery include:
- Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.
  - Water quality.
  - Natural Capital and ecosystem services.
  - Wellbeing.
- 3.2.6 The C&S Specialist is working with the Forward Planning team to facilitate the required work around the LNRS.
- 3.2.7 Tree planting. The Council has planted [172 large standards](#) at green spaces in towns with funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, thanks to a partnership bid with Trees for Cities. This was additional to the [9 large standards](#) planted along Blundell's Road in Tiverton. Large standards equate to circa 10 saplings, so the equivalent of 1,810 trees planted this winter surpasses the Council's annual target (500).
- 3.3 Green Growth and Bright Futures
- 3.3.1 Green Enterprise Grants. Since approval by [Cabinet 07 January](#), the scheme has been developed by the Economic Development team and the C&S Specialist. Launch in preparation, opening to expressions of interest in March. The scheme will run until March 2026.
- 3.3.2 Deletti 'Phase 2' partnership. The Council will host 12 new rapid chargepoints under this scheme (2 per hub) being run on renewable power, owned and operated by Wenea. Notes on the installation status:
- Cullompton; Forge Way (installed).
  - Crediton; Market Street (installed), St Saviour's Way (scheduled).
  - Tiverton; William Street (installed), Pannier Market (scheduled), Westexe South (scheduled).

3.3.3 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme. Devon County Council's (DCC) procurement is live, with evaluation of bids in progress and results due to be announced in April. The majority of the £7m subsidy from OZEV (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles) will benefit on-street residential areas and community car parks including at up to 12 Mid Devon parishes.

### 3.4 Healthy Homes

3.4.1 Energy Boost Mid Devon. The C&S Specialist has developed a partnership project to boost home energy efficiency and the uptake of retrofit by Mid Devon residents. This will boost independent advice services for 'able-to-pay' households on home plans and guidance on delivery; support for struggling households on vital minor repairs; and advice workshops for residents and landlords. Regular updates to be provided at future meetings.

3.4.2 The Housing Initiatives Officer worked with DCC and the other district authorities on a bid for the Warm Homes: Local Grant; decision awaited.

### 3.5 Community engagement and promoting events, exemplars and projects.

3.5.1 Online promotion continues via social media, the Let's Talk Mid Devon engagement platform and the Sustainable Mid Devon website.

## 4.0 Corporate activities

4.1 An additional Project Manager has been recruited to deliver largely climate and sustainability projects for the Property Services team. Priority projects will include solar power, battery storage and building management systems.

4.2 Biodiversity Duty. Action plan approved by [Cabinet 10 December 2024](#).

4.3 The C&S Specialist continues to give support to all teams and has:

- Worked to support and brief the Corporate Management Team (CMT), service leads and others on corporate environment aims.
- Met quarterly with key operational managers to support communications, teamwork and to help prioritise actions.
- Supported team meetings with climate and sustainability being a regular agenda item. Topical updates e.g. Climate Action Plan, LNRS, land use framework, strengthening of the Protected Landscapes statutory duty.
- Support for the leisure team and Property Services to respond to audits, surveys, priorities and opportunities for investment and improvements.
- Provided secretariat support for Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG). NZAG will review its Terms of Reference this year.
- Worked with the Cabinet Member to take forward actions raised by this PDG and NZAG with colleagues and partners.
- Shared opportunities with Members, NZAG, CMT, colleagues etc.

**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:** Andrew Jarrett  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151.  
**Date:** 28.2.25

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leburne  
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer.  
**Date:** 28.2.25

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director.  
**Date:** 28.2.25

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr  
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager.  
**Date:** 03 March 2025

**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](mailto:JBall@MidDevon.gov.uk) Tel: 01884 255255.

**Background papers:** The previous update report was provided to this [PDG](#) on 26 November 2024.