

# Environment and Sustainability Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

**Tuesday, 29 November 2022 at 18:00**

**The Environment and Sustainability Panel** explores methods of conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity through adapting existing practices or creating new ecologically diverse environments. The Panel encourages renewable energy generation and carbon footprint reduction in both the public and private sectors by examining air and water quality, plastic and waste reduction and renewable energy generation. The Panel monitors

the progress and implementation of the Council's Emergency Climate Action Plan and regularly reports to Cabinet and Full Council.

## Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

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## **Environment and Sustainability Panel - Terms of Reference (but not limited to)**

1. To acknowledge our “Climate Emergency” and translate aspirations into actions.
2. To explore methods of conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity, whether through adapting existing practices and places or creating new ecologically diverse environments with sustainable practices built in.
3. To engage, communicate and collaborate with strategic partners, external bodies, Parish Councils and local communities, to encourage biodiversity enhancement and sustainable practices through their work.
4. To encourage environmental stewardship focusing on carbon footprint reduction by improving air quality, water quality, plastic and waste reduction and renewable energy generation in both public and private spheres across the Borough
5. To be a leading voice for environmental sustainability, promoting innovative environmental practices, having influence across the borough and beyond, including public and private sector policy, at regional and national levels.
6. To promote, monitor and regularly report to Cabinet and Full Council upon progress and implementation of the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and it’s goal to be net carbon neutral by 2030.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Environment and Sustainability Panel**  
**Tuesday, 29 November 2022 at 18:00**

**The Environment and Sustainability Panel Members are:**

Councillor Lee Scordis	Chairman
Councillor Tracey Arnold	Deputy Chairman
Councillor Molly Bloomfield	
Councillor Michelle Burrows	
Councillor Andrew Ellis	
Councillor Richard Kirkby-Taylor	
Councillor Sue Lissimore	
Councillor Kayleigh Rippingale	
Councillor Michael Spindler	
Councillor William Sunnucks	

**The Environment and Sustainability Panel Substitute Members are:**

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

**AGENDA**  
**THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING**  
**(Part A - open to the public)**

**Please note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally dealt with briefly.**

**Live Broadcast**

Please follow this link to watch the meeting live on YouTube:

(107) ColchesterCBC - YouTube

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

**2 Substitutions**

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

**3 Urgent Items**

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

**5 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022 are a correct record.

**Environment and Sustainability Panel draft minutes 02-11-22** 7 - 16

**6 Have Your Say! (Hybrid Panel Meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to The Panel on any item on the agenda or any other matter relating to the business of the Panel. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Panel via Zoom. Each representation may be no more than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address Council remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing [democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk) by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting. In addition, a written copy of the representation should be supplied for use in the event of technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

There is no requirement to pre-register for those attending in person.

**7 Carbon Management Plan and the Council's emissions** 17 - 22

The Panel will consider a report outlining how the Council will take forward the options outlined in its Heat Decarbonisation Plans.

**8 DEFRA Air Quality Project Update** 23 - 32

The Panel will consider a report providing an update on the DEFRA funded air quality behaviour change projects, covering roadside signage, the CAREless Pollution Campaign, and the Homeburning Campaign, together with a new funding bid that is currently being considered by DEFRA.

**9 Climate Emergency Action Plan Update** 33 - 38

The Panel will consider a report detailing key progress made with the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), and other relevant updates since September 2022.

The Panel will consider a report setting out its work programme for the current municipal year.

**Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

**Part B**  
**(not open to the public including the press)**

## Environment and Sustainability Panel

2 November 2022

**Present:** Councillor Tracey Arnold (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Molly Bloomfield  
Councillor Andrew Ellis  
Councillor Richard Kirkby-Taylor  
Councillor Sue Lissimore  
Councillor Kayleigh Rippingale  
Councillor Lee Scordis (Chair)  
Councillor Michael Spindler  
Councillor William Sunnucks

**Substitutes:** Councillor Paul Smith for Councillor Michelle Burrows

### 76. Minutes of the previous meeting

In response to an enquiry from a Panel member, the Panel considered the form of minutes which were presented to it, and whether or not Councillors should be referred to by name in them. Although minutes were not intended to be a verbatim record of meetings, Officers would consider the points which had been raised.

*RESOLVED* that: the minutes of the meetings on 22 June 2022 and 19 July 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

### 77. Have Your Say!

Jane Black attended the meeting and addressed the Panel in accordance with the Have Your Say! provisions. The Panel heard that Colchester Borough Council (the Council) had been gifted Ferry Marsh in 1999 as part of a section 106 agreement, and had covenanted to maintain the property as public open space and to keep it clean and tidy and maintained to an appropriate standard. The marsh had been closed due to flooding over the past couple of years, and because it was thought protected species of birds may be nesting there. The floods had, however, subsided, and the nesting season was over, and Jane made a plea that the paths now be mown and the area re-opened to the public, until the result of a promised public consultation on the future of the marsh were known, although no date had been set for this consultation as yet. The Ferry Marsh Nature Reserve formed part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and Jane suggested that an opinion was sought prior to the public consultation from an independent expert, who would advise on appropriate water levels and the impact of public access on bird life in the area. Was the Council in breach of its covenant by currently keeping the reserve locked?

Robert Neve attended the meeting and addressed the Panel in accordance with the Have Your Say! provisions. He was a resident local to Ferry Marsh, and wished to see the path through the marsh open again. He considered that both locals and visitors to the area enjoyed the marsh without apparently disturbing the wildlife there. The Panel was urged to apply the necessary pressure to open the path again, at least until the results of a public consultation were known, and to try to find the correct measures to ensure that the marsh was not flooded again.

Joan Sawyer attended the meeting and addressed the Panel in accordance with the Have Your Say! provisions. The Panel heard that a number of years ago, Natural England had dug two ditches in the marsh for the benefit of the water vole population. She was concerned that the voles would not have survived the recent flooding, and felt upset to see that the marsh had become a jungle of reeds with no easy access to the site.

Rory Doyle, assistant Director – Environment, advised the Panel that the Council was aware of the flooding which had been experienced at Ferry Marsh, and this was a complex issue due in part to the land ownership and ownership of the associated sluice. Officers were working closely with ward Councillors and other stakeholders with regard to future maintenance of the sluice, and there would be a consultation event with local residents in late November 2022, in conjunction with Natural England. Jane Black advised the Panel that local residents had raised the issue at various Wivenhoe Town Council meetings, however she did not believe that it had been discussed at Town Council meetings.

Steve Kelly attended the meeting and addressed the Panel in accordance with the Have Your Say! provisions. The Panel heard that it was World Vitamin D Day, and that 80% of people were Vitamin D deficient which increased during darker months. It was suggested that health sustainability was essential, and that Vitamin D was responsible for a wide range of health benefits. It was suggested that inadequate supplies of Vitamin D were responsible for the deaths of thousands of people. Following enquiries from the Panel, Mr Kelly confirmed that he wished members of the Panel to raise awareness of Vitamin D deficiency, and consider lobbying central government and local health authorities to fortify staple foods with Vitamin D. The Panel advised Mr Kelly that he would be well advised to contact Essex County Council, who had a broader remit for public health than Colchester Borough Council.

## **78. Climate Emergency Action Plan – new iteration**

Ben Plummer, Climate Emergency Project Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s first Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) had been published in June 2021, and the Plan had been reviewed both to include new actions and update existing ones. The new Plan contained more information for residents on how they could contribute to reducing their environmental impact and tackling climate change, and this was supported by illustrative case studies.

A new theme on climate adaptation had been introduced to the Plan, which reflected that many impacts of climate change were already visible and could not be changed, and the only action that was available was to adapt to the changes in environments.



Work was being carried out with the University of Essex (the University) on a project called 'Building With Nature' which looked at natural sea defences to protect from rising sea levels and coastal erosion.

Dr Michel Steinke, a marine scientist working at the University, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Panel on a project which had been developed in conjunction with Council Officers Rosa Tanfield and Ben Plummer. The project was entitled Building with Nature for Ecosystem-Based Coastal Defence & Economic Resiliency in Colchester, and the Panel heard about the economic and social importance of the oyster industry to Colchester. In the past, Colchester's coastline had been completely buffered by native oysters, which sadly had now largely disappeared due to overfishing and disease. Sea rise, coupled with the fact that East Anglia was sinking into the sea, meant that the coastline needed to be protected. Hard engineered coastal defences were expensive and unsustainable, and would eventually fail, and it was hoped that over the coming years, coastline seabed which was currently muddy and devoid of life would be turned into a dynamic and adaptable oyster reef which would assist with defending the coastline by reducing the energy contained in waves which were pounding the shore. Such a living dynamic reef would constitute a soft-engineered coastal defence which would grow with sea level rises and be economically beneficial and sustainable. It was considered that the returns on an investment in such a reef would be maximal, and could support fish habitats and biodiversity, bolster bird habitats and provide economic support for local communities.

The Panel heard that it was considered that Colchester was uniquely placed to tackle such a project, and there was a rich tradition of coastal ecosystem management in the area which was supported by a large number of community-based organisations. Consideration had been given to recycling oyster shells to create an artificial reef, and the successful use of this method to create natural oyster reefs had been seen in similar projects in America. The project would be presented at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022 (COP 27), and engagement had been undertaken with a wide variety of local stakeholders and other groups working on similar projects in the United Kingdom. The next steps for the project centred around continuing community engagement and analysis of community feedback, and the production of a project website and fact-based summary report.

The Panel heard that it was intended to further support the project through raising awareness within the Council and continuing to foster good relationships with the authority. The Project was searching for funding to allow it to continue, and the Council's support was considered to be very useful in bidding for this funding. The project had meaning and benefit for local communities, and it was hoped that the support of Councillors could be counted on to promote and support the project when required.

In response to enquiries from the Panel Dr Steinke confirmed that the expectation was that initial seeding of the oyster reefs would take place in areas where it was very important to protect the coastline. It may be more economically viable to use limestone or other shellfish in place of recycled oyster shells for this purpose, as there could be logistical difficulties in sourcing oyster shells for seeding. Once

seeded, the reef would grow on its own, and would need to be kept separate from any commercial fishery area. The Panel heard that if seeding material was placed in the water in the summer of 2023, by September 2023 the first oysters would be settling on it, producing a benefit relatively quickly.

In response to a question from a Panel Member in relation to the impact of the project on the existing ecosystem, Dr Steinke confirmed that the Pacific Rock oysters which were being commercially grown in the estuary were an invasive, introduced species. Although it had been argued that oyster reefs could have an impact on bird populations, it was considered that there was insufficient data to prove this. Studies had been started to measure the output of climate warming gasses from oyster reefs, including methane and carbon dioxide.

A Panel member considered that there would be significant barriers to the project in the form of the studies which would be required, and the number of agencies who would have to approve the work. This meant that there was a need to become more entrepreneurial and flexible in dealing with climate change. Dr Steinke explained that he considered that the political support of the Council would be very important to the project in helping to overcome some of these barriers, and the biggest challenge which was being faced was that of sourcing additional funding. It was not considered that the timescale of implementing the project was important, as long as there was continued progress towards its conclusion.

John Akker, West Mersea Town Councillor, attended the meeting remotely and, with the permission of the Chair, addressed the Panel. Mr Akker offered his support for the project, and confirmed that the Town Council was very interested in the proposal. The project was in its infancy, but the Council's Officers, together with the University, had produced detailed plans, and it was considered that there were similarities between Mersea and successful oyster seeding which had taken place in New York and South East Asia. West Mersea Town Council would offer its support in any way it could for the project, and it was hoped that the project would obtain more funding in the near future.

The Panel discussed the level of funding which would be required to support the project, and Dr Steinke confirmed that the funding required would depend heavily on the type of project which was carried forward. Less funding would be required for a community lead project, and more would be required for a project which was more technically focused and which required surveys to be carried out, together with work at sea. A two to three year project was estimated to cost between £750,000 to £800,000, and would deliver implementation at a small but meaningful scale. Although similar projects had been implemented elsewhere, local conditions differed, and although there would be areas of commonality, each area would require different research to maximise the chances of success.

The Panel offered unanimous support for the project, and was happy for the Council to continue working with the University and supporting the project wherever possible.

The Panel turned its attention to the proposed CEAP, and wondered what impact budgetary pressures and the potential lack of grant funding would have on the progress of the Plan in the coming years. Assurance was offered to the Panel that

although more limited grant funding was available, a set of costed actions was being prepared, and where the Council had to borrow money to complete projects, it was hoped that the savings benefits realised from decarbonisation projects would serve to pay back any loan quickly.

A Panel member considered that when recommending actions which residents could take to combat climate change, the economic benefits or savings which could be made as a result of the action be emphasised. This was of particular importance given the current cost of living crisis faced by many. The Panel was assured that the direct benefits to residents of any retro-fitting works was being woven through any communications issued, and Officers were currently investigating obtaining access to a new Energy Company Obligation Scheme which was being run by Ofgem, and which would allow funding to be made available for residents on low incomes to support energy efficiency changes to be made in their homes. Noting the concerns raised with regard to funding, a Panel member wondered whether there was any potential to use the government's Green Investment Bonds as a source of funding, and Officers would look into this.

Concern was raised that the phasing out of certain weedkillers may have led to the prevalence of more deep-rooted weeds this year, and Councillors had been required to purchase their own strimming equipment to deal with these as hand pulling the weeds had proved impossible. Would the Council ensure that when its weed control programme was altered, suitable replacements were put in place, to prevent this happening again in the future?

It was suggested that the concept of biodiversity net gain could potentially be added to the CEAP, to ensure that where developers were unable to meet the requirement for biodiversity net gain on their own developments, the Council was in a position to offer its own projects which could utilise section 106 funding provided in this way, keeping the biodiversity net gain as local as possible. The Council needed to be proactive in developing policies to provide guidance to developers once the net gain requirement became mandatory next year, although the Panel accepted that these policies would likely fall under the remit of the Planning and Local Plan Committees of the Council.

A Panel member recommended that when communicating with residents, the Council did not shy away from including scientific detail in communications, as this detail was of interest to residents.

*RESOLVED* that: the new iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan had been reviewed, and feedback had been provided.

## **78. Recycling and Waste Strategy Development Proposal**

Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that the current Waste Vision and Strategy had been launched in 2015 and 2016, and the lifestyles of Colchester residents had changed significantly since then. Colchester

Borough Council (the Council) was performing well in terms of its waste and recycling services, and was in the top tier in the East of England for the amount of residual recycling which residents produced.

Changes to the waste and recycling landscape were to be implemented by the Environment Act 2021, comprising three main areas:

- Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR): The proposals cover the mechanisms to make packaging producers responsible for the full net cost of managing packaging that they place on the market.
- Deposit Return Scheme (DRS): The proposals instigate upfront deposits for plastic, metal, and glass drinks containers, to be reimbursed at return points.
- Consistency in household and business recycling: aims to standardise the materials collected across the UK from households and businesses.

In addition to this, the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) was under review, and as a result of these developments, it was proposed that a new Recycling and Waste Strategy be developed with the Environment and Sustainability Panel working alongside Officers, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability and an appointed consultant. The intention was that the Panel and the Portfolio Holder would work through the Strategy in a series of workshops which would be facilitated by Officers and the external consultant to prepare a Draft Strategy for recommendation to Cabinet by September 2023. It was intended that by 2030, the Strategy would:

- Deliver value for money
- Provide a safe, compliant, and resilient service
- Have a community asset based approach
- Minimise the impact on the environment
- Be transformative

Jason Searles, Head of Waste Policy and Circular Economy at Essex County Council, attended the meeting remotely and, with the permission of the Chair, addressed the Panel. The Panel heard that the JMWMS was currently being refreshed, and that this Policy was a statutory requirement for all two-tier local authority areas where waste collection was the responsibility of the district council, and disposal was dealt with by the county council. The JMWMS had been in place since 2009, and was being refreshed through the Essex Waste Partnership, which was an advisory group with representation from the 12 district and city councils in Essex. Work had been commissioned to model the impacts and outcomes of various waste collection, treatment and disposal regimes to help inform a future approach. Outcomes from the modelling were to be reported to the Partnership in the near future, and would enable the Partnership to consider what the overriding principles should be for the Waste Strategy for Essex. It was important to draw a clear distinction between the functions of the JMWMS, and Colchester's Waste Strategy, with Colchester's Policy focusing more on the operational side of waste collection, but the two Strategies still needed to be complimentary. The JMWMS would need to go through a public consultation process, and it was intended to launch this in late summer 2023, with the hope being that the revised JMWMS would be ready for adoption in late 2023 or early 2024.

In response to questions from the Panel, Rosa confirmed that with regard to the funding generated through the EPR scheme, it was intended that this would be gathered by a central organisation, and then distributed to local authorities, however, the practical arrangements for this had yet to be determined by central government. With regard to the proposed consistency in household and business recycling, central government had been consulting on the separation of different materials, the majority of which the Council was already doing, placing it in a good position for the future. It had been intended that consistency in household and business recycling regulations would be implemented in 2023/2024, but this was now looking unlikely. Business collections would be the subject of the new regulations first, in order to ensure that the necessary infrastructure was in place before household collections were also included.

It was confirmed to the Panel that Essex County Council was only responsible for the disposal of black bag and organic (food and garden) waste from Colchester, and all other recycling was dealt with by the Council itself. Black bag waste was currently being disposed of in a landfill at Stanway. Detailed information on the processing of waste by both Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council was readily available and could be distributed to the Panel.

The Panel suggested that care was taken to note areas of improvement from the last time that the Council had implemented a new Waste Strategy in 2016, when there had been significant issues, and that these areas for improvement be explored in early workshops.

In response to a suggestion from a Panel member that the workshops be opened to other Councillors with relevant experience in this area, Rory Doyle, assistant Director – Environment, advised the Panel that there would be some flexibility in how the workshops were conducted, and it was important that the right insights were obtained from the right people. It would, however, be necessary to maintain a relatively focussed group in order that the Strategy could move forward, but Councillors who were not members of this Panel were always welcome to contribute directly to the process via the service or feed back through Panel members. Consideration was given to opening the initial workshop to all Councillors, to provide the opportunity for a brainstorming session before narrowing the focus of the subsequent workshops.

In discussion, the Panel noted that the previous introduction of a new Waste Strategy had been very successful overall, but the issues which had been experienced during its implementation had been difficult to navigate and had caused considerable alarm amongst residents. It was of key importance to avoid such issues in the future, as problems with waste collection had significant impacts on local communities and the perception of the Council. In particular, the way that any changes were communicated to residents had to be very carefully considered, and it was suggested that a dedicated webpage which was updated at different stages of the project could be useful. The Panel was assured that the process would be as transparent as possible, and verbal updates on the development of the Strategy would be delivered to every public meeting of the Panel. Consideration would be given to consulting with Parish Councils if this was felt appropriate following

workshop discussion, and opportunities for visiting other local authorities to learn from their own practices would be explored. Although one of the planned workshops was to be held at the Council's Shrub End Depot, the Panel was invited to attend the depot at any time for a tour of the facility, and the chance to meet and talk with staff who worked there.

**RESOLVED** that:

- Work be undertaken to develop a new Strategy for Recycling and Waste.
- The Strategy be developed through a series of workshops facilitated by Officers and an appointed external consultant to define clear principles, objectives and evaluation criteria for the Strategy.

## **79. Woodland and Biodiversity Project Update**

Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that the project was now in the fourth of its five planned years, and was now considered as a unique opportunity to work together and develop a greener borough for future generations.

The successes that the project had enjoyed over the preceding year was highlighted to the Panel, and included:

- Ongoing working with other organisations - The Big Green Internet, the Trust for Conservation Volunteers, The Ministry of Defence, Wivenhoe Town Council, The Unity Academy and Kent Wildlife Trust and Together we Grow. Wivenhoe Town Council had been supported on its 'No Mow, no Sow' programme, and the activity had been showcased to demonstrate what could be accomplished in local communities.
- A presentation was made about the Project to the One Colchester Climate Change Network, together with other organisations and groups.
- Continuing to deliver Colchester's Greening Policy, including stopping use of glyphosate weed killer and looking at the re-wilding of some sites, and reducing the grass cutting of other sites.
- Continuing to develop plans for a nature reserve in Cymbeline Meadow.
- Planted over 7,000 young trees.
- Worked with 4225 volunteers.
- Launching a new project called Community Orchards, and seeking suggestions from local communities as to where orchards could be sited to provide habitat for wildlife, and a food source for people and pollinators
- 4 cheviot goats had been introduced at Highwoods Country Park, and would be to be joined by another 6, to support the development of wildflower meadows

In response to an enquiry from a Panel member concerning green corridors between habitat sites, Rosa explained that the difficulty for any local authority which was attempting to create such sites was that it rarely owned or had control over the land

between them. The Council did recognise the need for such corridors, and was constantly communicating with both private land owners and developers to encourage and support areas of green growth, re-wilding etc.

A Panel member expressed their support for urban tree planting, and noted that much of Colchester was not covered by Parish Councils or formal residents associations. How could tree planting be supported under these circumstances? The Panel was assured that any members of the public could contact Council Officers who would be very happy to assist with any elements of tree planting. Urban tree planting had already taken place in sites where there had formerly been trees which had died or been damaged, with 140 trees already planted, and a further 120 trees had been arranged.

The Panel heard that the Project had expanded from its initial goal of tree planting, and now included hedgerows and other forms of biodiverse habitat within its remit. Although extensive tree planting had taken place, it was acknowledged that the preceding year had been very difficult for new trees, and survival rates would be assessed in the spring, once new growth had been given a chance to establish itself.

With regard to areas which had not been traditionally mown by the Council, some had not produced wildflower as expected as the grass growth was too strong, and different methods were therefore being considered to re-wild these areas, including both active planting and distributing seeds across the area. Sites which were included in the 'No Mow' trial had been selected by Officers in consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors, however, Officers would welcome any future suggestions for new areas to be incorporated into this scheme or any future schemes such as community orchards.

In discussion, the Panel suggested introducing greening schemes into more urban areas, noting the success of the parklets which had been introduced in Colchester, and the excellent work which had been carried out by a Panel member in greening alleyways in the town. The Panel asked that communications with Councillors be clear when considering new projects, and Officers offered assurances that any input would be welcomed. It was suggested that the possibility of working with Colchester Borough Homes to create garden areas within the Council's social housing stock for the benefits of residents be explored.

*RESOLVED* that: the contents of the report be noted.

## **80. Work Programme 2022-2023**

Cllr Scordis noted the remaining items on the work programme, and invited comment from the Panel. No additional items were requested at this time.

*RESOLVED* that: the contents of the work programme be noted.





29 November 2022

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Place and Client Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Ben Plummer</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Carbon Management Plan and the Council's emissions</b>		<b>508965</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the Council's climate emergency declaration, a target was set to reach net zero emissions for Council services and operations by 2030. The Council monitors and annually reports on its emissions, and this report contains information on emissions from the 2021/22 financial year.
- 1.2 The Council has also been working with Ingleton Wood to identify new actions that can be taken to help reduce emissions within 6 key corporate assets, alongside Colchester Arts Centre which the Council owns but leases out. Ingleton Wood have conducted building surveys in each of these assets, alongside speaking to key staff that operate in each building to understand options and actions for reducing emissions and increasing energy efficiency in these buildings. This has resulted in them producing a Heat Decarbonisation Plan for each asset, which will outline options for decarbonising each building with ballpark costs, energy savings, payback time and emission savings outlined.
- 1.3 This report outlines how the Council will take forward the options outlined in the Heat Decarbonisation Plans, with the main headline being that a report summarising the findings of the Heat Decarbonisation Plans will be brought to the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.
- 1.4 With rising energy bills, there is an even greater mandate for increasing energy efficiency with the opportunity to deliver greater cost savings as well as contributing to reducing emissions. However, this work must be situated within the wider picture of the development and use of CBC assets, alongside the financial constraints faced by the Council.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The panel note the contents of the report recognising the need to reduce emissions and increase the energy efficiency of Council buildings, but that this will have to be financed and decisions taken in the context of the future use of Council buildings.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The report is for information only.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable

## 5. Background Information

### Council emissions

- 5.1 As part of monitoring progress towards achieving the net zero target by 2030 for Council operations, the Council records and publishes its emissions for each financial year annually. The Council re-established a calculation of its emissions in financial year 2018/19. This was set as the 'baseline year' after the declaration of the climate emergency, with progress measured in reducing emissions from this year.
- 5.2 The Council reports its emissions in the unit, tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). There are a range of different greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, nitrous oxides and more. All greenhouse gas emissions have different '[global warming potentials](#)', which quantifies how much each of them contribute to warming (their varying ability to trap heat). CO<sub>2</sub> is the most abundant greenhouse gas and thus the global warming potential of all greenhouse gases are equilibrated to that of CO<sub>2</sub> to make reporting easier.
- 5.2 A summary of the sources of the Council's emissions are provided below:
- **Gas consumption** used for heating Council buildings (and estimations produced associated with working from home)
  - **Electricity consumption** used within Council buildings (and estimations produced associated with working from home). Electricity consumption from the Council's fleet will be reported on from financial year 2022/23 onwards as some electric vehicles started to be introduced.
  - **Fuel consumption** from Council's fleet, staff commuting and business travel
  - **Water consumption** in Council buildings/sites – Emissions involved in the supply and treatment of the water that is used
  - **Waste production** from Council building/sites – Emissions involved in the transportation of this waste and its disposal (the latter only for landfill).
- 5.3 A breakdown of the Council's emissions as recorded for financial year 2021/22 is shown in the below table and figure 1.

Emission source	Emissions in financial year 2021/22 (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)
Gas (including working from home)	2695
Electricity (including working from home)	1218.2
Fleet	1490.3
Commuting	44.7
Water	39.3
Business travel	22
Waste	337.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5887.2</b>

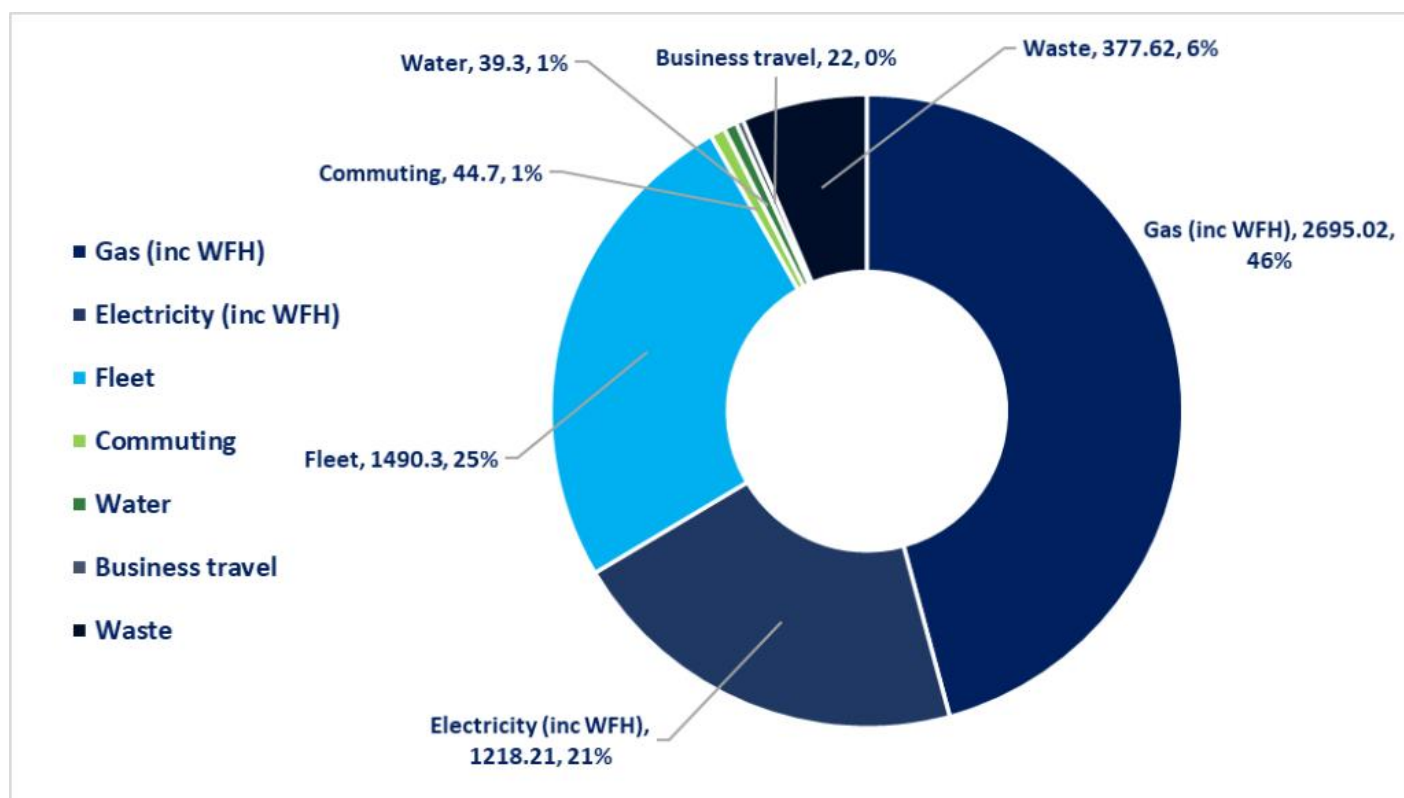


Figure 1: A breakdown of the Council's emissions in financial year 2021/22, with emissions in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e outlined, along with each emission source contribution as a percentage.

- 5.4 Calculating an estimation of emissions associated with working from home is something the Council has been doing since financial year 2020/21. The [open source methodology](#) produced by EcoAct consultancy has been used to do this, using a staff questionnaire to get more refined data on working from home patterns and use of heating and electricity at home.
- 5.5 The figures for the Council's emissions in financial year 2021-22 reflect an 8.9% increase since those recorded in financial year 2020-21. However, in financial year 2020-21, many of the Council's buildings were closed for long periods meaning emissions from these were much lower than to be expected. The figure of 5887.2 tCO<sub>2</sub>e represents a 4.3% decrease in emissions compared to those recorded prior to the covid-19 pandemic in financial year 2019/20.
- 5.6 Overall progress in reducing emissions since financial year 2018/19 is shown in figure 2. This shows an overall 10.1% decrease in emissions since financial year 2018/19.

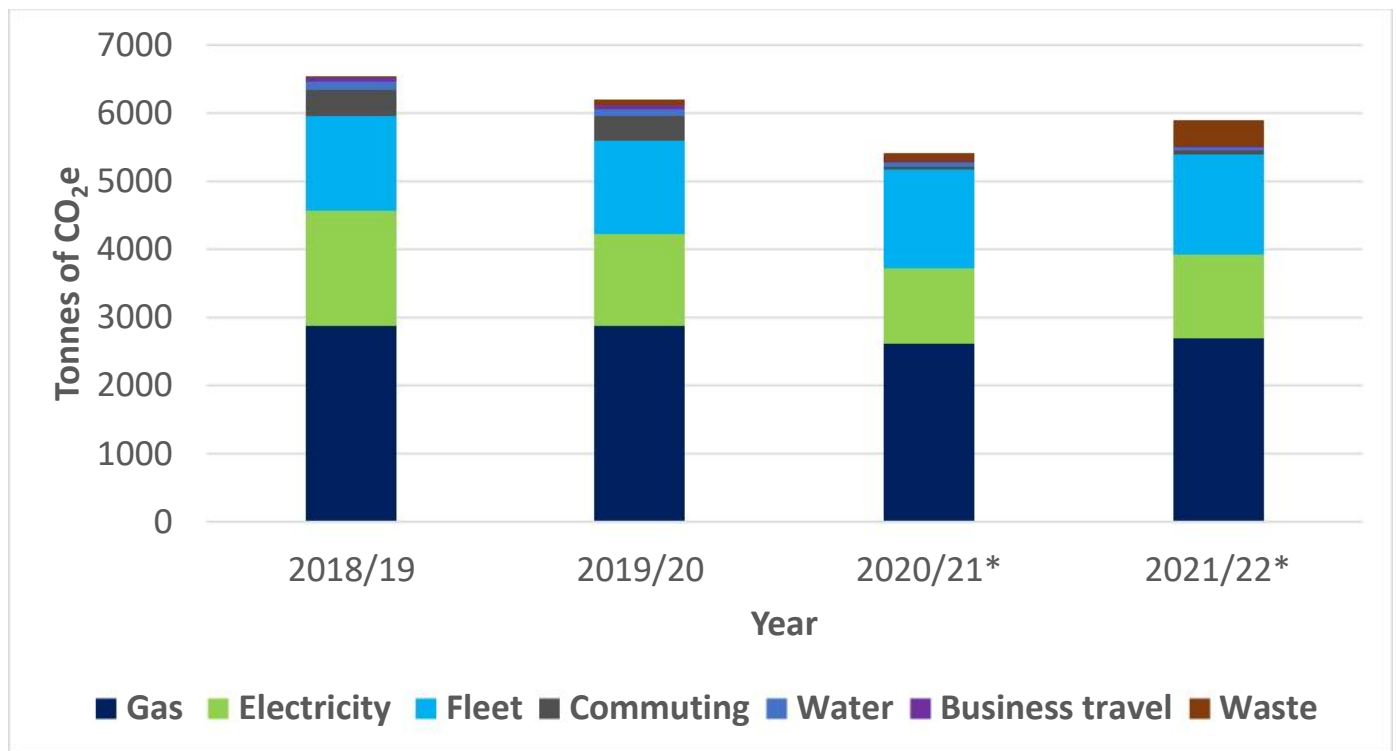


Figure 2: A breakdown of the Council's emissions recorded since financial year 2018/19. The asterisk (\*) indicates years where working from home emissions have been calculated and included within the overall Council emissions calculations.

- 5.7 As can be seen from figure 2, there is a notable increase in emissions from waste in more recent years. This is not because of an increase in actual waste produced, instead it is mainly because of a change to the waste to landfill emission factors provided by the UK Government, which increased substantially between reporting years 2019 and 2020. The explanation for why this emission factor changed is based on a change to the methodology for calculating the emission factor for waste to landfill. This can be viewed [here](#) (page 26).

## Heat Decarbonisation Plans

- 5.8 The Council has been working with Ingleton Wood to identify actions that could be taken to reduce the emissions produced from several Council buildings. Heat decarbonisation plans have been produced for each building. These plans are a strategic document outlining a 'whole building' approach, to transitioning a building to a low carbon heating system, alongside relevant opportunities to increase energy efficiency that will facilitate this transition.
- 5.9 The assets that have had Heat Decarbonisation Plans written for them are:
- Leisure World Colchester
  - Colchester Town Hall
  - Colchester Crematorium
  - Natural History Museum
  - Hollytrees Museum
  - Colchester Castle Museum
  - Colchester Arts Centre – Colchester Arts Centre is a building that the Council owns and leases out to the Arts Centre. It was included in this work for Ingleton Wood, as the Council is responsible for maintaining the heating system in this building and the current heating system was reaching the end of its life. Therefore, the opportunity was

taken to explore looking at the possibility of introducing a low carbon heating system into the building, especially as there was Government grant funding available that could partly contribute to this.

- 5.10 Ingleton Wood completed site surveys at each of the assets and spoke to each of the building owners to discuss the current and potential future operation of the buildings. This enabled them to make informed proposals for energy saving and decarbonisation opportunities at each of the buildings, considering the wider context of how the buildings were operated.
- 5.11 The Council only received these Heat Decarbonisation Plans for each of the assets in mid-November 2022 and can therefore not provide a summary of the findings in this report. However, it can be outlined that each Heat Decarbonisation Plan includes the following content:
- Options for decarbonising the heating system of each building
  - Opportunities to increase the energy efficiency of each building (e.g. insulation), or produce other cost savings (e.g. solar PV)
  - Costs of all decarbonisation and energy efficiency opportunities, including cost savings, carbon savings and payback times for each measure taken.
  - Further considerations of upgrades that could be made to each building that could supplement other decarbonisation and energy efficiency opportunities outlined e.g. sub-metering of buildings to provide increased data to better inform the potential for opportunities to save energy in CBC buildings.
- 5.12 The Council will review the findings of each heat decarbonisation plan with the different building owner/operator, alongside reviewing with other staff to determine which opportunities and actions outlined in each plan could be implemented and when. Some actions will be more short term, or have clear payback opportunities so can be budgeted in to happen sooner, whereas others will be complex and will not be implemented immediately. The plans will be reviewed in the wider context of the future for the operation of these CBC assets, alongside how we can consider funding some of these opportunities considering the Council's constrained budget.
- 5.13 The Council will explore opportunities to gain funding to implement some of the measures identified in the heat decarbonisation plans. For example, the Government has been giving the public sector funding for decarbonising heating systems and energy efficiency measures in buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The Council received £528,250 of funding through phase 1 of this scheme to contribute towards the retrofit of Rowan House, and has recently made a bid to the scheme to source funding to contribute to the installation of an air source heat pump and underfloor heating system in Colchester Arts Centre, an action fast tracked from the Arts Centre's heat decarbonisation plan so as to access this funding. It is expected there will be a further funding through this scheme coming from Government in 2023, so CBC will look to see if any actions outlined in the heat decarbonisation plans could be funded through this scheme.
- 5.14 The Council plans to bring back an update to the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, containing information on some of the actions we will be looking to take forward, as well as information that will require further consideration. When works could be completed will depend on a number of factors including impacts on closure of buildings, when any other refurbishment work may be taking place, when future funding might be available to help implement projects. This will limit the amount of information that will be able to be provided at the next Panel meeting, but the report will aim to be as detailed as possible.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

6.1 There are no equality, diversity and human rights implications of the report.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 This report directly links to the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 theme of 'Tackling the Climate Challenge and Sustainability'.

## **8. Consultation**

8.1 There are no consultation considerations.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

9.1 There are no publicity considerations.

## **10. Financial implications**

10.1 There are no financial implications.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

11.1 There are no community safety implications.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 There are no risk management implications.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 The report highlights how the Council will need to continue to reduce emissions from its operations and assets. The Council will need to put in a place a new carbon management plan to identify detailed projects and actions the Council can take to reduce emissions from its operations and assets going forward.

29 November 2022

Report of	Air Quality Engagement Officer	Author	Rosie Welch ' 507157
Title	DEFRA Air Quality Project Update		
Wards affected	Castle, New Town and Christchurch		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Environment and Sustainability Panel on the DEFRA funded air quality behaviour change projects, covering roadside signage, the CAREless Pollution Campaign, the Homeburning Campaign and our new funding bid that is currently being considered by DEFRA. The report has not covered the sustainable transport, i.e walking and cycling, element of our air quality work as this will be covered in a sustainable transport update to the panel in January 2023.
- 1.2 Colchester City Council (CCC) received its first funding from DEFRA in 2019, to work with the local community to tackle pollution within its Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's). CCC has had a further three successful bids totalling £746,163 for its work since then. By using an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to tackling pollution, the work recognises that education and community "buy-in" is the most successful way of achieving long-lasting behaviour change.
- 1.3 The Council's first DEFRA grant was for the award-winning CAREless Pollution "no idling" campaign that has led to an increase in the number of drivers switching off their engines in key targeted areas, contributing to less harmful pollutants in the air. Figures from this year's Annual Status Report show pollution levels are on a downwards trend. A more focussed programme of work has now commenced with delivery drivers and takeaway outlets in the borough.
- 1.4 Our roadside signage trial (funded by the 2<sup>nd</sup> successful Defra bid) has come to an end, but has led to a 11% increase in engine switch offs on Brook Street and at East Gates. At East Gates alone approximately **260 additional** vehicles were switching off their engines **every week** preventing an estimated **91g** of Nitrogen Dioxide per week entering the air (based on a 5-minute wait). The findings mirror the results of short-term trials in Kent where signage has now been made permanent.
- 1.5 Following the study, the Council are making a recommendation to apply for planning permission to have the signage on Brook Street and East Gates put up permanently and to use the remainder of the DEFRA budget to identify and fund further locations within our AQMA's for signage.
- 1.6 Awareness of the health impacts of home burning (part of our 3<sup>rd</sup> successful bid) have increased and we are continuing the work this Winter following reports that an increased number of people will start burning at home due to the cost of heating their homes and current "cost of living crisis".

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note and review the content of this briefing and to provide feedback.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 Air quality contributes to root causes of 1 in 20 deaths in Colchester. The City also contains 1 of the highest polluted areas in Essex, within our 3 designated Air Quality Management Areas

(AQMAAs). The four successful funding bids the Council has made the DEFRA, with hopefully a fifth forthcoming, has allowed the Council to make meaningful differences to improve air quality and understand behaviour change better.

#### **4. Alternative Options**

4.1 None.



## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 Colchester has three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) the biggest covering the area in and around the town centre with pollution levels on some roads exceeding national guidelines and proving particularly stubborn to tackle (see Air Quality Update below).
- 5.2 Colchester's narrow and historic roads weren't built to cope with the levels of traffic currently seen today. Brook Street alone sees over 100,000 vehicle movements a week as well as being home to hundreds of residents and the main walking route for children attending nearby primary schools.
- 5.3 Air pollution contributes to an estimated 36,000 deaths in the UK every year, or 1 in 20 deaths in Colchester, with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million (Public Health England Data). Disadvantaged communities are often more exposed to poor air quality because they tend to live in and around polluted spots, such as busy roads.
- 5.4 Even small reductions (a reduction of 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) in pollution (specifically Particulate Matter 2.5) in England in a single year can prevent around 50,000 cases of coronary heart disease, 16,500 strokes, 9,000 cases of asthma and 4,000 lung cancers over the following 18 years (information sourced from gov.uk). Thus, gaining community support around local issues, such as air quality, is a crucial way of making positive long-lasting change happen (Government paper: Inspiring communities, changing behaviours) which is why Colchester City Council (CCC) has taken an Asset Based Community Development Approach to delivering air quality improvements within the borough.
- 5.5 To date CCC has successfully received four rounds of funding totalling £746,163 from DEFRA for its air quality behaviour change projects. A bid for a further £310,770 in funding was submitted to DEFRA in September 2022 and the outcome will be announced in March 2023.

## 6. Air Quality Update

- 6.1.1 Colchester measures pollution levels, at 62 sites in Colchester. Diffusion tubes are used at 61 of the sites to measure for the pollutant Nitrogen Dioxide, and at one site in Brook Street a continuous monitoring station is located which also measures for the pollutant Nitrogen Dioxide [Air quality in Colchester · Colchester Borough Council](#)
- 6.1.2 The Council is required to submit to DEFRA an Annual Status Report (ASR) which includes all measurement results, and the actions taken by the Council against the boroughs Air Quality Action Plan. This report is appraised by external consultants, this year's Annual Status Report (ASR) 2022 has been submitted to and accepted by DEFRA and can be found in the above link.
- 6.1.3 Generally across the borough air quality is improving, however some hotspots remain and in 2021 three locations exceeded the 40  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  air quality objective's these were Mersea Road, Brook Street and Osborne Street. All these locations are within the borough's declared air quality management areas. See above link for map of Air Quality Management Areas  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

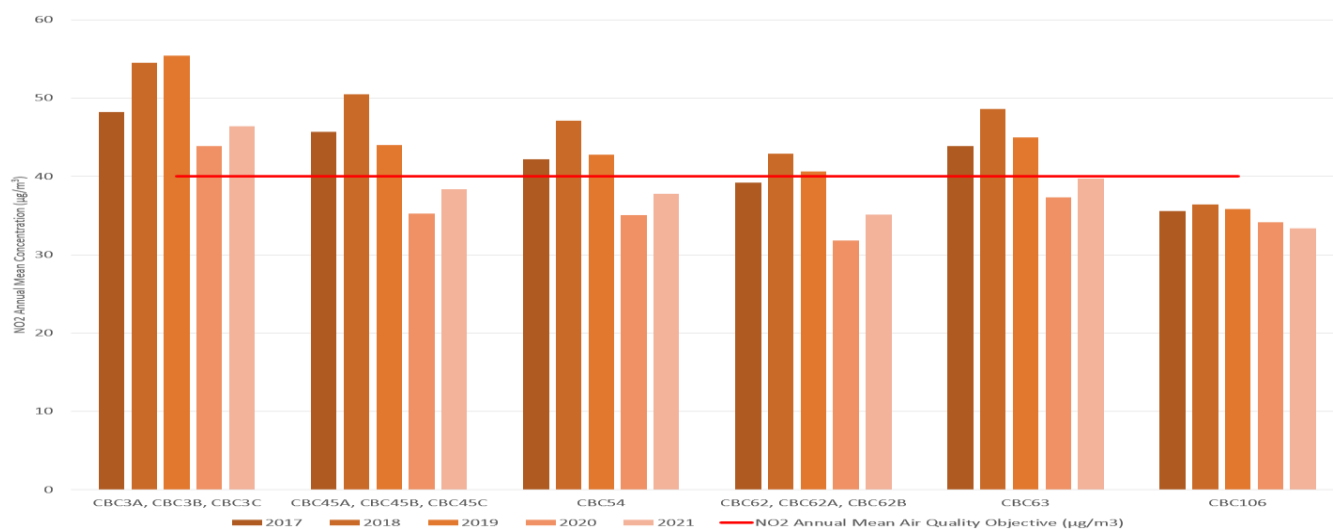
**Table 1 - 2021 Measured Exceedances above Air Quality Objective**

Site ID	Site Address	Monitored Annual Mean Concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )	Annual Mean Concentration at Relevant Exposure ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )
CBC3A / CBC3B / CBC3C	21 Mersea Road	46.4	44.7

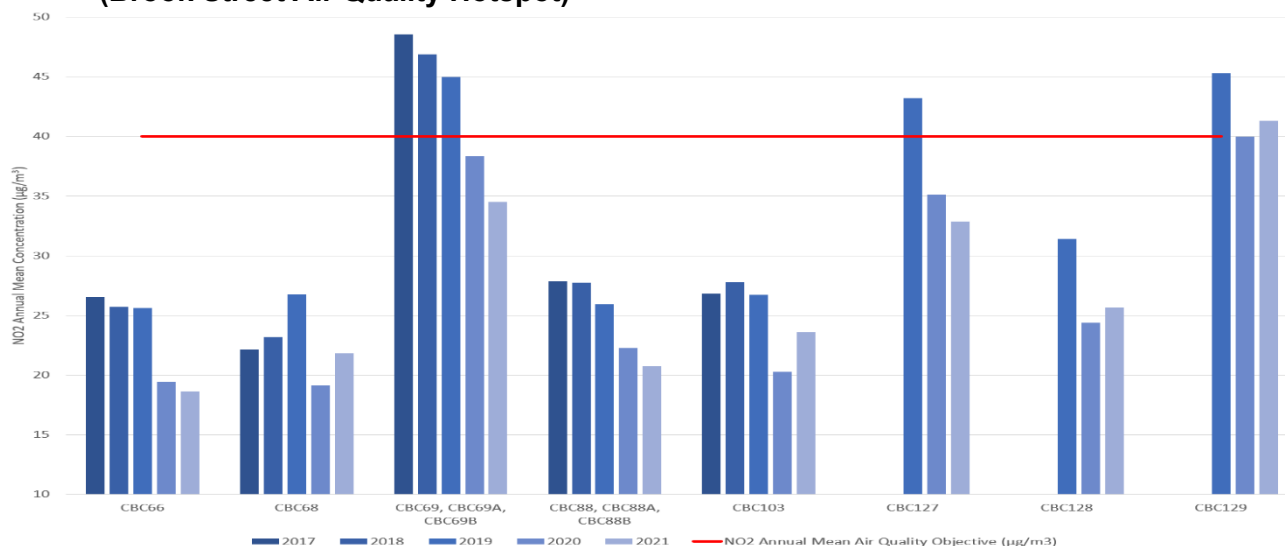
CBC71	6 Osborne Street	40.2	40.2
CBC129	37 Brook Street	41.3	41.3

6.1.4 However, it should be noted that even within these areas, pollution levels appear to be on a downward trend.

**Figure 1 – Trends in Diffusion Tube Annual Mean NO<sub>2</sub> Concentrations (Mersea Road Air Quality Hotspot)**



**Figure 2 – Trends in Diffusion Tube Annual Mean NO<sub>2</sub> Concentrations (Brook Street Air Quality Hotspot)**



6.1.5 The Council's priority for 2022/23 is to develop a new Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) which will focus on direct interventions to improve air quality at pollution hotspots. This new plan will involve partnership working with Essex County Council, and Essex Highways.

6.1.6 The Council continues to seek air quality improvements, through initiatives including the Ecargo Bike Delivery Service, Shared Transport Hubs, Electric Car Club scheme and other sustainable travel initiatives, an update on which will be provided to Members at the January Environment and Sustainability meeting, along with the CAREless Pollution No Idling Campaign, Roadside Signage and Community Art Project, an update on which has been provided below.

## 6.2 DEFRA Funded Signage – Psychological Messaging

6.2.1 In March 2020, Colchester City Council (CCC) was awarded £34,785 in funding from DEFRA for a study into the use of psychological behavior change messages on road signs. The study was undertaken in partnership with the University of Essex and aimed to explore the impact of road signage on engine switch offs and subsequent air quality within Colchester's Air Quality Management Area.

6.2.2 Research carried out by Kings College London identified that widespread adoption of switching off engines can cut pollution by up to 30% and the effects are immediate. In addition, it was identified through our community engagement with over 3,000 residents, schools and businesses that roadside signage would encourage 45% of drivers to switch off. Roadside signage therefore seemed an obvious intervention to explore to lower pollution within our AQMA's.

Each message used on the Colchester road signs was grounded in a different psychological approach to social influence identified for their effectiveness in short terms trials carried out by the University of East Anglia and the University of Kent in Norwich and Canterbury.

6.2.3 The four messages tested in the study were:

- 'Join other responsible drivers in Colchester Turn off your engine when the traffic lights are red/ barriers are down' (Social Norms – Responsibility Approach)
- 'Turn off your engine when the traffic lights are red/ barriers are down. You will improve air quality in this area' (Self – Efficacy Approach)
- 'Think about your actions. When the traffic lights are red/ barriers are down please switch off your engine' (Self-Regulation – Reflection Approach)
- 'Exhaust fumes build-up in your car while you wait. Switch off your engine. Protect your health' (Health Threat Alleviation Approach)

6.2.4 The trial was split into three studies:

Study 1, which ran from 15 February 2021 to 17 May 2021, aimed to identify which of three psychological messages encouraged the largest number of drivers to switch off their engines and whether the effects lasted once the signs were removed.

Study 2, which ran from 7 June 2021 to 1 October 2021, aimed to explore whether rotating three psychological messages every 3 weeks is more effective at getting drivers to switch off their engines than having one message displayed.

Study 3, which ran from December 2021 to 30 September 2022, aimed to identify if driver fatigue is a factor leading to a decrease in switch off rates and if so at what point messages stop being effective.

6.2.5 The messages were tested in three locations in the Air Quality Management Area, East Gates level crossing and the north and south end of Brook Street, the most polluted street in Colchester. Over the course of the trial, data was collected from **150,705** vehicles making this the largest study into roadside signage of its kind in the UK and over the longest period of time. It also saw a health threat alleviation message being tested for the first time.

6.2.6 The key findings from the signage study were:

1. Signage is a cost effective, low maintenance, measure that can achieve immediate results. Signage is proven, not just in this study but in trials in Norwich and Canterbury, to increase the number of engine switch offs which in turn reduces the level of harmful pollutants entering the air. Signage resulted in a peak average engine switch-off rate of 26% - an **increase of 11%** of drivers switching off their engines.

2. Some messages are more effective at encouraging behaviour change than others, the health threat alleviation and social norms responsibility messaging performed better than self-efficacy

and self-regulation messaging and led to a bigger increase in engine switch offs. Our research found messages performed better in certain locations, health performed best at East Gates and responsibility performed best at Brook Street.

3. Alternating signs is not more effective at encouraging behaviour change, our research found the opposite with the effectiveness of the messages reducing as the 4 signs rotated.

4. There is a positive spill over effect with people continuing to switch off their engines two weeks after the signage had been removed. This indicates that signs can be effective at forming habits.

5. Signs displayed for longer periods were more effective. Drivers did not get signage fatigue, on the contrary. The longer a sign is in place, the longer people are exposed to a message and the more powerful it becomes.

6. The University of Kent ran a trial testing similar psychological messaging on road signs. Their signs were up for 1 month (July – August) at 2 level crossings in Canterbury and they collected data from 6,000 vehicles. Their findings mirrored the CCC findings with their social norms responsibility signs leading to a 11.5% increase in engine switch offs and a reduction in PM2 at the level crossings, they have gone on to make their signage permanent.

6.2.7 Following the study Colchester City Council are making a recommendation to apply for planning permission to have the signage on Brook Street and East Gates put up permanently and to use the remainder of the DEFRA budget to identify and fund further locations within our AQMA's for signage.

### **6.3 CAREless Pollution No Idling Campaign**

6.3.1 Throughout 2021/22 the CAREless Pollution campaign has continued to build momentum in the community through work with residents, schools, businesses and community groups to tackle vehicle idling within the air quality management areas.

6.3.2 A schools' toolkit has been developed which includes learning resources, pollution monitors (loan only) pollution assembly, lesson plans, outdoor signage, postcards, posters and car stickers. We are currently working, to varying degrees, with 23 Colchester schools including St Thomas More and St James that sit within the Air Quality Management Area. Some of the work schools have delivered with our support can be found in our school handout in Appendix 1.

6.3.3 We have also been working with businesses including McDonalds, Bells School of Motoring, Driving Instructors Association, Knight West Estate Agents, Palmer and Partners, Ellisons Solicitors, Hiscox and St Helena's Hospice who have been receiving support on corporate no idling policies and have taken campaign materials to promote amongst their staff and stakeholders. St Helenas Hospice for example have put the CAREless Pollution engine switch off signs outside their retail outlets, donation centre, offices and the Hospice in Colchester. McDonalds have signage up at all 4 Colchester restaurants and have included the clean air films into their staff inductions.

6.3.4 We have taken an increased focus on takeaway firms and delivery drivers and have made contact with a number of takeaways including McDonalds, Dolphin Fish Bar and Kimichi House and delivery firms including Just Eat and Deliveroo. On Wednesday 16 November officers met with Deliveroo who currently employ 90,000 delivery drivers working with 60,000 restaurants across the UK. Deliveroo have agreed to work with the Council to tackle idling and encourage drivers to choose more sustainable forms of transport.

6.3.5 A volunteer toolkit has been developed and has been used by a number of local groups to tackle idling in their neighbourhoods including St Marys Residents Association, Mill Road Patient Participation Group and Ardleigh and Dedham Surgeries.

- 6.3.6 Over the Summer months a clean air stand visited events including the Eco Festival, Anti Loo Roll Brigade Festival, Myland Fun Day, Monkwick Family Fun Day and the New Town Fun Day, hundreds of local people took away campaign resources.
- 6.3.7 After the first 12 months of the campaign 56% of drivers surveyed said they were switching off their engines more than they were before, and this increased to 65% amongst drivers outside schools. The campaign has been nationally recognised and was awarded Highly Commended in Edie's National Sustainability Leaders Awards 2022. It is currently funded until June 2023. The next phase of evaluation will start early in 2023 with the findings shared to the Environment and Sustainability Panel upon completion.

## **6.4 Home Burning Campaign**

- 6.4.1 The Home burning campaign ran for four months from December '21 through to March '22. The aim was to raise awareness of the health impacts of pollution generated by home fires and log burners, specifically Particulate Matter (PM2.5) and provide information to help local 'burners' take positive action to reduce these risks and 'burn safe', 'burn better', 'burn clean' and 'burn less'. The campaign included public engagement events, social media, a home burning web page, and the development of resources including an information leaflet, posters, infographics and pull up banner. Through the course of the campaign there was:
- Over 900 face to face home burning conversations with local residents
  - 10 home burning events delivered across 5 locations
  - 178 visits to the [Colchester.gov.uk/homeburning](https://colchester.gov.uk/homeburning) webpage
  - 8 posts were shared across the Eco Colchester and Enjoy Colchester Facebook and Twitter pages with the potential of each post being seen by 26,500 residents
  - 1 online article published
  - Over 1200 materials distributed
- 6.4.2 In November 2021, prior to the launch of the campaign, 67% of people (based on 63 responses in our on-street polls) were aware that open fires and log burners generated pollution that could damage their health. In April 2022 the number of respondents who said they were aware of the health impacts had increased to 86% (+19%). In November 2021 73% of people (on-street poll) did not know that fires and log burners in the home produce the same amount of pollution as 18 family diesel cars. In April 2022 70% of respondents didn't know the levels of pollution from fires and log burners (+3% more aware).
- 6.4.3 We are re-running the campaign this winter targeting those that already use fires and stoves providing information on smokeless fuels and dry wood which are better for both the health and the environment. This year we will also be working with community colleagues and partners to reach residents who are thinking of using their home fires for the first time as we suspect that due to the energy crisis people might be tempted to open their blocked fires and burn anything they can get for free due to the high costs of heating, this is evidenced anecdotally and through posts we have seen on local social media.

## **6.5 Campaign Legacies**

- 6.5.1 Community Art Project: In September 2022 the Council appointed local outdoor artist Adrian LeRoy to work with the community to design a clean air artwork. We have identified a number of suitable locations for the artwork including the Papa John's wall at the bottom of North Hill and three further locations in and around Brook Street. It is a requirement of the funding that the artwork relates to clean air and is located within an AQMA. Discussions have taken place with a number of local groups including Colchester Civic Society and North Residents Association around the potential Papa John's location and we have taken their feedback on board as we continue work to finalise a location and design for the artwork which will be a legacy for the project. The team are working

closely with the CCC planning department to ensure all planning regulations are met in regards to the location and design of the artwork.

- 6.5.2 Clean Air Colchester: Clean Air Colchester are a voluntary group who partnered with the Council in 2020 to help develop and deliver the CAREless Pollution campaign. Part of our funding commitments are to grow and support Clean Air Colchester so they are in a position to continue their work once the funding ends. Part of this has involved bringing Clean Air Colchester under EnForm to give them the status and support they need to apply for their own funding going forward. EnForm is also supporting Clean Air Colchester with its web hosting and funding has been set aside to cover website updates and hosting for future years. Over the last 12 Months (October 2021 to October 2022) the Clean Air Colchester group has grown from 101 members in 2020, 138 in 2021, to 193 in 2022. Members of the group have been organising their own clean air activities and the group met earlier this year to decide on what they would like to focus on collectively. Going forward we will be looking to create some more defined roles within the group that volunteers can step into to make it easier for people to take an active role.

## **6.6 DEFRA Bid 2022**

- 6.6.1 In September 2022, CBC submitted a bid to DEFRA for a further £310,770 in funding to support its clean air work. The aim of our 2022/23 bid is to continue to tackle pollution levels within our air quality management areas by building on our successful work since 2019 in raising awareness of air quality, encouraging the community to switch off their engines, encouraging walking and cycling, providing shared transport options and an ecargo bike delivery service.
- 6.6.2 Through Essex County Council, the Town Deal funding, Levelling Up Bids and Town Centre Master Planning work, improvements in walking and cycling routes into the town centre are planned. However, our community engagement over the past year has identified gaps in support and understanding over and above the provision of high-quality infrastructure that still prevent people from adopting sustainable transport as a means for daily transport.
- 6.6.3 Our proposals seek to address this gap in knowledge and understanding through focused work with businesses, schools and local residents to co-design solutions that support a change in travel behaviour to low emission transport for journeys of up to 3 miles into the City Centre.

## **6.7 Knowledge Sharing**

- 6.7.1 CCC has continued its knowledge sharing commitments providing information and advice to a number of organisations including Uttlesford District Council, Three Rivers Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Chelmsford District Council and the North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group. The Council have also been asked to present at a range of forums including the Essex Air Group, Greener Practices Essex and Suffolk Forum and the Mill Road Surgery Patient Participation Group. Earlier this year the Council's CAREless Pollution no idling campaign received national recognition at the Edie Sustainability Leaders Awards receiving Highly Commended in the Consumer Engagement Campaign of the Year Category.

## **7. Standard References**

- 7.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.





CAREless Pollution is working with schools across Colchester to raise awareness of the importance of clean air, and the sources of air pollution. The campaign can support your school with ideas and materials. Here are some examples of the activities taking place in local schools which we hope will inspire your school to get involved.

### St Thomas More's Primary School

Pupils have been making use of the **free loan of our portable monitors** to take air quality readings outside their school. They also took part in a **street demonstration** on Clear Air Day to raise awareness among passing vehicles



### St James' Primary School

Pupils have hosted a Clean Air Day awareness raising event and put up the CAREless Pollution campaign **banner outside their school** to remind vehicle drivers to switch off their engines at drop-off and pick-up. They have also completed the Key Stage 2 activities, **made a pledge** about how they will help to bring air pollution levels down, **wrote letters** to their parents/carers and **planted trees**.



### St John's Green Primary School

Today is Clean Air Day and the theme is 'Protecting Children's Health from Air Pollution'. 🌱🌿🍃  
Breathing bad air from air pollution can cause heart problems and stroke and it is linked to 1 in 20 deaths in Colchester. Find out more at [www.colchester.gov.uk/cleanair](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/cleanair)

### St John's Green Primary School

The school has been engaging with both pupils and parents, making use of **free campaign materials** by sending out a postcard in each

child's book bag. They have used our template **social media graphics** to raise awareness on the school's Facebook page and put up an **outdoor banner** in the turning circle outside the school entrance.



### Colchester Prep & High School

To mark Clean Air Day, in June 2022, the Headteacher used the **ready-to-go assembly presentation** in our Toolkit for Schools. In addition, members of the school's **Eco Club** have been monitoring air pollution in the streets surrounding the school and devising a range of solutions, notably planting urban vegetation, to help improve air quality. **Outdoor signs** have been placed at both entrances to remind visitors to the school to switch off their engines. The school has just been awarded the Eco Schools Green Flag.



### Cherry Tree Academy

Pupils decorated the CAREless Pollution campaign emoji masks in a creative activity to explore how air pollution makes them feel. Pupils also participated in a **whole-school assembly** and undertook **air quality monitoring**.

### St Mary's School

Year 8 pupils, all members of the school's **Eco Team**, used monitoring sheets and **portable air quality monitors** to measure air quality outside their busy Lexden Road site. The results were shared with other pupils at the school during a themed **assembly**.



**Do you feel inspired?** Our free Toolkit for Schools has everything you need to help pupils understand about air pollution and the actions they can take to improve air quality, including:

- ★ Assembly presentation
- ★ Short film
- ★ Class based activity sheets linked to the curriculum
- ★ Free loan of portable air quality monitors and monitoring sheets

You can download the Toolkit for Schools at [www.cleanaircolchester.org](http://www.cleanaircolchester.org) in the 'For Schools' section.





29 November 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer ☎ 508965
Title	Climate Emergency Action Plan Update		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report details key progress made with the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), and other relevant updates since September 2022.

1.2 Progress/Updates include:

- Updates to the Council's [sustainability and climate action webpages](#) have taken place. This includes the production of a [new infographic](#) showcasing key highlights and achievements made in 2021-2022 related to the climate emergency action plan, plus a refresh of content on all the webpages, in anticipation of the launch of the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan in January 2023.
- The Planning Policy team have been working on **3 new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** on Active Travel, Biodiversity and Climate Change, that will help to provide more detailed guidance on policies in the Local Plan. They are a material consideration in decision making and will be presented to the Local Plan Committee in early 2023 ahead of a public consultation.
- The **first electric car club car** is due to be launched w/c 14<sup>th</sup> November. This will enable people to borrow the car for one-off journeys, contributing to reducing ownership of private vehicles. Other areas are currently being sought out for locating a second electric car.
- The Council's **home burning campaign** will be launching again, to make people aware of the air quality issues associated with open fires and wood burners and to promote responsible burning of fuels (such as dry, seasoned wood). An additional focus will look at ensuring people are not burning other potentially harmful substances on open fires in an attempt to keep warm.
- The Council will be launching a trial of the **city centre eCargo bike concierge service** in the lead up to Christmas, working with the BID. This will enable customers to have their shopping transported home by eCargo bike on the same or next day, to enable people to enjoy the Christmas activities taking place in the town centre.
- Progress with the **refurbishment and retrofit of Rowan House** has been going to plan, with the space due to open for staff working early in 2023. This project has involved the installation of an air source heat pump to decarbonise the heating, as well as roof insulation installed alongside LED lighting and a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system which will contribute to increasing the energy efficiency of the building.
- On 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the **EA Sustain Festival** is taking place at Firstsite. The event aims to raise awareness and action on sustainability within the culture and entrepreneur sectors. There will be talks with authors, artists and scientists throughout the day, with the event being opened by Lord Deben, Chairman of the [Climate Change Committee](#), the UK's independent advisor on climate change.

- En-Form have been working on opening an **environment centre** named 'Centre for Learning, the Environment and Action for the Future (LEAF)' in the town centre. The centre is still being prepared but will soon be open to host events, workshops, talks and will include a food waste café. The Council will look to engage with En-Form to explore opportunities for collaboration and promotion of the space. The centre will be based in 27-28 Priory Walk.
- **Climate Action Challenge Fund** made available by Essex County Council for communities to apply to carry out projects that tackle climate related challenges. Community groups, parish councils, charities and schools can bid for funding of up to £20,000. More information about the fund is available at [www.essex.gov.uk/leisure-culture-local-heritage/culture-and-communities](http://www.essex.gov.uk/leisure-culture-local-heritage/culture-and-communities). So far 11 applications have been received from organisations based in Colchester.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the report and to provide any guidance on the progress being made with areas of the action plan, or ongoing work in these areas. Of particular interest, councillors are pointed towards the creation of the SPDs, and to advise on anything they would like reflected in these documents, in terms of guidance to developers.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure that the Panel is content with the progress made to date and has the chance to feedback on ongoing work.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not Applicable

## 5. Key updates

- 5.1 The Council has updated its [sustainability webpages](#) to give residents more information about how the Council is tackling climate change and reducing the environmental impact of the Council and the borough. An [infographic](#) is provided summarising key achievements in 2021-22, alongside a summary of the projects and activities happening under each of the themes in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan. Additionally further information has been added on what residents can do to reduce their environmental impact, including links to organisations and resources that can support. A document summarising all the options will be uploaded in early 2023, alongside our detailed, updated Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Planning Policy Team is working on three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that are relevant to the climate and ecological emergency. SPDs should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. SPDs do not form part of the development plan and so cannot introduce new planning policies. They should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development. Once adopted, SPDs are a material consideration in decision-making. The three SPDs the Planning Policy Team are working on are: Active Travel, Biodiversity and Climate Change. These SPDs will build upon policies DM20, DM21, ENV1, CC1 and DM25 of the [Section 2 Local Plan](#). It is expected that draft SPDs will be presented to Local Plan Committee early in the new year ahead of a period of public consultation.
- 5.3 The Council is due to launch the first electric car club car in week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> November. This project will enable people to have access to the electric car for one off journeys, helping to reduce the need for private vehicles for some residents. The first car will be based at Priory Street car park and the Council has got a second electric car, and is currently looking for sites to situate this. Working with Enterprise Car Club, the Council hopes to expand the number of car club cars it has available for residents to use over the coming years.
- 5.4 Working with the Business Improvement District (BID) and eCargo bike delivery service, the Council will be setting up a trial of the eCargo bike concierge service in the run up to Christmas. The trial, operating on late night shopping evenings, weekends and the week before Christmas, will offer town centre shoppers the opportunity to have their shopping delivered to their home on the same or next day by eCargo bike, enabling them to enjoy the Christmas activities taking place in the city centre. Communications for this will take place with the BID. It is hoped that the project can be developed following the trial, including looking at a solution for shopping to be delivered to lockers located in out of town car parks for residents to pick up once they've finished spending time in the city centre.
- 5.5 The Council is relaunching its home burning campaign, that was first run last year, to make people aware of the air quality impacts from using wood burning stoves and open fires, and to remind people to use burn responsibly using 'ready to burn' logs and other fuels. More information on this can be found on the [Council's website](#). The team are focussing on this element of the project, particularly as some people will be looking to burn any products in their fires which may keep them warm, but may actually be very harmful to their health. Many of these people may not have used their open fire recently too so their could potentially be issues with build up of tar or soot in their chimneys which they may be unaware of and could cause risks such as chimney fires.
- 5.6 Progress with the refurbishment and retrofit of Rowan House has been going to plan, with the space due to open for staff working early in 2023. This project has involved the installation of an air source heat pump to decarbonise the heating, as well as roof insulation installed alongside LED lighting and a mechanical ventilation and heat

recovery system which will contribute to increasing the energy efficiency of the building. The space will also open with the 12 new electric vehicle charge points to support the Council's electric vehicle transition, which are ready to go live w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022.

- 5.7 On 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the [EA Sustain Festival](#) is taking place at Firstsite. The event aims to raise awareness and action on sustainability within the culture and entrepreneur sectors. There will be talks with authors, artists and scientists throughout the weekend on a variety of topics such as farming, rewilding, circular business and seeing how these interact with the arts, culture and business. The event is being opened by Lord Deben, Chairman of the [Climate Change Committee](#), the UK's independent advisor on climate change, and will include other notable speakers including Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, Helen Macdonald, renowned author of the book 'H is for Hawk' and Professor Alastair Driver, Director of Rewilding Britain.
- 5.8 En-Form, Colchester's environment charity, have acquired a building (27-28 Priory Walk, opposite Sainsbury's) to set up a local environment centre, to provide further opportunities for outreach and engagement with the community on environmental matters. The centre for 'Learning, the Environment and Action for the Future' (LEAF) will be opening soon, with plans to hold workshops, talks and activities in the space, along with a food waste café. The space will be able to be hired out for any events that organisations would like to hold in it. The Council will follow the developments of the centre, and will explore how the space can be used for any engagement around environmental issues
- 5.9 Essex County Council have launched a [Climate Action Challenge Fund](#) pot for communities to bid into to carry out projects that tackle a climate related challenge. Community groups, parish councils, charities and schools amongst others can bid for funding of up to £20,000 and is open until March 31, 2023 or until funds last. Further information about the fund and its guidelines can be found [here](#). This information has been circulated with Community 360, Town and Parish Clerks and all councillors. So far 11 applications have been received from organisations in Colchester.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 This report has no equality, diversity and human rights implications.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 All of the updates provided in this report contribute to the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 theme of 'Tackling the Climate Challenge and Sustainability'.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 There are no consultation considerations for this paper, although several of the projects referenced have consultation elements within them and success in tackling climate change will involve engagement and education of others to influence behaviour change more widely.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 There are no specific publicity considerations.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 There are no specific financial implications from this paper.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

11.1 There are no specific community safety implications from this paper.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 There are no risk management implications from this update.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 The updates mentioned in this report are all relevant to tackling climate change and/or improving the environment. Actions and projects highlighted in the report all have co-benefits outside of environmental improvements for residents.



## Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item  
**10**

29 November 2022

Report of	Assistant Director Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Matthew Evans ☎ ext. 8006
Title	Work Programme 2022-2023		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Environment and Sustainability Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

### 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the Work Programme for 2022-2023.

### 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Work Programme of this Panel is kept under review throughout the municipal year to ensure that business is progressed and Members have the opportunity to review upcoming agenda items.

### 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

### 5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Environment and Sustainability Panel deals with existing and emerging environmental issues, and will focus on carbon footprint reduction and monitoring and supporting the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Panel's Work Programme will evolve as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the Work Programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.

## 6. Standard References

- 6.1 There are no particular references to publicity or consultation considerations; or financial; equality, diversity and human rights; community safety; health and safety, environmental and sustainability implications or risk management implications.

## 7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 Environmental Sustainability is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan's priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the four themes of growth, responsibility, opportunity and wellbeing.

### WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

<b>Environment and Sustainability Panel</b>
<b>Meeting date / Agenda items -</b>
Environment and Sustainability Panel - <b>22 June 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Overview of progress on climate emergency</li><li>2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – progress update.</li></ol>
Environment and Sustainability Panel – <b>19 July 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy</li><li>2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update</li></ol>
Environment and Sustainability Panel – <b>20 September 2022</b>
Meeting postponed.



Environment and Sustainability Panel – <b>02 November 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft Climate Emergency Action Plan reiteration</li> <li>2. Colchester Waste &amp; Recycling Strategy Development</li> <li>3. Woodland and Biodiversity Project update</li> </ol>
Environment and Sustainability Panel – <b>29 November 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carbon Management Plan and the Council's Emissions</li> <li>2. Clean Air for Colchester</li> <li>3. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update</li> </ol>
Environment and Sustainability Panel – <b>31 January 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Active Travel and Electric Vehicles Update</li> <li>2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update</li> </ol>
Environment and Sustainability Panel – <b>21 March 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Waste and Recycling Strategy Update</li> <li>2. Climate Emergency Action Plan update/Summary of the year</li> </ol>

