

22 June 2023

Report of	Strategic Director of Place and Prosperity	Author	Ben Plummer
Title	Climate Emergency Action Plan Update		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report details key progress and updates from actions in the [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) (CEAP), and other relevant updates since the last meeting on 21st March 2023.

1.2 Key highlights include:

- The production of the **Carbon Cutting Essex** app by Essex County Council that provides tips and advice to inform residents about how they can cut their carbon footprint. The app will provide quizzes, videos, blogs and pledges which residents can complete to get points which can be put towards rewards or donated to charities.
- Opening of the **Secure Bike Park** in Portal Precinct, providing space for residents to lock their bike in a pin coded facility for £1 per day. The facility will also house an electric bike and electric cargo bike pay as you go scheme, with Colchester Bike Kitchen neighbouring it, providing tools and support to help people fix their own bikes.
- Approval of planning permission for the **Newtown Bike Hub**, that will provide 3 electric cargo bikes that residents can rent out.
- A proposal is being developed to replace the current sand **filtration system at Leisure World with an innovative system** which works by cleaning and returning heated pool water instead of filtering the heated water and flushing to drain thus saving water as well as the energy required to heat the pool top-up water.
- An **Energy Manager** has been appointed to analyse the Council's energy usage and identify ways to monitor and reduce energy use in buildings to operate more efficiently.
- A **planning application** is being developed for the creation of the **solar farm and microgrid** at Seven Saints Farm that will progress this project to supply renewable electricity to the Northern Gateway development.
- Participating in a **project to increase the collection of food waste** from properties with wheeled bins. The pilot is being co-ordinated by Essex County Council, using communications and bin stickers to reduce food waste being disposed of in general waste wheeled bins.
- Delivery of over **£300,000 of funding** for energy efficiency improvements for private sector homes through the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 3.

- Securing funding as part of a consortium for delivery of energy efficiency improvements for private sector homes off the gas grid through the **Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2**.
- Securing over **£1m of funding** from the **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund** for energy efficiency improvements to the 105 of the lowest energy performing properties in the housing stock.
- Continued availability of **free adult cycle training** of varying levels from beginner to advanced level training, to improve cycling confidence and understanding of how to cycle safely.
- Return of the **Eco Festival on 2nd September 2023** in Lower Castle Park, providing stalls and activities for people to learn more about ways they can live greener lifestyles. The Council will attend this event with a range of stalls on its environmental projects and work.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the report and ask any questions they have about the updates provided or progress of any actions in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

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. Background Information

Key updates

Carbon Cutting Essex App

- 5.1 Essex County Council have launched an app in collaboration with [Green Redeem](#) to help residents understand more about their carbon footprint and what actions they can take to lower it through lifestyle changes. The 'Carbon Cutting Essex' app will provide quizzes, blogs, videos and other activities on a weekly basis on a variety of different topics including food, waste, energy and transport. In return for completing activities, residents get 'points' which can be redeemed for rewards such as vouchers, entry into prize draws or donated to charities. The Carbon Cutting Essex app can be downloaded from the App Store, Google Play or the [Green Redeem website](#). CCC will ensure the app is promoted internally to staff as well as to town and parish councils and communities.

Secure Bike Park

- 5.2 The [Secure Bike Park](#) in Portal Precinct in the City Centre has opened with 23 bookable spaces for bikes to be locked up. Residents can now book a space to lock up their bike in the pin locked facility (with CCTV installed outside too) using the [Spokesafe](#) app. Bikes can be locked up at a cost of £1 per day with differing rates for weekly and monthly use. Additionally, electric bikes and electric cargo bikes will shortly be available for residents to hire on a pay as you go basis from this facility. [Colchester Bike Kitchen](#) are also in the neighbouring building to the secure bike park, providing support to help people fix and maintain the condition of their own bikes on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons.

Newtown Bike Hub

- 5.3 Planning permission has been approved for the installation of a bike shelter to store 3 electric cargo bikes for the Newtown Bike Hub scheme. The bikes will be available for residents to rent, with the bike hub being managed by the community including GO4 café and other volunteers. More information about a launch date for the hub will be circulated with councillors when available.

Water filtration system at Leisure World

- 5.4 A proposal being is developed to replace the current sand filtration system at Leisure World with an innovative system. This system would work by cleaning and returning heated pool water to the pools instead of filtering the heated water and flushing to drain. By doing this, the system would reduce water use as well as the energy required to heat the pool top-up water.

Energy Manager

- 5.5 An Energy Manager has recently started in post at the Council, with the aim of implementing systems to better monitor energy use in Council buildings as well as identifying opportunities to reduce energy use through behavioural and technological actions. With bills rising, this role is an important step to help the Council save money as well as cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Solar Farm planning permission

- 5.6 The Council is working with the consultant Push Energy to produce a planning application for the creation of a solar farm and microgrid at Seven Saints Farm. This would provide renewable electricity to the Northern Gateway development, providing the development with greener electricity, and providing a revenue stream for the Council through the sale of electricity to end users.

Food waste recycling project

- 5.7 The Council is participating in a project coordinated by Essex County Council that aims to increase the recycling of food waste, minimising the amount that is put in residual waste. This project is taking place across Colchester in June-July 2023 in properties that have wheeled bin collections for general waste. Each property would now have received compostable food waste liners, an information leaflet and a 'no food waste' sticker to be placed on the general waste bin, to encourage the behaviour change to avoid food waste being placed in general waste bins.

Domestic Energy Efficiency

- 5.8 The Council has delivered over £300,000 of funding to improve the energy efficiency of properties where residents were on low incomes and living in energy inefficient properties. This funding has gone towards installing a range of energy efficiency measures including cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and more. These improvements were funded through the Government funded Local Authority Delivery Scheme Phase 3 (LAD3), part of the overall [Sustainable Warmth Competition](#). The scheme has closed, with spend on the scheme being finalised and this will be shared with councillors when appropriate.
- 5.9 Building on the funding distributed in LAD3, the Council has been successful as part of a consortium of other local authorities in receiving funding from the Government's [Home Upgrade Grant Scheme Phase 2](#) (HUG2). This funding will be spent between Autumn 2023-March 2025 to improve the energy efficiency of, and to decarbonise properties that, are off the gas grid (i.e. main fuel for heating is not gas such as coal or oil) and where residents are on low incomes or receive eligible benefits. The scheme will be targeted at key areas in Colchester where residents are most likely to be eligible based on the parameters set out by Government, to improve the locality of delivery. CCC staff will be in contact with relevant councillors within target areas in due course to help with promotion of the scheme to residents.
- 5.10 The Council has received just over £1m from the Government's [Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund](#) to improve the energy efficiency of the lowest energy performing homes in the housing stock. These improvements will make 105 homes more environmentally friendly, whilst also reducing energy bills for the residents.

Free Adult Cycle Training

- 5.11 Essex County Council are continuing to provide access to free adult cycle training, to improve cycling confidence. These 1:1 sessions range from the 'adult learn to ride' sessions for adults at a beginner riding level to 'adult advanced cycling' which gives users advice on road positioning, cycling on faster roads and at junctions and roundabouts. Completing the 'adult advanced cycling' training is a condition of being able to use the pay as you go electric bike and electric cargo bikes in the secure bike park, as

well as for staff to use any of the Council's electric and electric cargo bikes. Find out more information, including the registration form for sessions [here](#).

Eco Festival

- 5.12 The [Eco Festival](#) is taking place for the 3rd year running in Lower Castle Park on 2nd September 2023 from 11am-6pm. The free event aims to raise awareness of environmental actions people can take to live more sustainably. There will be stalls from local businesses, charities and organisations all providing information to residents on what they're doing for the environment and how residents can help, alongside a range of different activities and music for all ages. The Council will be in attendance at the event, talking about several of our environmental projects including biodiversity, waste and recycling and active travel projects. More promotion about the event will come out as the date approaches.

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 2023-2026 theme of 'Respond to the climate emergency'.

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 direct financial implications of the updates provided in this report.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Several of the updates in this report include benefits to health and wellbeing such as the delivery of grant funding for improving the energy efficiency of domestic properties that will help increase comfort and reduce the instance of illness associated with cold homes. Providing more facilities, and access to training, to support cycling will also help encourage more residents to cycle more which can benefit physical and mental health.
- 11.2 There are no anticipated impacts on community safety from the project updates presented in this report.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications from this report.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no risk management implications from this update.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The project updates in this report all aim to reduce emissions and environmental impacts across the Council. Many of the projects aim to reduce energy use to increase energy efficiency. There are some projects that will have an embedded carbon impact (for example the materials to create the solar farm), but the design of this project has been considered for the beneficial environmental impacts it can deliver such as the renewable electricity output as well as potential to create wildflower areas between panels to support biodiversity.