

Environment and Sustainability Panel Meeting

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

Wednesday, 02 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

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<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
Wednesday, 02 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.

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 22 June 2022 and 19 July 2022 are a correct record.

Environment and Sustainability Panel draft minutes 22-06-22 7 - 12

Environment and Sustainability Panel draft minutes 19-07-22 13 - 18

6 **Have Your Say! (Hybrid meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Council via Zoom. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Council remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition, a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

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



7 **Climate Emergency Action Plan - new iteration** 19 - 100

The Panel will consider a report asking it to review the proposed new iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, and seeking feedback about actions in the Plan, and how it can be communicated to residents as a source of education and inspiration.

8 **Recycling and Waste Strategy development proposal** 101 - 108

The Panel will consider a report requesting that it agree to undertake work to develop a new Strategy for Recycling and Waste.

9 **Woodland & Biodiversity Project Update** 109 - 120

The Panel will consider a report setting out and reviewing the progress that has been made through the Woodland and

Biodiversity Project, which is now in year 4 of its five-year programme

- 10 **Environment and Sustainability Work Programme 2022-2023** 121 -
The Panel will consider a report setting out its work programme for 124
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

22 June 2022

Present: Councillor Tracey Arnold (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Molly Bloomfield
Councillor Michelle Burrows
Councillor Andrew Ellis
Councillor Mark Goacher
Councillor Sue Lissimore
Councillor Kayleigh Rippingale
Councillor Lee Scordis (Chair)
Councillor Michael Spindler

Substitutes:

68. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the meetings held on 22 March 2022 and 25 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

69. Overview of progress on Environment and Sustainability

Ben Plummer, Climate Emergency Project Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Officer's report provided the Panel with an overview of the progress which had been made in the preceding municipal year.

The Panel were advised that as part of declaring a Climate Emergency, Colchester Borough Council (the Council) had resolved to reduce its emissions to net zero by 2030. The Council had established a baseline of its emissions in 2018/2019, and the most recent calculations, which had been completed for the financial year 2020/2021, showed that there had been a 17.4% reduction in emissions compared to the baseline figures. The net zero target included gas, electricity and water consumption in all the Council's buildings, and work had recently been undertaken to estimate emissions associated with working from home. Fuel consumption from the Council's fleet was also considered, together with the emissions associated with staff commuting and business travel.

Considered separately to the Council's net zero emission target were what is known as 'scope three' emissions, which were indirect emissions associated with goods and services procured by the Council. Also included in scope three emissions were buildings which the Council owned and leased out, and the Council's own housing stock.

The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan consisted of eight themes and over fifty actions, and the themes were:

1. Reducing emissions from our buildings and fleet to help achieve a net zero carbon footprint by 2030
2. Produce renewable energy
3. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment
4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester
5. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle
6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development
7. Ensure sustainable planning and development
8. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment

Highlights of achievements under each theme over the preceding municipal year had been set out in the Officer's report.

Officers had identified key areas of priority for the forthcoming municipal year. Work would be carried out on a new Carbon Management Plan for the Council in conjunction with a consultant to examine the Council's estate to determine whether improvements in emissions, energy efficiency and carbon reduction could be made. Work with key partner organisations in the borough would continue, for example Essex County Council and the University of Essex to ensure that any synergies in the work of partner organisations could be taken advantage of. Examples of joint projects included oyster conservation and the reduction of single use plastics by business in the town centre. Communities were to be encouraged to take action on environmental issues, in line with the Council's approach around asset based community development, through the use of existing projects such as local bicycle hubs and bicycle kitchens.

Several strategies would be developed through the forthcoming year, including the Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the Council's Waste and Recycling Strategy. These Strategies would be carried forward with the input from the Council's Environment and Sustainability Panel and the Policy Panel.

Active and sustainable travel was to be promoted through the introduction of secure bicycle parking in the town centre, together with shared travel hubs where e-bikes and e-cargo bicycles would be available for use on a pay per use basis. These projects were innovative and their success would be monitored very carefully. Electric car charging points would also be available for the public to use in the Council's Priory Street car park, and consideration would be given to other suitable sites for the installation of additional charging points. Areas which had been identified in the Council's Positive Parking Strategy would be explored to determine whether or not alternative parking locations could be identified away from the town centre, and it was intended to develop a Supplementary Planning Document on Climate Change and Sustainability, which would provide additional guidance to developers.

The Council was aware that emissions would remain which still needed to be reduced by the 2030 target, and work to understand these was to be undertaken in conjunction with a consultant, Anthesis Group, who had been developing a concept called Authority Based Insetting which could allow a Council to reduce carbon emissions by offsetting these locally.

A Panel member noted that one of the aims of the Council's Community Engagement Team was to support residents carrying out tasks such as weeding of paths and they wondered how communications in respect of this would be managed, so that residents were aware that the Council may not be clearing certain areas. How would the Council's contracts with grounds maintenance contractors be managed to ensure that good value for residents was still being delivered if some pathways were no longer being tended to? Mandy Jones, Assistant Director Place and Client Services confirmed to the Panel that a variety of methods would be used to control weeds, with a varied cutting regime used for shrub borders and tree bases. The use of non-glyphosate herbicides had been trialled on hard surfaces and the efficacy of these methods would be monitored. It was accepted that communicating the Council's maintenance policy and the reasoning behind this effectively to residents may pose a challenge, and careful consideration was being given to the provision of effective communications in the future. A Panel member noted that the Council's current grounds maintenance contractor was under contract for a further three years, after which time it had been the recommendation of the Council's Policy Panel that the work be brought back 'in house', subject to the necessary Cabinet approvals.

A Panel member enquired about the use that had been made of the Council's Park Active scheme, and it was proposed that more comprehensive information about the project be provided to the Panel as part of the Active Travel and Electric Vehicles Update which was scheduled to be an agenda item at the January meeting of the Panel.

In response to an enquiry from a Panel member, Ben Plummer explained that the Council used a methodology published by a consultancy called EcoAct when calculating emissions associated with working from home. It was possible to estimate emissions associated with working from home by using a series of average energy consumption figures, and the Council had also undertaken a staff survey to gain further insight into staff behaviours. Obtaining this information would enable an informed estimate of energy consumption to be made, and a comparison with the emissions associated with staff commuting to work suggested that there was a slight benefit in staff working from home in terms of the emissions generated.

At the request of a Panel member, it was confirmed that the survival rate of the trees which the Council had planted in eleven different green spaces was between 75% and 94% as at September 2021. The Panel heard that once the trees became larger then it would be necessary to thin them out as part of the management of the green spaces. Site visits were offered to Panel members who wished to obtain more details on how areas of planted woodland were managed. The use of glyphosate weedkillers had now been phased out completely on green spaces owned and managed by the Council, and Colchester Borough Homes had also ceased using these chemicals.

The Panel heard that work had been carried out with one primary school, the Unity Primary Academy in Greenstead, using funding provided by the Local Government Association to support a project designed to champion environmental engagement activities. Funding had been obtained to enable the school to continue to work with the organisation Together We Grow in the future to create green spaces at the school. The Council did carry out regular engagement with schools around issues such as air quality, and was supporting The Essex Schools Green Day in July 2022, which was a county-wide day devoted to learning about environmental issues, and celebrating the progress made by schools in reducing their environmental impact. Additional resources would be shared with other schools during the week of the Essex Schools Green Day. Additional project work had been undertaken with schools across the borough, for example in relation to the Woodland and Biodiversity Project when schools had designed signage to explain to the public the new methods of land management which were being adopted. The Panel offered its support in the future with encouraging schools to become involved with future projects.

A Panel member praised the educational materials that had been provided to schools in conjunction with the Council's CARless scheme, and confirmed that they had shared the videos provided by the Council in support of this scheme. There was discussion around the CARless signage which had been placed at pollution hotspots around the town encouraging motorists to turn off their engines, and it was confirmed to the Panel that signage had been removed and replaced during the scheme in order to test the effect that it had on engine switch offs. At the conclusion of the scheme, work would be undertaken with the University of Essex to assess whether the project had achieved its aims. The Panel was very supportive of the continued use of signage, and additionally thought that consideration should be given to attempting to obtain countdown traffic light timers which showed motorists how long they would have to wait at a set of traffic lights, with the aim of encouraging engines to be switched off. Interim data which had been collected demonstrated that more car engines were switched off when the signage was displayed, and engine switch offs had also increased around schools as a result of the campaign. The Panel would review the campaign in more detail as part of the scheduled agenda for its meeting in November 2022.

The Panel requested clarification from Officers around the difference between emission offsetting and insetting, and were advised that the difference between the two terms was that insetting was emission offsetting work which was carried out within the local area, and therefore remained more under the control of the Council. The idea behind insetting work was that local emission reducing projects would be created which could include tree planting, the provision of e-cargo bicycles and working with the private sector and other organisations as potential funding sources for the projects. It was not anticipated that this work would be able to be undertaken in the near future, however, the preparatory work which was taking place would be of key importance to making the projects successful. Work was planned to take place with the Kent Wildlife Trust on a pilot site within Colchester to gain an idea of the potential impact a project such as wetland restoration may have on reducing emissions.

A Panel member had received comments that the voltage provided to the Council's Priory Street car park electric vehicle charging points was inadequate, and additionally had noted that emissions associated with staff business travel were higher than those associated with commuting. By way of response, Ben Plummer confirmed that the power provided to the Priory Street charging points was 22 kilowatts, which should be sufficient to fully charge a car in under 4 hours. It was possible that if all 3 charging points were being used at the same time then there may be a dip in the power provided, but nothing of this nature had been reported as yet. The difference between emissions could be explained by the fact that during the financial year 2020/2021 staff commuting had reduced dramatically due to the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning that required business travel, for site visits for example, had overtaken commuting in terms of emissions generated.

The Panel supported the 8 core themes which had been outlined in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, however, it was suggested that an additional theme could be added around communication. The additional theme could be split into 2 parts; encouraging local residents to get more involved in the Council's ecological projects such as tree planting, and communications explaining why the Council was taking the action that it was taking, and highlighting the successful results of projects. Mandy Jones confirmed to the Panel that the issue of communications was currently being considered as part of a wider strategic narrative, and this area of work could be referred back to the Panel in the future.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report summarising progress on environment and sustainability be noted;

AND that: the Council's related priorities for the coming year had been reviewed and approved.

70. Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

Ben Plummer, Climate Emergency Project Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that actions and highlights from Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s Climate Emergency Action Plan were presented to it at every meeting.

A Panel member requested more detail around the work that had been undertaken with the University of Essex in relation to reducing single use plastics in the town centre. Ben Plumer confirmed that the project had just started, and it was proposed that the Council would identify challenges and then work with the University to attempt to secure funding to tackle these. With regard to the aspiration of reducing single use plastics in the town centre, it was intended to work with businesses to share knowledge and identify the challenges which may be faced in achieving the reduction, and this was a project which Colchester's Business Improvement District was also supporting. It was not known which businesses would be participating yet, but this information could be reported back to the Panel at a future meeting.

In response to a question from a Panel member, it was confirmed to the Panel that the Council did not currently have a specific policy addressing the provision of wildlife corridors to allow animals to move safely between green spaces, however, this was something which would be considered as part of the Council's ongoing work on the Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy. It was considered by a Panel member that there would be future synergies in biodiversity net gain and insetting which could be brought forward through the management of the Council's green spaces in the future.

The provision of secure bicycle parking at the Council's Shrub End Depot was noted by the Panel, and it was wondered whether there were plans to extend the provision of similar parking to the Council's other sites to give staff the confidence to cycle to work. The Panel heard that the Council's Trave Plan was concerned with encouraging staff to use more sustainable methods of transport to get to work, and that cycle parking was also provided at the Council's Rowan House site. Plans were also in place to open secure cycle parking in the town centre at St Isaacs Walk, and this site was due to open at the end of July 2022, with the opening supported by appropriate publicity.

A Panel member reported that the Council's 'No Mow' policy had been a success in Wivenhoe, with a local resident confirming to them that there had been 141 species of wildflower reported across 15 'no mow' sites displaying 4 times as many flower heads as on traditionally mown areas. Additionally, 10 residents had joined the project as surveyors and a poll that had been carried out to seek responses to the strategy had received 111 responses, with only 6 of those responses expressing opposition to the scheme.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report be noted.

71. Work Programme 2022-2023

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries.

The Panel heard that the Council's Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy which was to be considered at the next Panel meeting in July 2022 would not be completed at this time as consultation with the University of Essex was ongoing.

The Panel discussed potential items which it might like to consider adding to the work programme in the future, but it was considered that it was already proposed to consider a broad range of topics, and a Panel member suggested that rather than adding items to the work programme now, it would be more productive to see whether items came forward throughout the forthcoming municipal year in response to new or changing proprieties.

The Panel were reminded that a briefing session which would be open to all Councillors was scheduled for September 2022, and more information would be provided in due course.

RESLVED that: the contents of the work programme be noted.

Environment and Sustainability Panel

19 July 2022

Present:	Councillor Tracey Arnold (Deputy Chair) Councillor Molly Bloomfield Councillor Michelle Burrows Councillor Mark Goacher Councillor Sue Lissimore Councillor Lee Scordis (Chair) Councillor Michael Spindler
Substitutes:	Councillor Laws for Councillor Lewis Barber Councillor Smithson for Councillor Andrew Ellis Councillor Warnes for Councillor Kayleigh Rippingale

72. Have Your Say!

The Panel had received a written representation from Kemal Cufoglu, which was read out by Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer. Mr Cufoglu's representation was on behalf of the Green Action Team and Pesticide Free Essex. He noted that he had asked the Panel for information in February 2022 in relation to Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s use of glyphosate, and raised a number of questions in respect of this. He mentioned that an alternative herbicide was planned to be used in a car park maintained by the Council, and he asked for information about the type of herbicide, the name of the car park, and the perceived effectiveness of the trial. He also sought feedback from the Panel on the public perception of Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) and the Council's transition to more environmentally friendly methods of weed control, and requested clarification on which non-glyphosate alternatives and maintenance methods were being used. Pesticide Free Essex had been approached by Councillors and residents of neighbouring districts who had been inspired by Colchester's example, and Mr Cufoglu hoped that the Council would share its experiences and expertise to assist partner organisations in their own projects.

Mr Cufoglu further advised the Panel that in commemoration of the International Day of Action for Protecting Rivers, he had carried out tests of the water in the River Colne in his role as the Activism Officer for the Colchester Green Party. These tests had revealed E. coli, and detected heavy metals potentially ten to 1000 times higher than the legal limits, chloride which was 11 times the legal limit, sulphate which was potentially above the United Kingdom legal limit, as well as very high alkalinity levels. Mr Cufoglu expressed his great disappointment that both Anglia Water and the Environment Agency had declined to carry out confirmatory testing, as the water was not designated as bathing water, and the Environment Agency was therefore not obliged to monitor it. The Panel was requested to reach out to these organisations to invite them to take the necessary steps to safeguard public health.

Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services responded to some of the points which had been raised and confirmed that a full list of the car parks and garage blocks had been used to test a different herbicide called Katoun Gold would be provided by way of written response. All the sites had been examined in June 2022, and there was little or no difference between the sites which had been treated and those which hadn't, however, continuous monitoring would be carried out in the future. There had been no change in the volume of calls that had been received by CBH as a result of the changes, and steps had been taken to publicise these as widely as possible to tenants. A detailed review would be carried out at the end of summer. A number of different methods of weed control were being trialled, including strimming, hand weeding and mulching, and new methods would be incorporated into the maintenance regime as and when these became available. The Council was happy to share the knowledge and experience that it had gained from the trials with partner organisations.

A Panel member expressed concern that although the Council as an organisation may not be experiencing a higher volume of complaints, it was their opinion that individual Councillors were experiencing a larger number of complaints, and some Councillors had been forced to purchase battery powered strimming equipment to tackle excess weeds in their Wards. It was requested that a detailed report be presented to the Panel in the future containing information about the weed control methods which were currently being used, and the plans that were in place for the forthcoming year.

Councillor Scordis, the Chair of the Panel, requested that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability be requested to work with Officers to potentially address the concerns which had been raised in respect of the river Colne.

The Panel had received an additional written representation from Andrew Wilkinson, who was representing En-form, which was read out by Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer. Although En-form supported the Council's efforts in attempting to improve the environmental performance of Colchester, it also expressed concerns that the Council's ecology policies appeared to be weaker now than they had been in the past, and requested confirmation of what the Council's biodiversity policy was. It was considered that a number of Council actions over the preceding years had potentially been harmful to wildlife habitats, including the removal of ancient hedgerow at Salary Brook and the inclusion of Middlewick Range in the Local Plan for housing development. The Panel was asked to consider whether it was time to update the Wildlife Site Review, which had not been updated since December 2008, and further consider whether a biodiversity group should be set up with representations from local ecologists and wildlife groups to help inform ecological decisions.

Rory Doyle, Assistant Director – Environment, confirmed that discussions were currently underway concerning the development Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, and he considered that this emerging Strategy would provide an opportunity to discuss all the Council's policies and procedures relating to the management of natural spaces. Panel members would be a key part of developing the scops, principle and objectives of the Strategy, and once this work had been finalised, the Council would be in a position to update its other policies and

procedures. The Council did not have a specific biodiversity policy, however, the principles of reducing impact, retaining, rewilding and restoring were at the core of its Woodland and Biodiversity project. A full written response would be provided to Mr Wilkinson addressing all the issues which he had raised.

Peter Chisnall attended the meeting and addressed the Panel in accordance with the Have Your Say! provisions. The Panel heard that Mr Chisnall was a trustee of En-form, and was a chartered Water and Environmental Manager, and had been a Colchester resident all his life. He considered that water was a precious resource, and climate change meant that access to water was becoming more unpredictable, and one of the biggest challenges being faced in the world today. The East Anglian water region received one third less rainfall than the rest of the United Kingdom, and was classified as semi-arid, and in addition to this, it has been stated that the population of Colchester used more water per head than the national average. As a large organisation, a reduction in the Council's use of water would have a significant knock-on effect in Colchester as a whole, including wetland habitats and other areas of biodiversity. Mr Chisnall requested that the Council consider conducting a water audit and set a reasonable, but high-impact, target to lower water use in CBC and CBH buildings.

Rory Doyle assured the Panel that the Council's Climate Action Checklist which related to all Council projects contained a requirement for Officers to consider environmental impact, and the consideration of water use and quality was particularly encouraged. The suggestion that the Council carry out a water audit would be considered by Officers outside the meeting.

Grace Darke attended the meeting and addressed the Panel in accordance with the Have Your Say! provisions. The Council had declared a climate emergency in July 2019, and although the Eco-Colchester community had been as supportive as it could to the Council since this time, Grace expressed alarm at some of the actions that had been taken by the Council. These included the decision to include a local nature reserve in the Local Plan, despite expert advice to the contrary, and the removal of ancient hedgerow at Salary Brook, which had resulted in no sanctions being taken against the developer. Grace suggested that many trees that had been planted by the Council had been poorly cared for and had died, and the Council had been intending to plant trees on meadowland against advice, which had only been stopped at the last minute by public pressure. In the light of this, both Colchester Natural History Society and Essex Wildlife Trust have requested that references to partnerships with them to be removed from Council literature. Taking all of the points that she had made into account, Grace asked whether the Council would now revoke its declared climate and biodiversity emergency, or, if there was no such revocation, what immediate proposals could be announced to repair the damage done to the environment and the Council's credibility.

Rory Doyle assured the Panel that Officers welcomed scrutiny and challenge and worked with stakeholders including ecologists and Colchester Natural History Society. Although agreement was not possible in all cases, different options were presented wherever possible in relation to the Council's proposals. It was noted that an update on the Woodland and Biodiversity project would be provided to the Panel

in the future, which would contain extensive detail around some of the projects which Grace had alluded to.

A Panel member spoke in support of the suggestion of the setting up of an ecological panel to consider current or upcoming issues and projects and feed into action which the Council may take. They felt that it was important to heed the advice of ecology experts as much as possible, and considered that protection and promotion of biodiversity was the result of more activity than just planting trees.

Andrew Tyrrell, Client and Business Manager, attended the meeting remotely and addressed the Panel in respect of the comments which had been made in the meeting with regard to the removal of ancient hedgerow at Salary Brook. He completely refuted the suggestion that the Council had allowed the hedgerow to be removed, and explained that in fact works took place which had not been permitted, and the Council had acted very quickly to put in place mitigation to limit the impact of those works, and to repair the damage which had already taken place.

Rory Doyle assured the Panel that Officers worked with a wide range of stakeholders as closely as possible in delivering its projects, and Grace Darke reinforced her belief that continuous training was of key importance for both Officers and Councillors to ensure that all had a grasp of the importance of the challenges that were faced.

73. Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy

Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services attended the meeting to provide the Panel with a verbal update on the Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s emerging Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy. The 'Green' element of the strategy concerned all of Colchester's open and green spaces used by communities, residents and businesses, and the 'Blue' element of the strategy would deal with lakes, rivers and coastlines across the borough. The Strategy would recognise the importance of Colchester's natural assets to its residents, and help support the effective management of these once the grounds maintenance contract had been brought back 'in house' at the Council. Work on the Strategy had been undertaken with the University of Essex, and it was intended to bring a much more comprehensive report back to the Panel at its September meeting, which would include the report compiled by the University.

In response to an enquiry from a Panel Member, it was confirmed that with regard to the 'Blue' element of the Strategy, the initial focus would be on publicly accessible areas of water which were in the main managed by the Council, however, stakeholder involvement would also be very important. It was considered unlikely that privately owned lakes would be included within the scope of the discussion unless these were publicly accessible, however, further exploratory work would be undertaken to understand the scope and availability of these waters.

A Panel member supported the increased use of the waterways in the Borough, and noted that designated bathing water status could possibly be obtained in the future for some stretches of water. A careful balance was necessary in the Strategy to ensure that the practical effects of increased usage of waterways was considered on

the natural environment, together with potential issues such as additional tree canopy interfering with existing closed circuit television coverage (CCTV) of both green and blue areas.

A Panel member requested that consideration be given to the development of a dedicated website which would allow residents to make comments on the development of the Strategy, and encourage them to feel included and engaged with the development process. It was suggested that this would also help to publicise the Strategy and help keep residents informed, and the Panel considered that the Strategy could provide a useful starting point for the development of a community action group to encourage and nurture this sort of engagement.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the verbal update be noted.

74. Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

Ben Plummer, Climate Emergency Project Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that actions and highlights from Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s Climate Emergency Action Plan were presented to it at every meeting. It was confirmed to the Panel that a training session would be delivered to all Councillors in September focussing on Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s climate change and sustainability work, and written content would be provided to Councillors after this.

A Panel member noted that it had recently been a national 'Clean Air Day', however, they had been made aware of the problem of cars idling outside schools, and understood that Council Officers did not challenge this behaviour or issue fixed penalty tickets for engine idling. It was considered that the issue of idling outside schools should be addressed, and information was requested on how this could be progressed, with an item potentially being added to the work programme in the future. Andrew Tyrrell, Client and Business Manager, attended the meeting remotely and advised the Panel that the Council was not currently able to issue fixed penalty notices to motorists who left their vehicle engines idling, and there was a process to be followed before such notices could be issued. He supported the addition of an item to the work programme of the Panel at a future date to further explore this issue, but did comment that to date, the Council had taken an educational approach to the issue rather than adopting an aggressive enforcement strategy. Ben Plummer confirmed that schools were able to request banners to display outside their gates promoting the values of the Council's CAREless scheme, designed to reduce air pollution, and details of how to do this could be circulated outside the meeting. The Panel accepted the need for education to encourage behaviour change, however, it also considered that the Council did need the capacity to issue fixed penalty notices as a last resort, and it was suggested that a new Policy covering this activity was needed as soon as possible.

Jason Butcher, Group Development Manager North for Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP), attended the meeting to give the Panel a presentation on the transition of the Council's fleet to electric vehicles (EV). Twelve EV charging points had been installed in Rowan House, which were intended to support up to twenty Council

vehicles, although it was hoped that there may be capacity for these to be used by staff and visitors to the site as well. Ten charging points had also been installed at St Johns car park which were shared between the Council and NEPP. The electrical capacity in this location was limited, however, this had been balanced through the use of dynamic load balancing which equally spread the available capacity across the number of vehicles which were charging at any one time to give optimal available performance. The charging system was monitored closely via a computer system which provided data such as the carbon offset provided by every charge as well as usage monitoring. The NEPP was using five electric vehicles, and the Council currently had six, and feedback from staff who used the vehicles had been encouraging.

Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services, explained that with the exception of the NEPP, the Council's Neighbourhood Services team managed the fleet of the Authority. Cabinet had approved a Fleet Transition Forward Plan, which set out short, medium and long term goals to moving the Council's fleet to a carbon neutral position, and all of the Council's small vehicle fleet would comprise of electric vehicles within the next couple of years. Other solutions for environmentally friendly vehicles would be considered as and when new technology became available.

The Panel were assured that consideration was being given to the installation of more electric vehicle charging points for public use, and heard that the Council had recently trialled an electric refuse vehicle, which had some operational limitations but which had been reported as being a very pleasant environment for the crew to be working in. Further trials with different vehicles were being sought, and different solutions were being considered.

The Panel discussed the possibility of providing assistance to Parish Councils who wished to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and Officers confirmed that this would be considered, however, the lack of government funding at the present time, coupled with the expense installations could limit the options available. Consideration would be given to subsidising parking charges for electric vehicles.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report be noted.

75. Work Programme 2022-2023

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries.

The Panel discussed potential items which it might like to consider adding to the work programme in the future, and noted that areas which had been discussed at the meeting were due to be considered at the November meeting of the Panel in relation to the Clean Air for Colchester campaign, and the Council's own work in relation to emission reduction.

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

02 November 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer
Title	Draft Climate Emergency Action Plan – New iteration		
Wards affected	All		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's initial Climate Emergency Action Plan was replaced by an [updated version](#) in June 2021. This introduced the Council's eight themes of the action plan and gave more detail as to how the Council was responding to the climate emergency.
- 1.2 A new version of the Climate Emergency Action Plan has now been drafted (see appendix 1), updating actions from the previous plan and adding in new actions. Improvements have been made also to the design and level of content within the document based on the review of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan by Climate Emergency UK in January 2022.
- 1.3 The purpose of the report is to introduce the new plan, showing new actions and other new features and to get feedback from councillors about this.
- 1.4 The action plan follows a similar style to previously. However, it does contain more background information on the Council's emissions and those in the borough and also how environmental action can produce co-benefits and how this links in with actions in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- 1.5 Additionally, progress within each theme of the action plan in 2021-22 is outlined to show the key achievements already made and then the actions for the current year follow to show how things are moving forward. At the end of each theme a case study section is provided, to attempt to bring the actions into reality and so they are not just 'words on a page'.
- 1.6 The Council is very keen that the Action Plan can be used to inform residents about the Council's work on the climate emergency. However, we also want it to inspire and empower residents and communities to think about how they could change their behaviours to live more environmentally friendly, or how they could set up or participate in any environmental projects in their communities, linking in with the Council's Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. A 'what can you do' section of the Action Plan has been introduced to help with this, highlighting actions people can take to reduce their environmental impact, with links to local organisations who can support them to do that.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to review the new iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and members are encouraged to present feedback about actions in the action plan, and how it can be communicated to residents as a source of education and inspiration.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To help move forward the Council's work on the climate emergency, particularly linking to how we can work to communicate our work better to residents.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not Applicable

5. Background information

- 5.1 The Council's [first Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) was published in January 2020, after the declaration of a climate emergency. Although useful in setting some key themes of the plan and some initial broad actions, it was decided that a more comprehensive and detailed plan was required to provide more information about the Council's actions tackling the climate emergency.
- 5.2 Therefore, in June 2021, the Council produced a new version of the [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) complete with 8 themes and over 50 actions, all with clear descriptions of what they were, along with timescales and measures of success. The action plan has been monitored throughout the past year, and it is now due for review just over one year on from its initial production.
- 5.3 The most recent iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan aims to build on the previous version by making several changes to it including:
- Communicating about the 'co-benefits' of climate actions such as improved health and wellbeing, cost savings and increased jobs.
 - Providing more information on greenhouse gas emissions, both of the Council and in the borough
 - Reporting key progress made on each Climate Emergency Action Plan theme in 2021-2022 is outlined at the start of each theme.
 - Identifying case studies to give more detailed information about actions completed to bring these 'to life' for residents to engage with and see that actions are being achieved.

New actions

- 5.4 Many of the actions within the 2021-2022 action plan have remained, albeit with slight changes to how they are being delivered as developments and opportunities have arisen to increase the impact that these actions can have.
- 5.5 However, several new main actions have been added to the action plan. Some of these were already being worked on during 2021-2022, but had not been captured on for reporting in the plan. The new actions are:
- Develop understanding of local offsetting opportunities to inform out pathway to net zero
 - Creation of Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
 - Creation of a nature reserve at Cymbeline Meadows and adopting management of Iron Latch Woods site.
 - Improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure as part of the Town Deal
 - Promotion of free cycle training offered by Essex County Council
 - Subject to approval, using Levelling Up Fund to introduce options to support active and sustainable travel modes in the St Botolph's area.
 - Create a new Waste and Recycling Strategy to set out the Council's direction and approach in line with Environment Act 2021.
 - Provide support to help residents transition to more sustainable lifestyles, showing how environmental actions can bring about other benefits such as cost savings and health benefits. This includes actions such as the 'community cycle' project and the Council's funding to support increasing domestic energy efficiency.

- Promote support and funding available to businesses to help them become greener
- Provide opportunities for residents to increase the energy efficiency of, and decarbonise, their homes
- Work with partners to identify how to close green skills gaps across Essex
- Unlock opportunities for local organisations to upskill staff in energy efficiency and domestic retrofit
- Reduce printing and postage at Council to contribute to reducing waste and saving emissions

Climate adaptation

- 5.6 There has also been a new theme added to the action plan; adapting to a changing climate. It was considered that this should get established as its own theme, rather than weaving into other themes. The Council is at the start of its understanding in thinking about actions that can consider the impacts of climate change on projects and how we can design actions to take account of these risks (e.g. extreme temperatures, drought) and the resultant impacts (e.g. impacts on biodiversity, health).
- 5.7 One of the main actions in this theme currently is involving the University of Essex in how we can understand the potential of increasing the coverage of oyster beds to act as natural barriers to coastal erosion, alongside providing valuable habitats for wildlife. The project also seeks to understand how a circular economy can be created around oysters, so waste oyster shell can be collected from restaurants to help restore colonies of oysters on the seabed. The project will be collaborative, working with oyster fishermen in Mersea and restaurant owners on this. It will also have a community element to educate people about the value of oyster beds in protecting the coastline, as well more generally about the impacts of climate change and why we need to adapt to these.

Communicating and creating engagement around the action plan

- 5.8 The Council is keen for the action plan to be both informative and inspiring, so residents can think about how they can take steps to lead more environmentally friendly lifestyles. Simple steps are being taken for this, including:
- The production of an infographic to show key actions the Council has achieved between July 2021 – July 2022 to contribute to tackling climate change and reducing our environmental impact
 - A section on 'what residents can do', providing links to resources where they can access information on ways to measure their carbon footprint and ideas of actions they could fit into their lifestyles to become more environmentally friendly. Opportunities for residents to participate in some of the Council's environmental projects are mentioned in the document, as well as pointing people towards community groups that undertake environmental action such as Eco Colchester.
 - Having a shorter summary document of actions within the Action Plan produced. This makes the Action Plan more digestible for those who want a quick overview of what we are doing. It is planned for this to be sit on the website, with the full action available as a downloadable pdf. Similarly, the 'What you can do' section in the Action Plan will be separated into its own document for easy reading.

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.

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 from this report. Active travel and cleaner air activities contribute towards quality of life and general health.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no risk management implications from this update.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 All of the Council's activities highlighted in the report contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the Council and/or the borough.

Colchester City Council Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022-23

Introduction

Taking action to tackle our climate emergency is an absolute priority for Colchester City Council (CCC).

The plan aims to address the urgent challenge of climate change faced by the Council; one which is made harder because, Colchester has already completed many of the 'easier', 'quick win' projects. This means that moving forward at pace to achieve our climate targets will require significant investment of resources from the Council, the government, our partners and citizens.

Since declaring a climate emergency, the Council has taken action to understand its baseline emissions and understand what assets contribute to these. Work has also been done to project our emissions to 2030, based on planned projects the Council intends to have completed by that time. This work identified we would still have 2,617 tonnes of emissions left, what is known as our 'gap to target', so there is still plenty of work to do to help the Council reach net zero. The Council is therefore looking to identify further opportunities for reducing emissions across its buildings, looking to utilise grant funding for this as it becomes available.

Several significant Council projects exist that respond to this climate emergency declaration as are described in our action plan. But we will need all Council staff, partners and residents to be on board with tackling the climate emergency if we are to make a real difference in creating a cleaner, greener Colchester together.

This action plan aims to show you what action the Council is taking to reduce its environmental impact and highlight some opportunities for you to be involved in these as well.

To keep up to date with our climate and environmental work, visit the Council's [sustainability page](#) or view meeting reports and minutes from the [Environment and Sustainability Panel](#) which monitor the Council's progress on environmental action. A review of actions completed in the action plan from 2021-2022 that was presented at this Panel can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions about this action plan, or any of our environmental and climate work please email climate.change@colchester.gov.uk, or come and ['have your say'](#) at the Environment and Sustainability Panel.

Themes of the Climate Emergency Action Plan

[Theme 1 – Reduce emissions from our buildings and fleet](#)

[Theme 2 – Adapting to a changing climate](#)

[Theme 3 – Produce renewable energy](#)

[Theme 4 – Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment](#)

[Theme 5 – Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality](#)

[Theme 6 – Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle](#)

[Theme 7 – Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability](#)





[Theme 8 – Sustainable planning, built environment and green economy](#)

[Theme 9 – Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment](#)

Co-benefits:

Alongside climate action delivering positive environmental benefits such as reducing emissions and improving levels of biodiversity, it can also produce other benefits for wider society. These are known as 'co-benefits' and the Council's action plan contains many actions that produce co-benefits such as improving air quality, increasing jobs and increasing community engagement and cohesion.

In this plan, co-benefits are split into four categories. Actions that contribute to producing a particular co-benefit will be marked with the corresponding symbol to show this is being delivered.

- Improving physical and mental health -  or H (e.g. Improving air quality, creating warmer homes, supporting active travel, improving access to green spaces)
- Supporting local economy -  or E – e.g. Job creation, opportunities for local investment, businesses reducing their environmental impact.
- Reducing inequalities -  or I (e.g. reducing fuel poverty, increasing community engagement)
- Increasing resilience to impacts of climate change -  or R (e.g. increasing local renewable energy supply, reducing flood risk)

Emissions

The Council publicises its greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis on the Council's [website](#). There are lots of different greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), methane (CH₄) and others. There are several Council activities and operations that contribute to emissions. The Council has set a target of reaching net zero emissions by 2030. This means the Council will reduce emissions from its activities to as close to zero as possible. As a last resort, and to reduce residual emissions that are not considered viable to reduce, the Council will seek to understand the potential to reduce its emissions locally through offsetting projects, that can produce both environmental and community benefits.

There are several emission sources that are included in the Council's net zero target:

- Electricity and gas consumption in Council buildings (including emissions associated with working from home)
- Fuel used in the Council's fleet
- Emissions associated with waste production in Council buildings (type of waste, transportation of waste)
- Emissions associated with water consumption (emissions produced during the treatment and supply of water to Council buildings)
- Emissions from staff commuting and business travel (e.g. for meetings, site visits)

The Council reports its emissions in terms of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

All types of greenhouse gas emissions have varying impacts on climate change (known as their global warming potential), but for simplicity, we equal and report on our emissions in the terms of if they were all CO₂ (as this is the predominant emission type). The 'e' in CO₂e stands for equivalent and is used as the Council captures all the greenhouse gas emissions in its reporting as if they were equivalent to the global warming potential of CO₂.

For instance, methane (CH₄) has a global warming potential of 27-30, compared to carbon dioxide (CO₂) of 1. This means 1 tonne of methane has the same impact on climate change and warming as 27-30 tonnes of CO₂.

For more information on global warming potentials, click [here](#).

The Council's emissions from 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022 are reported below in figure 1.

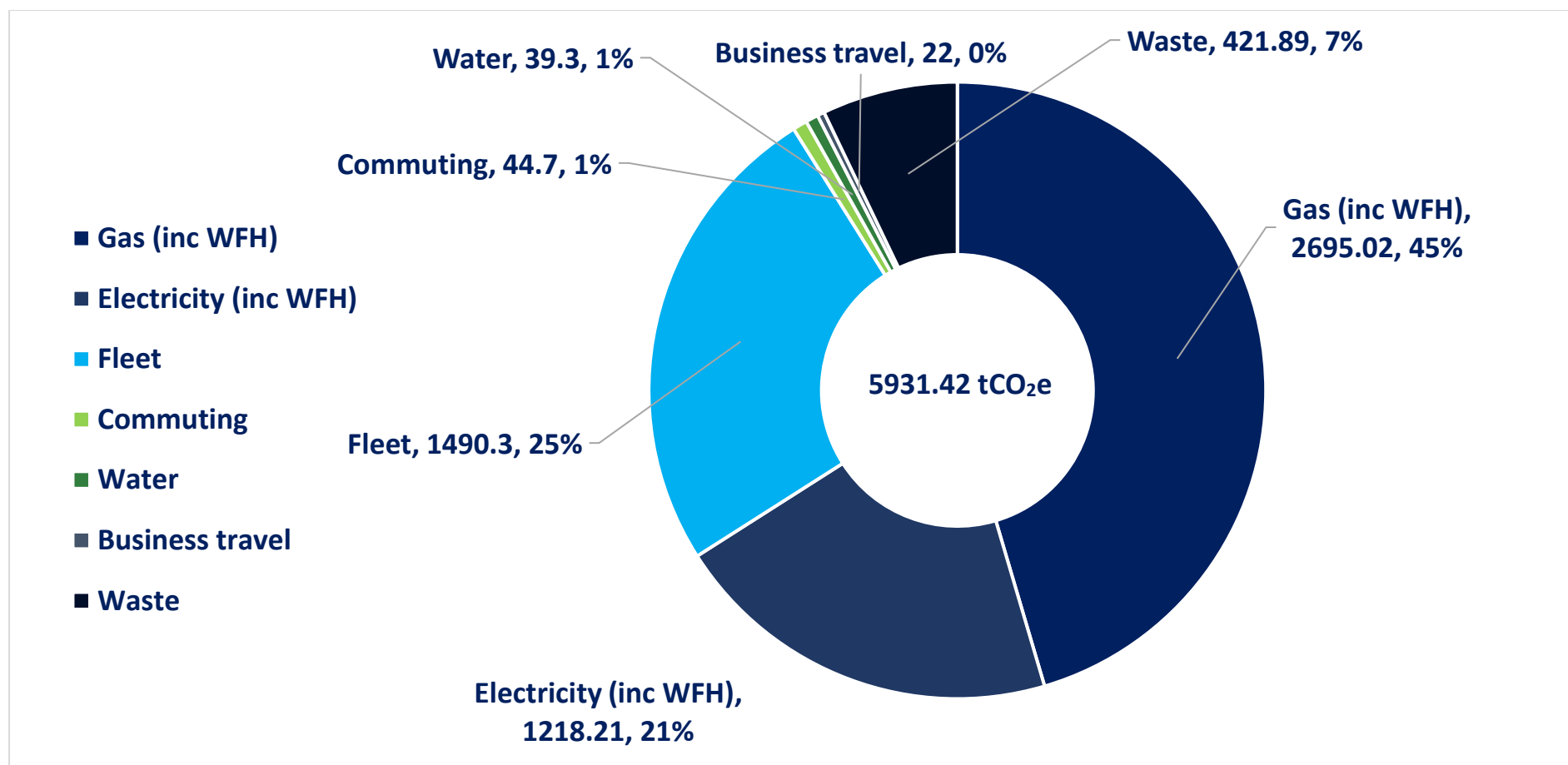


Figure 1: Colchester City Council greenhouse gas emissions for financial year 2021-2022 (1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022). For clarity the acronym 'WFH' stands for 'working from home'. The Council used the [methodology published by EcoAct](#) to estimate the Council's emissions associated with staff working from home, as this is now a significant part of how staff work at the Council.

Since 2018/19 (the baseline year for when the Council declared a climate emergency), the Council's emissions have decreased from 6549.3 tCO₂e to 5931.4 tCO₂e (a 9.4% decrease). A graph showing this decrease for the last 4 years is shown in figure 2.

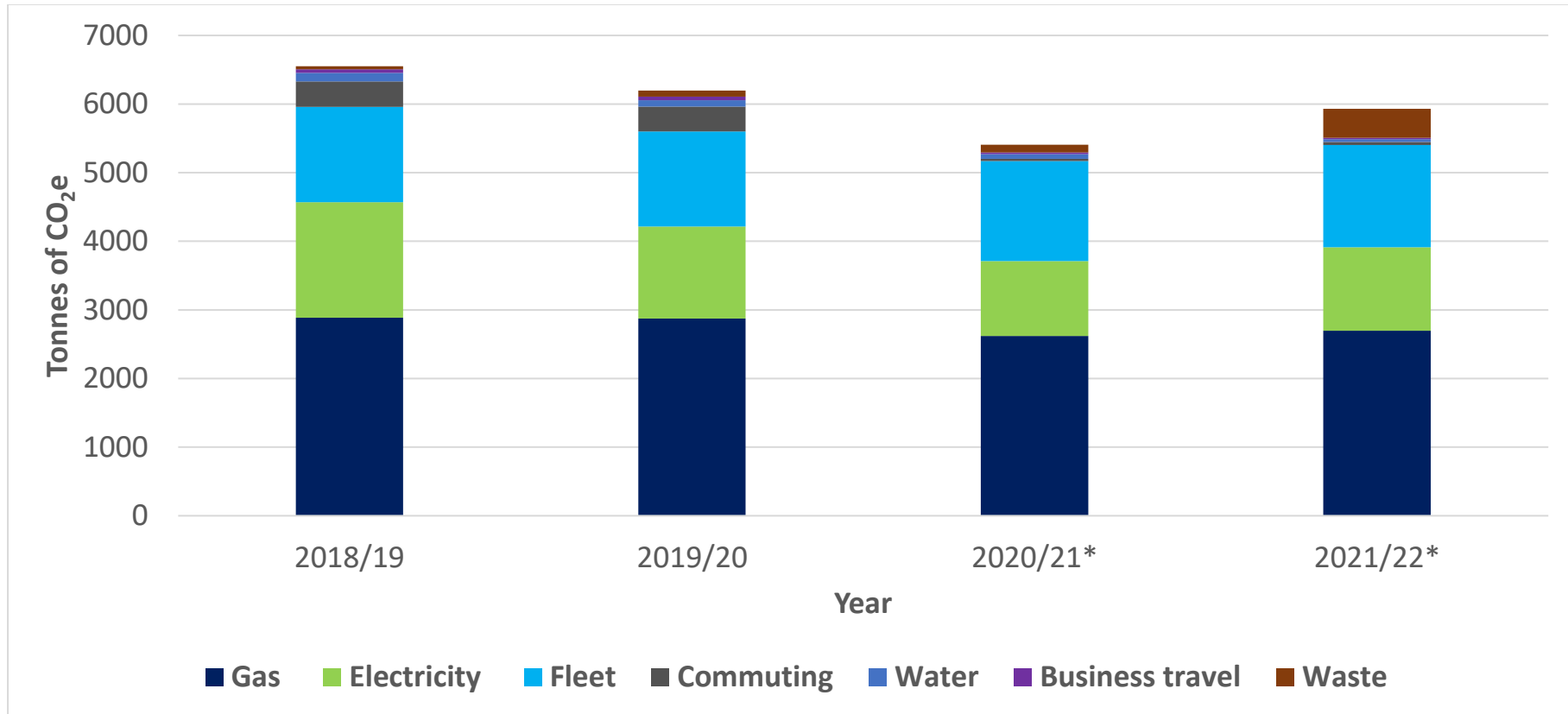


Figure 2: Change in Council's greenhouse gas emissions between financial year 2018/19 and financial year 2021/22. The asterisk (*) refers to years where estimated emissions associated with staff working from home were factored into the overall emissions calculation.

Note that financial year 2020-2021 was a year significantly impacted by covid, meaning the forced closure of some buildings and operations led to decreases in emissions that were unrealistic of normal operations. All Council emissions are recorded in the Council [emissions archive](#).

In the most recent projection out till 2030, based on planned projects the Council's emissions will be 2,617 tonnes of CO₂e. This figure is still sizeable so the Council will be continuing to identify projects to help further reduce emissions through the creation of a new Carbon Management Plan.

There are several other emission sources that the Council records emissions data for. However, these are emissions which are classed as 'indirect' emissions associated with the Council's operations. The Council has not set an emission reduction target for all of these emission sources, mainly because of lack of data quality as these emissions sit with other organisations and it can be difficult to access this from them. These emissions sources are:

- Emissions from Colchester Borough Homes who manage the Council's housing stock – Colchester Borough Homes have set a target to reach net zero emissions by 2050 for the housing stock.
- Emissions from procured goods and services
- Emissions from leased buildings (buildings the Council own, but leases out to another organisation to operate out of)
- Emissions associated with the extraction, production and transportation of the electricity and gas the Council uses in its operations (i.e. this is separate to the emissions involved in the generation of energy that the Council uses to provide heating and lighting to its buildings)

Emissions for these sources can be viewed on the Council's [website](#).

Emissions in the borough

There are also emissions that occur in the wider borough, including from transport, domestic and commercial energy usage, agriculture and waste disposal and treatment. As shown below, the greatest chunk (44%) of Colchester's emissions comes from transport, primarily road transport.

The emissions in the wider borough are estimated from 2018 (the most recent data source) and are detailed below:

Borough wide emissions (SCATTER CITIES, 2018)		
Category	Emissions (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, TCO₂e)	
	Scope 1 (emissions from heating, fuel usage)	Scope 2 (electricity usage)
Energy use (domestic)	177,186	87,765
Energy use (commercial/institutional/industrial)	116,542	103,088
Transportation (road, off road, railways)	325,461	-
District waste operations (waste treatment including wastewater)	76,495	-
Industrial products and product use	44,314	-
Agriculture and land use	-4789*	1
Total	735,209	190,854

*Figures for this are minus. This is because the emissions captured/stored from agricultural land use (for example crops, soil) outweigh the emissions directly produced from agricultural processes such as livestock management.

1. Reduce emissions from our buildings and fleet

Key to tackling the climate emergency is reducing the emissions associated with the Council's buildings and fleet that it owns and operates. Approximately 66% of the Council's emissions are from its buildings, and 25% from fleet (based on financial year 2021-22). The actions below state how the Council is responding to this, including plans set out for decarbonising these assets and specific actions that are already being carried out to put those plans into action.

Not all of our assets listed below are included in our net zero target by 2030. The main asset not included is the Council's housing stock consisting of nearly 7000 properties. These properties are managed through a separate Asset Management Strategy with the target of all properties reaching an energy performance certificate of a C by 2030, and for the whole housing stock to be net zero by 2050.

Key Highlights from actions completed in 2021/22 include:

- **Estimating the Council's emissions in 2030**, based on planned projects occurring at several different assets. This revealed that there were still 2,617 tonnes of CO₂e that will need to be reduced by 2030 that can be accomplished by agreeing actions at other assets to reduce emissions.
- **Sourced Council's electricity from a 100% renewable energy green tariff**. This meant the Council pays a premium on its electricity bill to support the production of renewable energy, but does not mean renewable electricity is directly used by assets (unless these have rooftop solar photovoltaic panels, which are on some assets like Leisure World Colchester, the Crematorium and others).
- **4 hybrid electric vehicles** purchased for the Helpline response team and **5 fully electric vehicles** purchased by North Essex Parking Partnership. The Council has also purchased 5 fully electric vans so far for its own fleet. These are part of the contribution to the Council's outlined Fleet Transition Plan to use fully electric/low carbon fuel alternatives for the fleet by 2030.
- **Installation of electric vehicle charge points** in several Council owned car parks including 3 at Priory Street car park and 10 chargers in St John's car park (for Council fleet vehicles).

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
1.1 Development of a new Carbon Management Plan (CMP) based on insight and evidence gathered from a detailed pathway modelling of the Colchester City Council (CCC) footprint.	Work with Ingleton Wood to develop a new CMP for 2022-27, establishing possible actions to reduce emissions from key CCC assets such as Leisure World, Colchester Castle and the Town Hall amongst others.	Climate Emergency Officer	June 2022 - December 2022	New CMP produced by December 2022	
1.2 Continue to report on our emissions annually, and look to collect more refined data on our indirect emissions	Review other data sources and report annually, including calculating emissions associated with working from home. Where possible, look to improve collection of data on the Council's indirect emissions (e.g. those from procurement, leased buildings)	Climate Emergency Officer	Emissions reported annually	Report on emissions produced, in better detail where possible.	
1.3 Take steps to ensure the council's future electricity supply is provided by 100% renewably generated sources	Source Council's electricity from a supplier providing 100% renewable electricity. Explore opportunities for renewable energy generation such as solar PV that can be used to contribute directly to powering Council buildings through Carbon Management Plan	Facilities Management team Climate Emergency Officer and building operators, working with Ingleton Wood	Reprocure green tariff at each procurement cycle April 2022 – December 2022	Continue to reprocure green tariff. Identify more options for installing solar PV on rooftop of CCC assets.	

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
1.4 Review our estate and assets to investigate means of increasing energy efficiency of heating, lighting and cooling systems	Building maintenance programme to consider opportunities for decarbonisation of buildings as part of building surveys that are conducted	Estate Manager	Ongoing action	Building Maintenance surveys to include carbon reduction assessment and activities to maximise opportunities to decarbonise assets when carrying out repairs.	
1.5 Decarbonisation of Rowan House, the Council's main office	Replacement of existing heating and ventilation systems with heat pump. Also adding in extra roof insulation, LED lighting, and 12 electric vehicle (EV) charge points	Rowan House project team	March 2022 – Spring 2023	Realization of predicted energy savings (and associated carbon emissions) during first full year of operation.	
1.6 Increasing the energy performance of 100 Homes to reduce energy use and tackle fuel poverty	<p>100 Homes Project – Purchasing 100 former Council homes to increase energy performance certificate (EPC) rating to an average of EPC C (SAP 79).</p> <p>Purchase of 90 new social homes will include grant funding allocated to increase energy efficiency of the properties</p>	Housing officer	<p>Sept 2020 – Sept 2022</p> <p>Spring 2022 – Spring 2024</p>	<p>Increase EPC rating to average of EPC C (SAP 79) for the 100 properties</p> <p>Increase EPC rating to average of EPC C (B for houses, C for flats)</p>	H, I

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet

Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
1.7 Decarbonising the housing stock through the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP)	<p>Housing Improvement Programme Works to upgrade most energy inefficient properties to an EPC of C or above on average.</p> <p>Boiler replacement works – Replacement of outdated and inefficient boilers</p>	Colchester Borough Homes	July 2022 – July 2023	<p>40 properties to be raised above D in 12 months</p> <p>382 boilers to be replaced, of which 10 will be air source heat pumps</p>	H, I
1.8 Redevelopment of Elfreda House (sheltered housing) to reduce carbon emissions	Redevelopment of Elfreda House to Future Homes 2025 standard.	Colchester Borough Homes	April 2021 – April 2023	Site built to standard to produce no more than 33.4 kg/m ² CO ₂ per year	H
1.9 Take a phased approach to the renewal of the fleet to meet our target of having a fully electric vehicle (EV)/low carbon fuelled fleet by 2030	Procurement of a further 9 electric vehicles to replace diesel vehicles, building on the 6 electric vehicles procured in June 2022	Fleet Manager	December 2020 – April 2030	Procurement of electric vehicles and achievement of carbon emission savings	H

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
1.10 Develop an understanding of local offsetting opportunities to inform our pathway to net zero*	Work with Kent Wildlife Trust to understand potential for nature based solutions to contribute to carbon offsetting and benefit biodiversity	Climate Emergency Officers and Parks, Countryside and Greening Manager	January 2022 – November 2022	Established potential carbon savings that could be delivered from one nature based project for CCC	E
	Work with Anthesis Group to understand the emerging concept of ' Authority Based Insetting ' (ABI) and how it can help the Council and local organisations/businesses to achieve their carbon reduction targets	Climate Emergency Officer	March 2022 – December 2022	Report produced to develop the concept of ABI, local businesses and organisations engaged about concept, and increased awareness about opportunity for using ABI at CCC	

*carbon offsetting will only be used as a last resort to reduce any residual Council emissions. It has become apparent that the Council could be involved in helping other local organisations to reach their carbon reduction targets, and how offsetting could actually be implemented at a local scale to not just deliver carbon reduction, but other co-benefits such as habitat creation, improved air quality etc.

Case study: Colchester's City Council Fleet Transition

The Council's ambition is to transition the whole fleet to electric or low carbon alternative fuels by 2030. We have a [fleet transition programme](#) that sets out when different vehicles are due for replacing in procurement cycles.

In June 2022, the Council purchased its first electric vehicles, 6 vans to be used by the pest control and street care and safety teams. A further 9 electric vehicles are due for arrival towards the end of 2022. Over 20 electric vehicle charge points have been installed to support these with more to come, and we've even trialled an electric refuse collection vehicle for our refuse team to see what these are like when the time comes to invest in these! The Council is also exploring other methods of using vehicles for work purposes in the fleet, including the use of eCargo bikes for delivery of items.



2. Adapting to a changing climate

The Council recognises that the impacts and risks posed by climate change such as flooding, drought and extreme weather events are already occurring. These can have severe impacts on residents' wellbeing, wildlife and habitats and the economy. Therefore, we consider it important to take action to adapt to these climate risks, so that we can minimise the impact of climate change as much as possible and ensure people are prepared.

2. Adapting to a changing climate					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
2.1 Warn the public of severe weather incidents such as flooding, extreme heat and drought and provide advice for how to be prepared for these incidents	CCC signed up to receive Met Office weather warnings and has access to Met Office Hazard Management site to see detailed severe weather information	Resilience Officer	All year	CCC kept up to date with latest weather information enabling it to act when required.	H
	Will then act as necessary to provide early warning of severe weather to residents via social media and via Parish Councils.	Resilience Officer	Act when necessary	Sufficient warning of severe weather events, alongside good communication to ensure residents are informed of risks.	
	Disseminate information on the website about how residents can adapt to a changing climate.	Climate Emergency Officer	By Dec 2022	Website pages updated with information	
2.2 Raise awareness of sea level rise and coastal erosion as key climate change threats to coastal regions of Colchester borough	Work with the University of Essex to understand potential for reusing waste oyster shell to re-establish oyster colonies along the coast to	Sustainability team in collaboration with University	May 2022 – December 2022	Report produced to improve understanding of how oyster shells can offer natural protection against	R

2. Adapting to a changing climate					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	<p>act as a physical barrier to protect against coastal erosion, alongside providing habitat for wildlife.</p> <p>The project will be used to raise awareness generally about the changing climate and what impacts it might bring.</p>	of Essex academics		<p>sea level rise and coastal erosion.</p> <p>Residents informed about climate adaptation through creation of engaging art piece to provoke discussion and thought about the topic.</p>	
2.3 Manage flood risks along River Colne by enhancing the natural environment	Tree planting along parts of the River Colne, as well as works to manage flooding from riverside lake near Castle Park.	Greening Team	Ongoing during planting seasons	Monitoring of flooding events in Castle Park and see if changes are helping to mitigate risk	R
2.4 Ensure CCC is kept up to date with latest climate risks to keep severe weather plans updated	Attend Essex Resilience Forum meetings to align our plans to that of the forum's, and keep up to date with latest research on climatic changes.	Resilience Officer	Ongoing	Severe weather plans kept updated with the latest knowledge	R
2.5 Ensure that policies such as consider actions that will help contribute to adapting to a changing climate	Long term policies such as the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on sustainability and carbon reduction to consider climate adaptation in their development	Various CBC staff	Ongoing	Climate adaptation considered within key CBC policies where relevant	R

2. Adapting to a changing climate					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
2.6 Increase the 'greening' of the city centre and surrounding urban areas with street trees and shrubs to naturalise urban areas and contribute to increased shading to provide natural cooling through several projects	<p>Planting trees along North Station Road as part of Fixing the Link project</p> <p>Planting of street trees in areas such as New Town and Christchurch using funding from Local Authority Treescape Fund</p> <p>Greening of St Nicholas Square as part of the Town Deal</p>	Various officers	Ongoing	Increased amount of trees and shrubs planted in urban areas	R

3. Produce renewable energy

Energy is linked into all parts of our lives, from powering our individual homes to larger businesses. Energy demand, particularly for electricity, is increasing as people look to decarbonise their lifestyles and electrify their heating and vehicles. To support this demand, extra energy supply is required and the Council, through its wholly owned energy company [Colchester Amphora Energy Limited](#), is looking to generate more renewable energy. How this is being done is shown in the below table.

Key Highlights from actions completed in 2021/22 include:

- Progress made in the development of the idea for a solar PV farm, Energy Storage and microgrid to provide renewable electricity to the Northern Gateway Development. This work will be progressed in 22/23, with the development of a detailed business case for this project.
- Continued progress developing the Northern Gateway Heat Network for which implementation has been delayed due to planning issues of the main development.

3. Produce renewable energy					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
3.1 Continued development of Northern Gateway Heat Network site to generate low carbon heat	Construction of the main energy centre and beginning to build connections to residential, commercial, health and leisure sites.	Energy Manager, Colchester Amphora Energy	Project ongoing and due for Energy Centre completion in 2023	Heat Network Energy Centre commissioned and supplying heat.	R, E
3.2 Explore the creation of a microgrid to link up new development sites with solar PV generation and energy storage at Colchester Northern Gateway	Conduct feasibility study and development of a business case.	Energy Manager, Colchester Amphora Energy	April 22 to Oct 2023	Business case produced and investment decision made.	R, E

Case study: Northern Gateway Heat Network

The Northern Gateway Heat Network is an innovative project that will use an open loop ground source heat pump to provide heating and hot water to homes, businesses and leisure spaces. The heat network will be the biggest of its kind in the UK, using a confined chalk aquifer 75 metre below ground as the heat source, providing low carbon heat to 200 homes, 450 flats and nearly 35,000m² of office space and a healthcare area. The boreholes into the aquifer have been installed and tested and construction of the Energy Centre is due start in late 2022.



4. Enhance biodiversity and protect our natural environment

The natural environment and landscapes in and around Colchester are important to protect for the valuable services they provide to us. They provide habitats for wildlife, which in turn support our food systems, absorb and filter out pollutants, store carbon and support many recreational opportunities amongst other benefits.

The Council recognises this, and in recent years has taken several steps to change the way that Council owned green spaces are managed for the benefit of the environment and wildlife. We aim to encourage partners and other organisations to follow our lead on this work.

Key Highlights from actions completed in 2021/22 include:

- **Banning the use of glyphosate herbicide** on Council owned green spaces, with many different alternative approaches to managing weeds being trialled such as hand weeding and using potato starch based hot foam. From March 2022, Colchester Borough Homes also committed to phasing out and banning the use of glyphosate herbicide on green spaces surrounding council housing. Taking this action will have beneficial outcomes for both wildlife and humans.
- **Trialling 'no mow' or reduced mow approaches** on Council green spaces, in an effort to 'rewild' green spaces, creating habitats and an environment suitable for wildlife such as insects and pollinators. On 24 green spaces, mowing regimes were reduced from once every three weeks, to once at the end of the growing season (in mid-Autumn). Since the reduction in grass cutting, 18 butterfly species have been recorded in these areas, about a 1/3 of all species found in England, alongside a large number of bee species. We worked with Wivenhoe Town Council, adopting this approach on green spaces owned by them, and records taken showed that there were 3-29 more species of wildflower in the unmown compared to the mown spaces.
- **Increasing the number of trees planted across Colchester** through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project. Around 7,170 trees were planted on 11 different Council spaces between November 2021-February 2022, along with 23,000 trees given to community groups, parish councils and schools. These trees will help to provide habitats for wildlife, and contribute to storing carbon.

4. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
4.1 Deliver the Woodland and Biodiversity Project	<p>Work with relevant experts and communities to ensure planting sites are chosen appropriately to ensure tree planting will benefit biodiversity.</p> <p>Environmental Impact Assessments will also be undertaken on new tree planting sites.</p>	Woodland and Biodiversity Project Manager	<p>November 2021 – March 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planting targets</p> <p>Continue to work with experts/communities to ensure tree planting is carried out at appropriate sites</p>	
4.2 Creation of a new Nature Reserve at Cymbeline Meadows	Cymbeline Meadows Nature Reserve - To create a hub of biodiversity in the heart of Colchester using existing agricultural fields. The site currently has a tenant farmer who we are working with to continue to be involved with the management of and maintenance of the land to make it sustainable.	Greening Team	Ongoing	Creation of a new Nature Reserve rich in biodiversity	H

4. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
4.3 Deliver Trees for Years campaign to give out free trees and shrubs to residents, community groups and schools and more	Build on success of ' Trees for Years ' campaign that took place in February 2022, offering free trees and shrubs. The click and collect process was introduced in February 2022 making the tree giveaway more accessible than ever. This enabled local residents to attend a number of sites to collect their trees to plant in their garden or within their local community, and will be followed again for a giveaway later in 2022/beginning of 2023	Greening Team	Ongoing	Over 1400 trees given away to local residents, parish councils and local schools in February 2022. Build on this figure for 2022/2023 Trees for Years.	H, I
4.4 Deliver Colchester's Greening Policy	Continued review of how we deliver our services including the cessation of Glyphosate and identifying sites to rewild	Greening team	Ongoing	Existing habitats improved New habitats created More Grow – Less Mow initiatives	H

4. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
4.5 Create a new Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which will highlight opportunities for managing our green spaces, rivers and coastal environments in ways that benefit biodiversity and the natural environment.	<p>Work with the University of Essex to begin the process with engagement with communities that will use a participatory budgeting approach to value blue and green spaces situated along the River Colne.</p> <p>Work with the Policy Panel to develop the new Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy to an agreed programme.</p>	Greening Manager	<p>July 2022</p> <p>September 2022 – Ongoing</p>	<p>Workshops undertaken to understand areas of interest and focus for the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>Work to the agreed programme for the strategy development and make recommendation to Cabinet.</p>	H, E, I
4.6 Ceasing the use of glyphosate herbicides in Council operations through a phased approach as a way to manage weeds in a more environmentally friendly way, and encouraging other stakeholders to do the same	<p>Agreement reached to phase out glyphosate use for general maintenance by end of March 2021</p> <p>Alternative ways of managing weeds without glyphosate will commence at the start of the growing season and will be monitored for effectiveness</p> <p>Evaluation of alternative approaches to weed control,</p>	Greening Team	<p>September 2020 – April 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 2022 – March 2023</p>	<p>Significant reduction in glyphosate use. Increases in biodiversity found on Council green spaces.</p> <p>New methods adopted for managing weeds going forward.</p>	H

4. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	<p>and look to rollout in other CCC green spaces.</p> <p>Help Colchester Borough Homes to eradicate the use of glyphosate on land surrounding housing stock.</p>		March 2022 – April 2023		
4.7 Trialing 'no mow' or reduced mow approaches to rewild Council green spaces and support biodiversity, particularly pollinators.	Build on learnings from the 14 green spaces where areas of reduced frequency mowing have been implemented to allow for the growth of grasses and wildflowers, with rewilding approach developed through engagement with Town and Parish Councils	Greening Team	September 2022 - Ongoing	<p>Weed and verge maintenance policy agreed and implemented.</p> <p>Trial for no mow/reduced mow approaches leads to formally adopting new mowing regimes for Council green spaces going forward.</p>	
4.8 Securing our Open Spaces to protect them from unauthorized access	Audit all open spaces and prioritize a list of sites that need further enhancement	Greening Team	March – Sept 22	Installation of additional security measures such as height barriers and bollards at key site locations	

4. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
4.9 Producing Countryside Site Management Updates	Creation of site management plans for all Countryside and Destination sites.	Greening Team	June 2022 – March 23	Each site will have its own 5 year management plan outlining what management and maintenance is required	
4.10 Taking over management of Iron Latch Woods	<p>Adoption of Iron Latch Woods which consists of mature woodland, wetlands and informal mountain bike course.</p> <p>Creation of site management plan which enhances the biodiversity of the site and manages the informal recreational needs of the mountain bike users.</p>	Greening Team	September 22 – ongoing	<p>Installation of notice boards, interpretation and site infrastructure.</p> <p>Working with the existing mountain bike community to create ownerships and volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Carry out habitat surveys to monitor and enhance the biodiversity.</p>	

Case study: Woodland and Biodiversity Project

This project has three key areas in which it aims to deliver value; For our communities, for our wildlife, for our environment. Central to the project has been its emphasis on engaging with the community as much as possible, for example involving volunteers in tree planting activities, getting school children to design signage to promote the rewilded green spaces and supporting volunteers to become 'tree guardians' to monitor the growth of the planted trees. The project has also worked in collaboration with Together We Grow CIC, who have helped to lead tree planting activities and expand community engagement throughout the project, for example involving organisations such as Refugee Action Colchester to give refugees the chance to take part in outdoor activity to help their physical and mental health.

Following the success of planting over 7000 trees in recent years on Council spaces along with 23,000 trees given to community groups, parish councils and schools, the Woodland & Biodiversity Project will continue to develop in 22/23 by continuing to plant trees in suitable areas and by focusing on the naturalisation of sites, enhancing the biodiversity further and reviewing the management regimes and continue to communicate changes to our communities.

Find out more about the project on the Woodland and Biodiversity Project [webpage](#).



5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality

Transport is the biggest contributor to emissions in Colchester, and it's something we're doing everyday whether that's to work, school or for leisure. The Council is committed to promoting sustainable transport around Colchester, not only to reduce emissions but also as a way to increase physical activity. Traditional transport classed as 'sustainable' would be walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport like trains and buses. When car use is necessary, lift sharing, using a car club, driving an electric vehicle or eco driving (i.e. switching off your engine every time you wait) are recommended. This follows the travel hierarchy approach (see figure 3).



Figure 3: Sustainable and Active Travel hierarchy

In recent years, Colchester has been a pioneer in encouraging other innovative, greener ways of moving people and goods around, such as the use of electric cargo (eCargo) bikes and electric scooters (escooters), reducing the need to use private cars and vans. As the electric vehicle transition is also well underway, the Council is in the process of understanding how it can support people to use electric vehicles in and around Colchester too.

The Council's sustainable travel work is facilitated by many partners, most prominently Essex County Council who are the Transport and Highways Authority.

Key Highlights from 2021/22:

- Over 20,000 miles travelled by eCargo bikes that are part of the Colchester eCargo bike library. The project grew over time, and in 2021 a new eCargo bike delivery service was developed which the Council has helped support. This service offers

local organisations and businesses the opportunity to have products delivered to, or for, them by an eCargo bike rather than a car or van

- Delivered the Clean Air for Colchester project, including the air quality awareness campaign 'CAREless Pollution'. The campaign engaged with residents, businesses, schools and community groups to raise awareness of air quality in Colchester and what we can all do to improve air quality. The campaign received a 'Highly Commended' award in the Consumer Engagement category at the Edie Sustainability Leaders Award.
- Significant progress made to help move forward the creation of a secure bike park and shared ebike hub in the city centre. The bike park will provide a facility for visitors to store their bikes while in the city centre. The bike hub will provide access to electric bikes and electric cargo bikes for residents to use on a pay as you go basis. A premises has been identified, planning permission approved and work is being done to have the site open for residents to use in Autumn 2022.

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
5.1 Encourage uptake and usage of eCargo Bikes by the council and the business community to reduce travel emissions Colchester Electric Cargo (eCargo) bike Library	<p>Work with Council teams to increase usage of eCargo Bikes in place of cars and vans</p> <p>Work with eCargo Bike Champions and partners to provide case studies and help promote the short term loan scheme.</p> <p>Expand eCargo Bike delivery service to offer new concierge service to city centre shoppers and businesses to reduce</p>	<p>Sustainable Travel team</p> <p>Sustainable Travel team, project champions and partners</p> <p>Sustainable travel team, working with ICT,</p>	May 2020 – May 2023	<p>eCargo bikes used for several routine Council services</p> <p>Good uptake of short term loan scheme</p> <p>Normalisation of ecargo bikes in Colchester and providing encouragement to</p>	H, E

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	driving into the city centre and encourage walking, cycling and using outlying car parks instead.	Colchester Business Improvement District and En-Form		businesses and other organisations to buy their own to replace cars/vans for their operations	
<p>5.2 Raise awareness of the health and environmental impact of air pollution and encourage residents to change their behaviour in relation to engine idling and home burning</p> <p>For more information on air quality projects in Colchester visit https://www.colchester.gov.uk/environmental-protection/clean-air-for-colchester-project/</p>	<p>Behaviour change campaign led by community volunteers, to encourage more people to not idle their vehicle engines.</p> <p>Explore the installation of artwork in the city centre to raise awareness of air pollution and improve air quality in Colchester</p> <p>Psychological signage trials encouraging no idling to be installed in East Street/ Brook Street and monitored for effectiveness.</p>	<p>Air Quality Community Engagement Officer</p> <p>Air Quality Community Engagement Officer, plus community engagement create the artwork</p> <p>Air Quality Community Engagement Officer and the University of Essex</p>	<p>June 2020 – June 2023</p> <p>August 2022 – Spring 2023</p> <p>Phase 3 – January 2022 – September 2022</p>	<p>Post project survey results demonstrating increased awareness of pollution and its effects and a change in attitudes towards idling</p> <p>Artwork created that raises awareness of air pollution and gets people thinking about how they can contribute to keeping the air cleaner.</p> <p>Evidence of reduction in air pollution and idling in air quality management areas.</p>	H, I

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	<p>Raise awareness of the negative impacts of home burning and encourage residents to burn responsibly including using seasoned wood and smokeless fuels</p> <p>Work with ECC to monitor air pollution in the AQMA using air quality monitors to evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural campaigns and initiatives.</p>	<p>Air Quality Engagement Officer</p> <p>ECC and Environmental Protection manager</p>	<p>December 2022</p> <p>December 2021 – June 2023</p>	<p>Post project survey results which demonstrate increased awareness of pollution and its effects and a change in attitudes towards home burning</p> <p>Lower levels of particulate matter in the air within the air quality management areas</p>	
5.3 Provide enabling policies and strategies to promote sustainable and active travel.	Prepare/update a Sustainable and Active Travel SPD which will incorporate an update of the existing Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy and consider including the walking environment, shared bike schemes, Car Clubs, Travel Planning, mobility hubs, and electric vehicle charging.	Sustainable travel and planning policy	Draft prepared by March 2023	Influence future developments and lobby for funding	H

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	Assist with and advise on review of ECC's Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans and support in implementation of Colchester Future Transport Strategy, to help steer City Centre Masterplan.	Sustainable travel and Essex County Council	Input October 2022 & ongoing	Influence others to increase uptake for sustainable travel	

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
5.4 Promote walking and cycling routes in Colchester through improving signage and wayfinding	<p>Introduce wayfinding signage along the University to City Centre routes to encourage walking</p> <p>Include Greenstead to University as part of the Safer Streets project</p> <p>Animating King Edward Quay to encourage more walking and cycling and access to the Rowhedge Trail</p> <p>Animating Swing Basin to encourage more walking and cycling and access to the Wivenhoe Trail</p> <p>Make improvements to the wayfinding signage between City centre and port</p>	Sustainable travel team	<p>Complete by March 2023</p> <p>Complete by March 2023</p> <p>Complete by November 2023</p> <p>Complete by November 2023</p> <p>Complete by December 2022</p>	Signage improved and more people using the routes on foot and by bike	H

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
5.5 Fixing the Link phase 2 implemented to encourage walking from Colchester rail station to the City centre.	Trees in planters placed along the route, new waymarking flags installed and plans for wayfinding planting and lighting on Albert roundabout.	Sustainable Travel team	November 2022	Increased numbers of people walking along the route, by clear wayfinding and enjoying a quality welcoming experience.	H, E
5.6 Encourage the uptake of shared sustainable travel opportunities as an alternative to personal car use and ownership	Taking part and supporting the electric scooter (escooter) trial, and exploring option of getting hire ebikes available in city centre provided by Tier	ECC lead, with sustainable travel team supporting	Ongoing	Learn how escooters can be used as a sustainable mode of travel for getting around Colchester	H
	Creation and launch of a shared bike hub in the City centre, providing pay as you go access to electric bike and eCargo bikes with the aim of working with the community to expand bike hubs to other areas of the borough in the future.	Sustainable Travel Team	1 st hub complete by November 2022. Community bike hubs ongoing	Residents supported with more options for travelling sustainably in and around Colchester.	
	Influence Rapid Transit system linking Garden Communities, park and ride site with City centre, hospital and Colchester Station, route and provision.	Planning Policy & Sustainable Travel team	Ongoing	Input into and influence ECC's Strategy to enable projects which promote sustainable travel are taken forward	

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	<p>Work with ECC to review bus operations and to increase usage.</p> <p>Launch electric pay as you go car club starting in Colchester City centre with two cars with the aim of expanding to other areas of the borough in the future</p>	<p>ECC with support from sustainable travel</p> <p>Sustainable travel</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Complete by October 2022</p>	<p>Encourage greater usage of buses to get around Colchester</p> <p>Residents given option for using electric vehicles for infrequent trips, helping them to transition from second car ownership or eliminate need for a private car altogether</p>	
5.7 Facilitate walking and cycling in Colchester by providing suitable infrastructure.	<p>Creation of a secure bike parking facility in the City centre and monitoring its usage to inform design of permanent facility</p> <p>Working with ECC to support the introduction of infrastructure such as segregated cycle lanes and</p>	<p>Sustainable travel team</p> <p>Sustainable travel team, alongside ECC</p>	<p>Complete by November 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Secure cycle parking implemented and monitored.</p> <p>Improvement of cycling infrastructure in and around the city centre</p>	H, E

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	<p>school streets along key routes in and around Colchester City Centre as part of the Active Travel measures</p> <p>Reviewing S106 funding to plan and work with others to install and improve a range of measures and infrastructure.</p>	Sustainable travel team, working with others as appropriate	Ongoing	<p>meaning greater uptake of cycling</p> <p>S106 identified and schemes promoted/designed ready for implementation.</p>	
5.8 Develop actions as part of the Positive Parking Strategy that will help to reduce congestion in the city centre and promote sustainability.	<p>Park Active – A project to encourage people to park in car parks on the outside of the city centre – A review of this scheme to take place during Autumn 2022</p> <p>Review usage and requirements of Council car parks to determine the quantity of parking required, where parking should be located and parking tariffs. This will take into account Levelling Up Fund requirements as well as agreed Parking Strategy outcomes.</p>	<p>NEPP/Sustainable travel team</p> <p>Parking team at CCC</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Fewer cars parking in the city centre and encouraging active travel</p> <p>Charge points installed to support a transition to electric vehicles</p> <p>Ensuring car parking is used more efficiently and in a way that promotes active, and greener forms of travel.</p>	<p>H, E</p> <p>E</p>

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
5.9 Work with Essex County Council through the Town Deal to increase walking and cycling between Colchester city centre and Greenstead through improvement to infrastructure and making bikes available to residents in Greenstead,	<p>Provision of 2.96km of walking and cycling paths to link up to existing networks to make walking and cycling along this route easier and safer between Greenstead, University and city centre.</p> <p>£1m investment in providing 750 bikes for residents in Greenstead through the 'Pedal Power' scheme to support residents who want to cycle but cannot afford a bike.</p>	<p>Sustainable travel, economic development and ECC colleagues</p> <p>This includes the above teams, plus those from community enabling</p>	Ongoing	<p>New route created and increased use of the route by walkers and cyclists monitored.</p> <p>Bikes being used by residents for journeys, helping to save any costs for using cars/public transport</p>	<p>H</p> <p>H, I</p>
5.10 Creation of an EV charging Strategy to guide provision of EV charging across Colchester	Development of an EV strategy to set out guidance for provision of EV charge points across the borough, working with ECC as the Transport and Highways Authority.	Resource TBC	TBD	Strategy approved and in place	
Installation of EV charge points throughout the borough, particularly in Council owned car parks.	Increase EV charge points coverage, with charge points at Council car parks in line with EV charging strategy outcomes.	Resource TBC	TBD	Increased number of electric vehicle charge points for residents to access.	

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
5.11 Support residents and businesses to take up active and sustainable travel.	Work with local businesses to reduce reliance on private cars for commuting through implementing work place travel plans	Colchester Travel Plan Club coordinator	Ongoing	Deliver annual plan of action including review and refresh of workplace travel plans	H, E
	Promote free adult cycle training to improve confidence to cycle	Sustainable Travel team working with ECC	Ongoing till March 2023	Increased numbers of residents taking part in this training to help support uptake in cycling in Colchester	H, I
	Pilot enhancements to Bikeability scheme to increase the uptake of cycling in primary aged school children post training	Air Quality Engagement Officer, Anglia Ruskin University, Safer Essex Roads Partnership	Complete by December 2022	Increased uptake in cycling in primary aged school children at the point of evaluation	H
	Support the 'Get Monkwick moving' project that aims to raise awareness and increase usage of the off road walking and cycling route to the city centre.	Air Quality Engagement Officer in partnership with En-Form	Ongoing till December 2022	Greater awareness of, and use of, the route amongst local people. Lower pollution levels in the Mersea Road part of the Air Quality Management Area	H

5. Facilitate sustainable and active travel and improve air quality					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
5.12 Look to identify opportunities for improving options for sustainable and active travel into the city centre, through the City Centre master planning work	Working with Essex County Council and consultant to understand what people want to see improved within Colchester City Centre and how this then relates to opportunities to improve access to the city centre using active and sustainable travel options	Various officers from Council and Essex County Council	TBD	Creation of City Centre masterplan helps to identify new opportunities for travelling into Colchester using active and sustainable travel modes.	H, E
5.13 Subject to approval of grant funding, use Levelling Up Fund (LUF) to introduce options to support active and sustainable travel modes in the St Botolph's area	Use LUF to replace St Botolph's Circus with new junction layout to support walking and cycling into city centre and to Castle Park. Additionally there are plans for the introduction of a hub for storing and hiring bikes, ebikes, escooters.	Various officers from Council and Essex County Council	TBD	Funding secured to implement replacement of St Botolph's Circus and support active travel modes.	H, E

Case study: Colchester eCargo bike library

The Colchester eCargo bike library project has been funded by an Energy Saving Trust grant, and aims to promote and encourage the use of electric cargo (eCargo) bikes for transporting materials and people, rather than using cars or vans. The grant funded 25 eCargo bikes and 5 electric trailers which were shared out across the Council and with 10 'champion' organisations to use on a long term loan. The rest are available for organisations to try out on short term loans of 1-3 months.

The project has been very successful with nearly 20,000 miles travelled on the bikes between January 2021 – June 2022. There have been several notable pioneers of the bikes, with Colchester eCargo bike delivery project being one. The project has helped to do deliveries for local businesses, community groups and charities in a more environmentally friendly way.

The success of the project has led to two further successful grant bids involving eCargo bikes; the creation of a shared travel hub for residents to use eCargo bikes (and other bikes) on a pay as you go basis and the creation of a city centre eCargo delivery service that businesses can use to deliver shopping to their customers. These are both exciting developments so watch this space! See more on our [website](#).



6. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle

Waste and recycling is something that's pretty close to home, literally! Most of us have it ingrained with us to make sure we recycle as much as we can, from aluminium cans to food waste. In Colchester we are in the top 30 local authorities for our recycling rates, and were recognised as the most '[recycling conscious town](#)' in June 2022, which is impressive but there is more that can be done.

However it's important to think beyond recycling. How can we reduce the amount of waste we produce? How can we keep more materials in circulation so that they last longer?

Waste and recycling is an action that we all have some control over, and we can all take steps to reduce how much we produce. Can we all use reusable water bottles and cups? Do we really need to buy that thing as a present for someone, or could we instead look to gift someone an 'experience' like a theatre ticket?

The Council works hard to ensure it provides a quality and comprehensive recycling service for residents. However, we need everyone to help us by recycling what they can, and cutting down the waste they produce.

Key Highlights from 2021/22:

- 4 smart waste bins have been installed in Dedham on a trial to see how these bins could support the effective collection of litter. The bins have a solar powered compacting feature to help fit five times more rubbish into them compared to the average bin. The bins are also programmed to close when they are full to prevent overflow, and will notify waste operatives when the bins are nearing full capacity so they can be emptied. They can also talk and engage with residents.
- Reduced contamination and improved quality of recycling collected by asking residents to separate cans and glass for their kerbside collections.

6. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
6.1 Create a new Waste and Recycling Strategy to set out the Council's direction and approach, in line with Environment Act 2021.	<p>Work with the Environment & Sustainability Panel on strategy development (including business waste collections)</p> <p>Deliver trial projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married quarters project – to improve resident behavior in relation to residual waste • Route rebalancing – to improve capacity on collection routes • Hard to reach – to improve collection methodology • Flats food waste – to trial new methods of food collection 	Waste and recycling team	September 2022 – April 2023	<p>Work with the Environment & Sustainability Panel the agreed programme of strategy development, with a recommendation presented to Cabinet.</p> <p>Deliver the trial projects to the agreed programme and budgets</p>	

6. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
6.2 Work with the Essex Waste Partnership on the development of the new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Regular attendance to meetings and workshops, providing input, making contributions, and sharing data. Presenting at agreed points to the Policy Panel.	Neighbourhood Services Manager	Ongoing	Presentation to Policy Panel and recommendations made to Cabinet	
6.3 Complete roll out of recycling equipment distribution	Identify outlets to provide coverage to Castle and Berechurch Wards	Waste and recycling team	December 2022	Residents have access to suitable recycling equipment to enable them to separate items for recycling appropriately	

6. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
6.4 Improve outcomes for residents in flats with Communal Bin Stores	Engage Management Companies to address reported issues.	Business Improvement Team	March 2023	<p>Launch new 1100 litre bin provision capabilities including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outright sale, • short term rental, • short term rental renewal, and • rental to sale products <p>Deliver better outcomes for residents by rapidly addressing broken bins in bin stores so that we can continue to collect weekly</p>	
6.5 Love Essex campaign “It’s for driving on, not littering on”, working with local business partners (e.g. KFC and McDonalds) and local authorities	<p>Campaign messaging at petrol stations</p> <p>Campaign messaging on rear of buses</p> <p>Social media campaign</p>	Street care and safety team	August 2022 – September 2022	6 week monitoring of littering	

6. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
6.6 Understand the barriers businesses face to reducing their use of single-use plastics, and identify examples of good practice in Colchester which can be shared with others	Work with the University of Essex academics who will do surveys and interviews with local businesses about their use of single-use plastics. They will also use their academic research to propose ways in which the Council or other organisations could help to support businesses to reduce their use of single-use plastics.	University of Essex, Colchester Business Improvement District with support from some CCC colleagues	July 2022 – December 2022	Increased understanding of barriers businesses face to reducing use of single use plastics, with some ideas of how the Council or other organisations could help to encourage businesses to shift away from single use plastics for some operations	E

Case study: Litter picking hubs

We appreciate the help of residents who want to help us keep Colchester green and clean by picking up litter. The Council is now trying to make this easier for residents to do by expanding on our [Litter Warriors programme](#), and providing [litter picking hubs](#). These hubs provide a place for residents to litter pick on the go, with all litter picking equipment provided in one area.

The number of these hubs is increasing across the borough, and if you would be keen to see one set up in your local area please email climate.change@colchester.gov.uk.



7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability

The Council cannot tackle climate change on its own. That's why we are working with many partners such as the University of Essex to share knowledge and resources to help with tackling this challenge. One of our key partners is Essex County Council who have announced their own climate action plan which may be of interest to residents. This can be found at this [link](#).

However, it's not just up to the Council to reduce its environmental impact, we need residents across the borough to all help. Through many of our environmental projects, we provide opportunities for residents to do this, whether it be raising awareness of actions people can take to improve air quality or tree planting. Click [here](#) for some suggestions of actions you could take to reduce your environmental impact, and links to useful sites that may help support you take action.

Key Highlights from 2021/22:

- Supporting the delivery of Colchester's first 'Eco Festival'. Many Council staff were present at the event, raising awareness of Council environmental projects. The event was a great success with over 3500 people attending, with Eco Festival 2022 taking place on 3rd September 2022 which attracted over 4500 residents and enabled the Council to engage communities with information about its environmental projects.
- Collaboration with many partner organisations to share knowledge and enhance the delivery of projects. For example, the Council worked with the University of Essex on several projects in 2021-22, and will be working with them in 2022-23 to deliver a range of projects including supporting the creation of the Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy and delivery of two environmental projects on understanding potential of using oysters to protect against sea level rise, and reducing the use of single-use plastics in the city centre.
- Providing opportunities for residents to find out more about, and take part in, our environmental projects. For example the 'Clean Air for Colchester' project gave residents the opportunities to be involved in the design of promotional campaign materials to raise awareness of air pollution in Colchester. The Woodland and Biodiversity Project gave residents the opportunity to take part in tree planting activities, get a free tree/shrub for their garden as part of 'Trees for Years' and involved schools in the design of signage to show why some green spaces were being mowed less (visit the [Woodland and Biodiversity Project webpage](#) for more information).

For more information on some of the ways the Council engaged with the community in 2021/22, please see the [committee report](#) that went to the Environment and Sustainability Panel on this topic on 22nd March 2022.

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
7.1 Support community organisations in the borough to help deliver environmental benefits within communities	Work with community organisations/individuals to help spread the message of their work and provide expertise where required.	Community Enabling	Ongoing action	Raise awareness of existing community groups that are acting to produce positive environmental change	I
	Support the delivery of Eco Festival 2022, with Council staff volunteering and holding stalls at the event	Multiple Council teams	March 2022 – September 2022	Council helps Eco Festival to be run with event engaging many residents around climate change and the environment	
	Make communities aware of Climate Action Challenge Fund funding from Essex County Council that can fund local environmental projects	Community Enabling and Sustainability team	Ongoing till March 2023	Residents get access to funding to kickstart community environmental projects	
	Continue with the Trees for Years programme	Greening team	October 2022- February 2023	Residents collect plants for their gardens	
	Introduce site improvements to facilitate community activities at East Bay Community Allotments	Greening team	November 2022	More community activity at the allotments	

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	Implementation of self management at Drury Road allotments	Greening team	October 2022	Increased ownership and activity at the allotments	
7.2 Provide opportunities for residents to participate in Council projects and action on environmental issues	<p>Multiple opportunities for residents to support the Council's no idling air quality project. Schools activity toolkits and campaign materials can be found on the Council website.</p> <p>Tree planting opportunities to be provided in Winter 2022/2023 through Woodland and Biodiversity Project</p>	<p>Air Quality engagement officer</p> <p>Greening team</p>	<p>May 2022 – August 2022</p> <p>Winter 2022/2023</p>	More opportunities provided for residents and increased numbers of residents taking part in these	

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
7.3 Provide support to help residents transition to more sustainable lifestyles, showing how environmental actions can bring about other benefits such as cost savings and health benefits	<p>Support residents to get free bikes through the ‘Community Cycle’ project where preowned bikes are donated, repaired and then given to the community.</p> <p>Promote Warm Homes Essex website run by ECC and Citizen’s Advice Bureau for information on tips for energy and cost saving as well as grants for energy efficiency (see action 8.3), and other cost of living support.</p>	<p>Community Enabling team, with support from sustainable travel</p> <p>Various CCC colleagues</p>	<p>May 2022 – September 2022 (with possible rollout in future years)</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Increased support required to link environmental and social agendas together so the Council can help to reduce environmental impacts across the borough, whilst also reducing inequalities.	I, H

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
7.4 Collaborate with the University of Essex to ensure actions we develop are informed by academic expertise (where appropriate)	Support the delivery of 2 projects that emerged from the challenge lab on oyster conservation (see action 2.2) and the links with climate adaptation, and reducing single-use plastics usage with local businesses (see action 6.6)	Multiple CCC teams working alongside University of Essex	April 2022 – December 2022	Projects completed, with short term achievements and enhanced community engagement	
	Build rapport with researchers on existing Council projects, and understand the expertise available at the University.	Multiple teams	Ongoing	Continue work with the University of Essex to inform design/operation of our projects and actions and share best practice/knowledge.	
7.5 Increase engagement with schools in Colchester to promote and support awareness raising and behaviour change around environmental issues	Support the Essex Schools Green Day on 6 th July 2022, enabling schools to learn more about environmental issues and take action to protect the environment at their school.	Climate Emergency Officer with Community Enabling plus other local organisations.	January 2022 – July 2022	Schools signed up to the event and accessing CCC and other organisations support for the day.	
	After the Green Day, continue to maintain engagement with schools to ensure they know about	Multiple Council teams	Ongoing	Increase number of schools engaged with through Council projects.	

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	environmental projects that may be of relevance to them and the students and provide webpage of resources detailing support and information available to them.				
7.6 Develop a Climate Emergency communications plan which will support the delivery of, and engagement around, the Council's Action Plan.	Keep an external communications plan updated with key messages and content to deliver to residents on Council environmental projects and key environmental tips	Sustainability and Communications teams	Ongoing	Communication Plan developed and updated, with key projects, events and tips advertised	
7.7 Collaborate with Essex County Council (ECC) and other local authorities (LA's) in Essex and those in the UK to share learnings around work on the climate emergency	Take part in Carbon Reduction Across Essex (CORE) meetings with other Essex local authorities to hear about latest projects from other LAs and keep up to date with developments from ECC. Maintain good communication with ECC to be aware of latest environmental projects,	Climate Emergency Officer Sustainability team	Ongoing action Ongoing action	Continue good relationship with Essex County Council and other Essex LA's to help share learning Regular meetings scheduled with ECC to hear latest environmental updates	

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	<p>news and grants that we can help promote and collaborate on when relevant</p> <p>Participate in national local authority forums such as the Collective for Climate Action to share learning, ask questions about work on the climate emergency and keep up to date with latest environmental news, grants etc.</p> <p>Participate in the Essex Woodland Partnership</p> <p>Participate in the Essex Waste Partnership</p>	<p>Climate Emergency Officer</p> <p>Greening team</p> <p>Portfolio Holder and Neighbourhood Services Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Use forums to gain ideas, knowledge and experience from other LAs on how to tackle the climate emergency.</p>	
7.8 Work with the Essex Climate Action Commission to support partnership working with key ('anchor') institutions	Participation in climate action working group meetings to support campaigns and work across	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Ongoing	Council is plugged into thinking about tackling climate change across Essex, and ensure that it can play its part in	

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
across Essex to ensure joined up thinking around tackling climate change	<p>Essex that support tackling climate change</p> <p>Participation in workshops and ongoing meetings to discuss the development of a 'climate focus area' in Essex, where actions and projects to contribute to reaching net zero would be tested as pilots in a defined area to accelerate change.</p>	Various CCC staff	Ongoing	<p>supporting any actions and campaigns</p> <p>CCC linked into work of the Commission, to ensure we can contribute to the recommendations made in their Essex wide report.</p>	
7.9 Communicate with Town and Parish Councils to understand how we can work together to tackle the climate emergency and ensure this reflects the wishes of communities we serve	<p>Sharing resources and support with Town and Parish Councils that will help them reduce their environmental impact e.g. the ECC Climate Action Challenge Fund</p> <p>Presentation to Town and Parish Councils to explain CCC action on climate emergency and understand help and support they may require to take action on climate emergency.</p>	<p>Climate Emergency Officer</p> <p>Climate Emergency Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing action</p> <p>Autumn/Winter 2022</p>	<p>Successful collaboration and communication with Town and Parish Councils on climate emergency related work.</p> <p>Presentation completed and discussion created with Town and Parish Councils about how CCC can help them with their own climate/environmental ambitions</p>	

7. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	Provide opportunities to collaborate on Council projects e.g. eCargo bikes, Rewilding plans	Multiple teams	Ongoing action		

Case study: Go Green Schools

The 'Go Green Schools' project was a collaborative initiative between the University of Essex and the Council, funded by the Local Government Association's Net Zero Innovation Programme.

The project aimed to understand the varying levels with which primary schools had embedded environmental education and action into their ethos and operations. The project engaged with 6 primary schools in Colchester, with interviews conducted with headteachers and environmental leads to understand this.

The project also worked closely with one school, Unity Primary Academy, to help deliver environmental improvements in the schools grounds. Many activities were run including bird and bat box making, planting of trees, marine wildlife demonstrations, planting for pollinators and more.

Through engaging with the school, the teachers and children became more aware of the potential for the school grounds to be used to enhance biodiversity. The project also had benefits outside the environment. Below are quotes from the environmental lead at the school who supported the project.

"There has always been very positive feedback about the various sessions and all staff have commented on how much their children have enjoyed the activities. Several staff have made a comment that children's behaviour improved when undertaking the practical activities.

Children have been very enthusiastic about all the activities. They have been very keen to talk about the new experience and they were very proud to be part of improving the school grounds.

It has given all children at the school different experiences and because they have been involved with the activities taking place around the school it has really helped them to have a sense of pride towards the school grounds. On numerous occasions children have wanted to show me the plants or trees growing and discuss their involvement in it.

Encouraged by this project, and wanting to continue to deliver more work, the school successfully approached a local councillor for funding to continue outdoor gardening sessions with Together we Grow CIC.

The Council is keen to support schools to become greener, please see our [webpage](#) for more information.



8. Sustainable Planning, built environment and green economy

Planning can play an important role in influencing the environmental standard of developments and how Colchester as a city is set out to support sustainable travel. Buildings are also a key contributor to emissions in the borough, through the energy use so it is important that existing buildings are retrofitted to reduce their energy use and new buildings built to use low carbon forms of heating and built to high energy efficiency standards.

Linked into both of these elements is the requirement to build a green economy that can support this transition. There is a challenge in ensuring that there are enough local companies and individuals are trained with 'green skills' in being able to support this transition, across a range of sectors from low carbon construction and retrofit, energy generation and distribution, land management and more.

Green skills are knowledge, experience, values, attitudes and abilities that support carbon reduction and resource efficiency to increase climate resilience and enhance natural assets. This is not the same as a green jobs sector, green skills will be relevant to all sectors of the economy.

A [review of green skills infrastructure](#) completed by [Mace Group](#) found that there would be an increased demand for green skilled jobs of 997 per year in Essex that will have to be overcome, based on predicted growth outlined in the Government's '[The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#)' report.

The demand for businesses to become greener is also increasing, and so all businesses need to understand ways that they can reduce their environmental impact, and recognise the benefits from doing so including opportunities for cost savings and reaching new audiences. One of the Council's four priorities in its Economic Strategy 2022-2025 is 'Planet', focussing on how the Council can provide support to businesses to decarbonise and reduce their environmental impact.

Key Highlights from 2021/22:

- Working with community partners such as Community 360, Age Concern and Citizen's Advice Bureau to promote grant funding for energy efficiency improvements for residents on low incomes and living in energy inefficient homes. 4 homes in Colchester received improvements totalling £18,165 in 21/22, with many more scheduled for 2022.
- Ensuring S106 funding was allocated to support sustainable travel as part of new developments, such as the allocation of parking spaces for electric car clubs and electric vehicle charge points amongst others

8. Sustainable Planning, built environment and green economy					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team Responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
8.1 Create & adopt a new Supplementary Plan Document (SPD) on sustainability and carbon reduction	Creation of a new Supplementary Planning Document to provide guidance and encouragement to developers to consider carbon reduction and sustainable design within new developments (including consideration of biodiversity net gain)	Planning team	September 2022 – Spring 2023 (with consultation to follow)	Supplementary Planning Document adopted and used as a material planning consideration	
8.2 Information on sustainable travel choices to be included in marketing of new residential developments that have a travel plan or travel planning co-ordinator allocated, in order to promote active, sustainable travel, reducing the use of private cars.	Provision of information is produced for new tenants on sustainable, active travel options in Colchester.	Planning team	Ongoing	Information on sustainable travel options is included in all new homes	H
8.3 Provide opportunities for residents to increase the energy efficiency and decarbonise their homes	Delivery of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (phases 2 and 3), providing £1.2 million of funding to low income households to make their	Sustainability and Communities teams	June 2022 – March 2023	Number of homes receiving energy efficiency and decarbonisation improvements.	H, I, E

8. Sustainable Planning, built environment and green economy					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team Responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	homes more energy efficient and greener				
	Promotion of Essex County Council schemes that provide support to help residents become greener and cut energy bills such as the Solar Together scheme and Essex Energy Switch.	Sustainability and Communities teams	Ongoing	Increasing numbers of Colchester residents signing up for these schemes.	H
	Signpost and provide access to residents to organisations and funding/advice that can provide support for increasing energy efficiency and managing fuel bills	Communities and financial support teams	Ongoing	Increasing numbers of residents supported to access services and support to help manage their fuel bills	H, I
8.4 Unlock opportunities for local organisations to upskill staff in energy efficiency and domestic retrofit	Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) receiving training provided by The Retrofit Academy to learn more about how the most up to date energy efficiency/retrofit standards (PAS 2035 standards) can be applied to the Council's housing stock	CBH staff	Ongoing	CBH aware of the latest energy efficiency standards and can support process of following these standards in management of the Council's housing stock	

8. Sustainable Planning, built environment and green economy					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team Responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	Explore opportunities for housing associations in Colchester to receive support from The Retrofit Academy to upskill their workforces so they have the understanding of PAS 2035 standards and know the process for completing works to this standard	Economic Development Officer	October 2022 – Ongoing	Housing associations have increased understanding of the latest energy efficiency standards and how the process should be applied for homes they manage.	
8.5 Work with partners to identify how to close green skills gaps across Essex	Work with further education organisations such as Colchester Institute to ensure courses are available in green building techniques, and existing courses have sustainable elements embedded.	Various CCC and ECC officers working with further education organisations	TBD	Actions identified in collaboration with others as to how more people can be trained up to support the green economy	E
	Work with Essex County Council to identify areas where there are additional green skills gaps and explore ways to overcome these such as by demonstrating demand for green retrofit of estates across Essex to stimulate interest from local installers to train in green retrofit.	Various CCC and ECC officers	TBD	Identify solutions for overcoming green skills gaps and demonstrating there is demand in Colchester for green retrofit/new build.	

8. Sustainable Planning, built environment and green economy					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team Responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
8.6 Promote support and funding available to businesses to help them become greener	Promotion of Colchester Business Enterprise Agency's (Colbea) Net Zero Business support programme for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to understand their carbon footprint and how they can reduce this.	Economic development team	April 2022 – March 2023	Businesses increasingly understand the opportunities available to help them become greener and decarbonise their operations	E
	Fund and support the promotion of Colbea's ' Colchester Business Cost Reduction Programme ' to help SMEs by providing advice on ways to save costs by reducing their energy use and waste production	Economic development team	Ongoing		
	Promote the Low carbon across the South East (Locase) programme for businesses to access funding to support energy efficiency and other environmental improvements.	Climate Emergency Officer/Economic development team	Ongoing		

8. Sustainable Planning, built environment and green economy					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team Responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	Signpost businesses to Essex Climate Action Commissions advice pack to help businesses become greener	Climate Emergency Officer/Economic development team	July 2022 – ongoing		

9. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment

To achieve our net zero target by 2030, and reduce the Council's environmental impact, we need to change the way we do things at the Council. From how we travel to work to how we manage our projects. Achieving this organisational change helps to make sure all staff are on board with tackling the climate challenge, and for them to understand how they can play a part in their professional and personal lives to reduce their environmental impact.

Key Highlights from 2021/22:

- Introduce training on climate change and sustainable travel as a part of Councillor training. This was run for the first time in 2021 to ensure councillors understood the Council's approach to these issues, and this will now become a regular part of the training package for councillors.
- Created the Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Assessment, to enable staff to consider the environmental impacts of their projects and how these could be managed. Associated guidance was also produced to help staff complete the assessment effectively, and think about how their projects could be adapted to become more environmentally friendly.
- Supported staff to travel to work sustainably through running bike maintenance sessions, eCargo bike try out sessions and understanding staff travel patterns through the annual staff travel survey. The team have also done some focussed work at Shrub End Depot, providing regular bike maintenance sessions for the staff based there and securing funding to create a bike shelter to enable staff to store their bikes more securely.

9. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
9.1 Ensuring internal strategies and policies are consistent with the climate change emergency	Review of internal core strategies and policies with at least 3 updated to show consideration of the climate emergency, including Waste and Recycling Strategy, Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Business rates relief policy	Multiple teams	July 2022 – December 2023	At least 3 key strategies reviewed and updated by end of 2023	
9.2 Capture progress made on Climate Emergency Action Plan and Council's progression to become more environmentally sustainable	Continue with regular reporting on the progress of the action plan to the Environment and Sustainability Panel	Multiple teams involved with keeping progress up to date.	Ongoing	Action plan progress reported at every Panel meeting	
9.3 Develop a learning and development programme for staff (and members) on climate change and environmental issues to help increase awareness and promote behaviour change	<p>Ensure councillors receive member training on sustainable travel and climate change to understand the importance of these elements to Council projects.</p> <p>Creation of an e-learning course for staff to help them understand environmental issues, and how they can act within their work and personal lives to reduce their environmental impact</p>	<p>Sustainability, transport and climate change team.</p> <p>Climate Emergency Officer</p>	<p>Delivered in September 2022</p> <p>August 2022 – November 2022 for development. Delivery thereafter.</p>	<p>Training delivered, and any feedback and support asked for by councillors followed up on</p> <p>E-learning course created, and feedback collected from staff on its usefulness.</p>	

9. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
9.4 Embed consideration of the environment and climate change within internal communications to promote awareness and behaviour change of environmental issues and the climate challenge	Keep internal comms plan updated to plan out how to inform staff of environmental work and projects.	Climate Emergency Officer	Ongoing	Comms plan stays updated	
9.5 Strengthen assessment of environmental impacts in all levels of Council decision making	Monitor completion of sustainability and carbon reduction assessment (and associated guidance) to help staff consider and reduce the environmental impacts/emissions throughout their projects, and where relevant see how this could be improved.	Climate Emergency Officer	Ongoing	New assessment and guidance created that staff use effectively to increase their knowledge of environmental impacts/emissions from their projects and how these can be reduced.	
9.6 Reviewing the Council's Travel Plan to ensure this continues to promote sustainable travel to staff	Review the Council's Travel Plan in light of changes to staff working location patterns to ensure Travel Plan facilitates sustainable travel to staff going forward, exploring actions such	Travel Plan Officer	Ongoing	Council Travel Plan reviewed and updated	

9. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	as options for electric vehicle salary sacrifice schemes.				
9.7 Reduce the environmental impacts of events organised by Colchester Events	Review 'travel pages' for Colchester Events so that sustainable travel options are shown and prioritised over private car travel in line with the travel hierarchy.	Travel Plan Officer	May 2022 – July 2022	Information provided on Events Company websites/ticket information about sustainable travel to events	
	Research opportunities to make events run and facilitated by Colchester Events greener	Sustainability team alongside Colchester Events	Ongoing	Measures and actions identified to make the operation of events taking place in Colchester greener, which in turn can help with behaviour change	
9.8 Ensure the environmental impacts of our ICT systems and processes are considered and reduced as much as possible	Not replacing physical telephone handsets from offices, with work calls routed directly to Microsoft Teams	ICT team	July 2022 – March 2023	Telephone handsets removed, resulting in avoided purchase of 100 physical handsets and removal of supplier's dedicated servers and computer application that supported the use of handsets.	
	Reviewing data retention to ensure unnecessary data in emails and files is not being stored (the systems that store	ICT team	July 2022 – July 2023	Ongoing review of data retention to identify opportunities to reduce emissions from storage of data.	

9. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
	data use energy and have an impact on carbon emissions)				
	Ensure that sustainability is considered in the lifecycle of using ICT equipment (from procurement to disposal)	ICT team	Ongoing action	Council assesses need for ICT equipment and looks to dispose of equipment responsibly after use (e.g. getting it repaired, giving to other organisations to reuse, sending parts for recycling).	
	Connecting directly to the cloud and the internet to use applications, cutting out the need for desktop applications that require energy to power	ICT team	Ongoing action	Device specification choice is made by balancing performance and power consumption impact Minimise the number of desktop applications used on CCC laptops, in order to reduce energy usage.	
	Use of the cloud to store files resulting in lower emissions than using a data centre (more efficient equipment used for operating cloud)	ICT team	Ongoing action	Calculator provided by Microsoft to show and estimate our IT based emissions savings from storing files in the cloud.	

9. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment					
Action	How will action be achieved?	Officer/Team responsible	Timescale	Measurement of Success	Co-benefits
9.9 Reduce printing and postage at Council to contribute to reducing waste and saving emissions	Staff behaviour change project to identify opportunities to digitalise paper-based processes to reduce printing and posting where possible.	Multiple teams across Council	January 2022 – Ongoing	Measured reductions in quantity/cost of printing and postage done across CCC, Colchester Borough Homes and Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited	

Case study: Colchester City Council Travel Plan – Helping staff travel sustainably

The Council has a Travel Plan which is kept up to date to support Council staff to travel to and for work sustainably. For example, discounts are available for buses, Park and Ride and train travel, alongside a salary sacrifice scheme for bikes. There are also a selection of pool bikes and electric cargo bikes available for staff to use to travel to meetings and events.

Support has also been offered to help staff keep their bikes in good condition through the offering of 'Dr Bike' maintenance sessions, as well as providing useful to have bike equipment such as helmets, puncture repair kits and bells. In the last year, Council staff made a concerted effort to help staff who travel to the Shrub End Depot offices do so by bike. Surveys were run to understand the main barriers to cycling, and alongside the bike maintenance sessions provided, a new covered bike shed has been provided to increase the provision of secure, quality cycle storage for the staff.



Case study: Colchester Museums team going green

The Colchester Museums teams are taking lots of steps to make their operations more environmentally friendly. In addition to exploring opportunities to decarbonise the museum buildings, the team have also been working to raise awareness of environmental issues and reduce their environmental impact. This includes:

- Developing displays and regular activities focused on local wildlife and habitats, or ways to be greener. Much of this fits naturally into the programme for the Natural History Museum, which already features a Climate Change gallery and is due to be redeveloped in the next few years.
- Having an 'Environmental Champions' group that meet to come up with ways to make museum operations greener and how museums can be used to raise environmental awareness.
- Having staff trained on Carbon Literacy through [SHARE Museums East](#).
- Cutting out use of single use plastic materials in museum shops. This includes removal of plastic bags, paper bags only provided upon request, using paper tags rather than plastic labels on products. Items are also not hung off rails with plastic kimbles, instead they are on shelves with paper price tags attached
- Stocking new ranges that promote recycling, such as the 'Recycling and reusing since 1076' canvas bag, exhibition-related souvenirs with seed paper labels and Castle-branded products made from recycled plastics.
- Exploring ways to improve procurement of items to sell in museum shops, so that items are more environmentally friendly.
- Repurposing and reusing materials from old exhibitions into newer exhibitions going forward.
- Moving much of their evaluation to digital, to cut down on physical feedback forms.



For any questions on the Council's climate and environmental work, please visit the [CCC sustainability webpage](#) or email climate.change@colchester.gov.uk.

What can you do?

We all need to help reduce our environmental impact in order to tackle and adapt to climate change. However, it's unrealistic to become 100% green – a great quote from Mike Berners-Lee, author of '[How bad are bananas?](#)' summarises this well:

“Very few of us are squeaky clean in carbon terms. You don't have to become so overnight, but most of us do need to make serious changes over the next few years.

It's important to keep moving in the right direction and enjoy the process of cutting carbon out of our lives. Don't beat yourself up, but don't let yourself off the hook either.”

Calculating your carbon footprint

If you're just starting on your environmental journey, you may want to understand how your lifestyle contributes to the production of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. Filling in a carbon footprint calculator like that from the [WWF](#) may be a good place to start. [Giki Zero](#) have also produced an excellent calculator that enables you to add lots of detail about your lifestyle. It then gives you sets of actions that you could take to help lower your environmental impact, along with guidance to help you take them.

Taking action

Ready to take action, but not sure what to start with? The best place to start is with something that is manageable within your daily life, before then proceeding onto bigger actions. Not all actions will be suitable for everyone, but an example of some actions you could take are shown below.

- **Reducing the amount of meat and dairy you eat in your diet.** Lots of land, energy and water use goes into livestock farming making it [a big contributor to greenhouse gas emissions](#). Switching your diet to become more plant based can help improve your health as well as lowering emissions. See tips and recipes from a range of sites including [Meat Free Monday](#), [BBC Good Food](#) and [Veganuary](#). Eating local and seasonal produce and making the most of leftovers to reduce food waste are also great tips to reduce emissions. See the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) website for more information on reducing food waste.
- **Taking the bike for more journeys** – Cycling to places is a great way to stay healthy, cut costs from fuel and reduce emissions. Perhaps you could help cycle with your kids to school on the school run? Pop to the shops on your bike with some panniers for storage? Find the best routes for cycling to and from different locations using [Cycle Streets](#). If your bike is

in need of a maintenance check, take it down to [Colchester Bike Kitchen](#) where they'll help you repair your bike. Want to increase your cycling confidence – Visit [Safer Essex Roads Partnership](#) for information on bike training, a lot of which is FREE till March 2023.

- **Reducing your water use** – Colchester is one of the driest areas of the UK, receiving less rainfall than some places in the Mediterranean! The climate is likely to get drier as climate changes, so we need to get better at using water efficiently and not wasting it. Actions like cutting showering time and frequency, getting a water butt to store rainwater for plants in dry spells and boiling the right amount of water for your cuppa and more are all good ways to save water. See more water saving tips on [Anglian Water's website](#).
- **Supporting biodiversity in your garden** – Gardens can be a great way to provide a green space to support nature in an increasingly urban environment. There's lots of ways you can support local wildlife, for example the planting of wildflowers to support insects and pollinators, putting up bird feeders (see how to make your own [here](#)) and nest boxes or creating a pond. Find out more at [Essex Wildlife Trust](#) and on [Colchester Museums site](#) with children's activities that support wildlife.
- **Turning your engine off when stationary** – Air pollution from cars and log fires contributes to damaging human health, with approximately 1 in 20 deaths in Colchester linked to air pollution. One simple way you can help cut air pollution from your car is by turning your car engine off when stationary (not idling your engine), for example when waiting in a long queue at traffic lights or waiting outside schools. For more information on taking action on engine idling, including campaign resources to encourage others to turn off their engine can be found from the Council's [CAReless Pollution project website](#).
- **Environmental volunteering** – There are loads of great organisations where you can learn valuable skills in protecting the environment and also those that will boost your own personal development. In Colchester, there are a wide range of organisations offering volunteering opportunities such as [Essex Wildlife Trust](#), [The Conservation Volunteers](#), [Eco Colchester](#), [Colchester Litter Pickers](#), [Together We Grow CIC](#) and the [Council](#) (amongst others). Consider looking at volunteering websites such as [Volunteer Essex](#) or visiting the [One Colchester Community Hub](#) in Colchester city centre to find out more.

There are also several great websites which show you actions you could take and provide extra guidance and advice to help you take these actions.

[The Jump](#) – A grassroots project encouraging the take up of 6 specific actions or 'shifts' to lifestyles to help reduce environmental impacts and reduce consumption of resources. Actions can be pledged for different timescales, with support provided along the way.

[Grantham Institute](#) – An educational department within University College London, that has one element researching about climate change and the environment. They have produced some great guides with clear actions that we could all take to [tackle climate change](#), [protect the natural environment](#) and [improve our health and the planet](#). Each guide is simply presented with useful information included on each action you can take.

[Do Nation](#) – A website set up to encourage people to take, and stick to, environmental actions by taking a pledge to do them. The website lists many environmental actions you can take, which is great as an information resource. You can then go one step further and pledge to do any number of environmental actions for a 2 month period, with reminders and encouragement provided. You can use the site as ways to encourage work colleagues or friends to also pledge to take environmental action, perhaps in return for a pledge or action you're doing. Instead of raising money for a marathon you're doing, you could get people to take environmental pledges to support what you're doing instead!

[Essex Residents Climate Advice Pack](#) – [Essex Climate Action Commission](#) have produced a climate advice pack for residents, giving ideas of actions you can take to tackle climate change and reduce your environmental impact. This has been produced with local context in mind so there are opportunities for Essex residents to help you become greener such as free cycle training, free water saving kits and more!

[Carbon Copy](#) – This contains lots of environmental case studies that a range of organisations, from individuals, community groups to local authorities, across the UK have carried out. If there's an idea you have for an environmental project in your community, why not see if someone has done it already to get some inspiration and give you a useful starting point.

Another great resource is the Eco Colchester [website](#) and [Facebook page](#). Eco Colchester are a mainly online environmental community groups supporting local environmental action. Their website has lots of information about environmental actions, and organisations who support this action locally. Their Facebook page is also a great forum for discussion about local environmental issues and actions.

Got a great idea but need the funding to bring it to life? Check out the [Essex Climate Action Challenge Fund](#) – A grant pot offering schools, parish councils and community organisations up to £20,000 to fund environmental projects. Funding is currently available till March 2023

For schools

Inspired to take action in your school to make it greener? See below for some resources that you may find of use:

CCC school webpages – CCC has produced some dedicated webpages on support for schools to help them become greener. This details support available from the [Council](#), [Essex County Council](#) and other [local](#) and [national](#) organisations that can help you become greener. There's also a section on actions you can take to become greener with some case studies of Colchester schools that have taken some of these. All types of actions are covered from ink cartridge recycling, air quality awareness activities and opportunities to access funding for your green projects!

Essex Climate Action Commission Schools advice pack – This [advice pack](#) includes many actions for schools, with examples of how other Essex schools have become greener which could provide you with some inspiration.

[Essex Schools Green Day](#) – This is an annual event organised by the [Multi Schools Council](#). The aim of the event is for schools to dedicate a day to environmental learning, awareness and action. The day normally takes place in June/July each year. Over 20 schools took part in 2022 in Colchester but we'd love to see more taking part. Email mschoolscouncil@gmail.com or climate.change@colchester.gov.uk if you'd like more information.

For Business

With rising energy and fuel bills, you may be looking at ways to save energy for your business. Saving energy equals reducing emissions as well as money. There are lots of other things you can do to make your business greener, which can have lots of other benefits from improve staff wellbeing, meeting customer demand for environmental products and produce further cost savings.

Below are several resources and opportunities that may be of interest in helping your business to become greener:

Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (COLBEA) [Sustainable Business Training](#) – Colbea provide support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them with the first steps of understanding their carbon footprint and how to take action on climate change. They have several 1 ½ hour introductory workshops running till November 2022, but it is possible they may offer further workshops as part of their sustainable business training in the future, so do enquire with them if this sounds of interest. They are also currently offering a [cost reduction programme](#) for Colchester based SMEs, with a consultant providing a review of their operations to identify ways to cut costs and overheads related to energy use, waste production and more.

Colchester eCargo Bike Library – This project is managed and run by Colchester City Council, focussing on breaking down the barriers for businesses to uptake the use of electric cargo (eCargo) bikes for their operations. eCargo bikes are electric bikes with a storage compartment on the front, enabling a variety of items to be delivered in a cheap, fast and green way. Find out more details on our [website](#) for how businesses can apply for a free short term loan of 1-3 months to try out one of the eCargo bikes and see if it could work for their business.

Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE): This grant fund offers £10,000 to businesses to help them increase the energy efficiency of, or contribute to the decarbonisation of, their premises. This funding can also help to reduce other environmental impacts of your business, for example supporting your business to switch to electric vehicles. It is a grant fund that businesses in Colchester and the surrounding area can offer. However, other national grants are mentioned in the Business Advice pack produced by Essex Climate Action Commission (see below).

Essex Climate Action Commission Business Advice Pack – An advice pack of resources, funding and case studies that can help your business become greener.

For any questions on the Council's climate and environmental work, please visit the [CCC sustainability webpage](#) or email climate.change@colchester.gov.uk.

02 November 2022

Report of	Assistant Director Environment	Author	Rosa Tanfield Group Manager, Neighbourhood Services
Title	Recycling and Waste Strategy development proposal		
Wards affected	All Wards		
			☎ 03300538047

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The current Waste Vision and Strategy was developed and launched in 2015 and 2016, respectfully. The Borough has changed since that time, but operations of the recycling and waste service has changed little. Whilst the service is performing well regionally, the time is right to review the strategy to align the service to the ambitions of the Council and Government. There are several drivers for change, including Government legislative changes, county-wide waste strategy changes, Borough growth, budget, and operational challenges. The recent LGA Peer Review of the Council has also made recommendations for the Council to review the Recycling and Waste Service.
- 1.2 The recycling and waste service impacts on every resident, visitor, and business in the Borough. The strategy could be far reaching and broad, impacting on a variety of areas.
- 1.3 It is proposed that a new strategy be developed with the Environment and Sustainability Panel working alongside officers and the Portfolio Holder to develop this piece of work.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree to undertake work to develop a new Strategy for Recycling and Waste. To develop the strategy through a series of workshops facilitated by Officers and the appointed consultant. The workshops will be used to define clear principles, objectives and evaluation criteria through which future operating models may be tested as set out in the report.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Council has the opportunity to undertake a considered review and develop a new strategy for Colchester ahead of changes that could impact on service delivery in the future.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 If no review is undertaken, the service delivery continues under the existing vision and strategy. This could potentially limit the ability for successful service delivery in the future and impact on income to the Council.

5. Background information

- 5.1 The Environment and Sustainability Panel, at its meeting in March 2022, received a report and presentation from officers on a proposed approach to the Council Recycling and Waste Strategy. Since then, there has been a change of administration and a subsequent change to the membership of the Environment and Sustainability Panel. This report provides an updated view for the current Panel to consider and recommends an approach for future development of the strategy.
- 5.2 The Council's current 'Waste Vision' was adopted by the Council in 2015 and the subsequent 'Waste Strategy' was agreed by Cabinet in December 2016. The lifestyles and behaviours of the residents in Colchester have changed since then and as a society, greater focus has been given to the impact on the environment; the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019. In addition, the Borough has continued to change and grow over the last 7 years. The way the Council operates the recycling and waste service has changed very little since the last vision and strategy was launched. Whilst the service performs very well regionally (sitting in the top performing tier for those in the eastern region for the amount of residual waste and percentage of recycling that residents produce) a review is required to mitigate operational risks, increase resilience, support the wellbeing of staff and ensure the service remains high performing and fit for the future.

Strategic and operational drivers for change

- 5.3 The following section sets out in more detail the strategic drivers for change:

Environment Act (2021) – Resources and Waste Strategy

- 5.4 The Environment and Sustainability Panel received a presentation from the Group Manager of Neighbourhood Services at its meeting on 22nd July 2021 that explained in detail the consultation by the Government on changes proposed under the Environment Bill (as it was at the time). The Panel received a further report from the Assistant Director of Place and Client Services at its meeting on 24th February 2022 that set out an overview of the Environment Act (2021).
- 5.5 The proposed changes will see the biggest changes to waste services in years, including how services will be delivered, the infrastructure required and how Council costs are recovered. Three key areas are discussed:
- 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.

Climate Change 6th Budget

- 5.6 The Climate Change Budget sets out targets for how the UK will be net zero and fully decarbonised by 2050. This includes targets for increased recycling rates, food waste reduction, reducing landfill, and increased targets for zero-emission vehicles.

Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS)

- 5.7 The Council works closely with Essex County Council (who has responsibility for the disposal of waste) and the other Borough, City, and District Councils through the Essex Waste Partnership (EWP). One of the primary roles of the EWP is to consider how authorities can work together to deliver high performing waste services that meet the needs of communities.
- 5.8 In 2007 members of the EWP published a 25-year Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS). This established a strategic framework and plan for the future of waste and recycling in Essex, enabling the delivery of high levels of recycling and waste avoidance. Although much progress has been made since its adoption, the climate challenge and emerging legislation will require the EWP to do more to tackle waste growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.9 To ensure the authorities are best placed to meet future challenges the EWP is currently in the process of reviewing the JMWMS to ensure it is aligned with the collective aspirations.

Local Development Plan

- 5.10 The Local Development Plan sets out to manage the increased growth of the Borough. New developments such as the Garden Community offer the opportunity for the Council to explore innovative ways for residents to live and thus, the potential for how household waste is managed. The continued growth of the Borough has an impact on the sustainability of the current operational set up and it is important that this is considered and adapted.

Operational drivers

- 5.11 The operations of the service during the recent pandemic, fuel crisis and storms, has demonstrated to the Council the importance of operational resilience and to that end, the need to simplify the service in order to ensure resources can be redeployed to priority services as necessary. Recent work completed to review the Shrub End depot facility has demonstrated that capacity is an emerging challenge when faced with increasing tonnages of material with limited space and facilities. The current fleet is broad and varied, and the Council has set clear ambitions to transition to low carbon options by 2030. Overall, as with other services in the Council, it is important to consider the financial sustainability of the service; not just efficiencies and savings, but cost recovery and income generating opportunities too.

Proposed approach

- 5.12 It is proposed that the Environment and Sustainability Panel will lead the development of the new strategy working with PFH, officers and an appointed consultant. In order to do this effectively and to the right level of detail a number of workshops are proposed in addition to the Panels current work programme. The workshops will vary between 1 and 3 hours long. The following table gives an outline of the workshops and timing (to be agreed with the preferred consultant):

1 st workshop (November/December 2022) Location: In person at Shrub End Depot	Exploratory discussion on the understanding of the current service and scope of the strategy Facilitated by Officers
2 nd workshop (December 2022 / January 2023) Location: 'online' via MS Teams	Vision and aspirations workshop Facilitated by consultant
3 rd workshop (June 2023) Location: 'online' via MS Teams	Preferred option meeting Facilitated by consultant
<i>Possible visit to another authority</i>	
4 th workshop (August/September 2023) Location: 'online' via MS Teams	Pre consultation 'Draft' Strategy presentation Facilitated by consultant

5.13 It is proposed that a site visit will be undertaken at Shrub End depot, and potentially at other local authority sites where they may be identified as suitable comparators for the vision and aspirations of the Council, along with presentations from officers and Councillors of those authorities. Case studies will be shared, group exercises, online discussions, and data and insight will help inform the strategy development.

5.14 An update on the progress of the strategy development will be provided at each Environment and Sustainability Panel, until such time as the strategy has been fully drafted.

Development of the strategy

5.15 The following initial objectives are proposed which will be further developed through the programme: The Colchester Recycling and Waste Strategy, by 2030, will:

- 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

5.16 It is proposed that the strategy is developed based on:

- Understanding the current operations, the key challenges, and drivers
- Using agreed evaluation process and criteria for options
- Basing decision making on evidence and data led forecasts
- Using 'prototypes' and 'pilots' to provide evidence for informed decision making

5.17 It is proposed that the development of the strategy and workplan is tested and evaluated against the following areas to ensure that it is considered and robust:

- Environmental implications - the appropriateness of the strategy to meet the Council's strategic and Government aims to tackle the climate challenge and leading sustainability
- Public implications - the appropriateness of the strategy to support communities, through the Communities Can approach
- Operational implications - the impact of any change on the operational delivery of Neighbourhood Services, including efficiencies, and performance, service resilience, and staff wellbeing, income generation taking account of the Council's budget strategy.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 This project work is directly aligned to the Council's strategic priorities of *Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability* (in particular, responding to the climate emergency), and *Creating safe, health and active communities* (in particular, building on community strengths and assets).

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Transformation funding has been allocated for this work in recognition that the recycling and waste service is one the largest cost areas in the budget, with income also associated with credits and recycling material. It is clearly set out in the proposed objectives that there should be value for money outcomes. This will be further explored as the programme of development takes place. Any proposed changes through the development of the strategy will give proper consideration to revenue and capital budget implications within the medium-term financial forecast.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 It is proposed that the strategy will be developed through the Environment and Sustainability Panel work programme. The Climate Action Plan and Environment Act (2021) will be used as a mechanism for wider engagement on the strategy. The opportunity will also be taken to raise awareness and support public education on the wider implications of Government changes and how this may impact the residents and businesses of Colchester.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 9.1 This report sets out proposals for an approach to developing a new recycling and waste strategy. It does not propose or set out to make any service changes at this stage and to that extent it does not impact on the promotion of equality and overcome discrimination in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, and race/ethnicity. However, any proposed changes through the development of the strategy will give proper consideration to equality, diversity, and human right implications.

10. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 It is clearly set out in the proposed objectives that there should be outcomes for communities. This will be further explored as the programme of development takes place. Any proposed changes through the development of the strategy will give proper consideration to health, wellbeing, and community safety implications.

11. Health and Safety Implications

- 11.1 It is clearly set out in the proposed objectives that there should be outcomes with health and safety. This will be further explored as the programme of development takes place. Any proposed changes through the development of the strategy will give proper consideration to health and safety implications.

12. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 12.1 It is clearly set out in the proposed objectives that there should be outcomes with environmental and sustainability within the recommendations. This is driven through the Council's own ambitions and that of Government through the Environment Act (2021) and the Climate Change Sixth Budget. This will be further explored as the programme of development takes place. Any proposed changes through the development of the strategy will give proper consideration to environmental and sustainability implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There are no implications at this stage, but as the development of the strategy takes place, proper consideration and reporting of risk management will be made.

02 November 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Environment	Author	Nick Christo
Title	Woodland & Biodiversity Project Update		
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out and reviews the progress that has been made through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project which is now in year 4 of its five-year programme.
- 1.2 The project has evolved over the 4 years and has a clear objective and statement of purpose set out. The project focuses on three, intrinsically linked areas of work:
 - For our communities
 - For our wildlife
 - For our environment
- 1.3 The report sets out the activities being undertaken across these areas and highlights projects that demonstrate the impact being made in each.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 This report is for information only.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Woodland Project (as it was initially called), launched in 2019. In response to learning, development and challenge, the principles and objectives of the project have evolved; from a clear aim of planting trees to make the borough greener and offset carbon emissions in year 1, to incorporating increased consideration of biodiversity and community focus in year 2, to a project that now focus on developing a legacy of a greener and biodiverse future for Colchester in year 3. The following project descriptions demonstrate the evolution of the project:

Year 1 (2019/20)

- 5.2 'The Colchester Woodland Project'

'Over the next five years, we plan to plant 200,000 trees across the borough as part of the Better Colchester campaign. Trees and woodlands are a vital part of our eco-system, and we are committed to preserving them and helping them to flourish. This is at the very heart of the Colchester Woodland Project. We want to make our borough even greener, and we want to help our community know, love, and use our woods and parks'

Year 2 (2020/21)

- 5.3 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

'We plan to plant 200,000 trees across the borough in the next 5 years, as part of the Better Colchester campaign, as well as to encourage natural recovery networks that help wildlife and biodiversity. Trees and woodlands are a vital part of our eco-system. We are committed to planting trees and to helping them and wider biodiversity to flourish. We want to make our borough even greener. We want to help our community know and love and care for our environment, from wildflowers and meadows, to our woods and parks, old or new.'

Year 3 (2021/22)

- 5.4 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

'Is a unique opportunity for everyone to work together and develop a legacy of a greener Borough for future generations.

The project aims to bring about improvements in 3 areas, our Communities, our Wildlife, and our Environment.'

Year 4 (2022/23)

- 5.5 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

The project will continue to develop in 22/23 by continuing to plant trees in suitable areas and by focusing on the naturalisation of sites, enhancing the biodiversity further, reviewing the management regimes and continue to communicate changes to our communities.

Year 4 in detail

- 5.6 Year 4 of the project focuses on providing a unique opportunity for everyone (no matter what background, location, age, etc) to collaborate with others and create a legacy of a greener place for Colchester in the future. This sees an important shift in how such an ambition might be delivered and articulates the important outcomes from the project. The number of plants the project aims to plant has been removed from the project description, and there is continued focus on the breadth of a diverse programme of activities. To ensure that this aim is met, the project focuses on three intrinsically linked areas which it sets out to make tangible outcomes:

COMMUNITIES

- 5.7 To add value to the health and wellbeing of our communities and support the development of deep-rooted connection. We will:
- Improve physical health by enabling access to green spaces for everyone
 - Enable more people to be involved in nature based outdoor activities to improve physical and mental health
 - Help communities to benefit from urban planting
 - Help families create precious memories and stories

WILDLIFE

- 5.8 To develop, enhance and diversify our wildlife within Colchester. We will:
- Reduce mowing approaches on Council green spaces, in an effort to 'rewild' green spaces, creating habitats and an environment suitable for wildlife such as insects and pollinators
 - Create new woodlands
 - Recover and improve wildlife corridors and networks

ENVIRONMENT

- 5.9 Reduce the environmental impact of the Council and influence others to follow our lead: We will
- Help residents and businesses to make informed decisions about their impact on the environment in Colchester
 - Conserve and enhance biodiversity by reviewing our Greening Policy
 - Banning the use of glyphosate herbicide on Council owned green spaces
 - Contribute to the reduction in drought and flood risk
- 5.10 In working towards these outcomes and to deliver the best possible approach, the team have committed to the following:
1. We will not harm existing habitats
 2. We will use natural processes as far as practicable and possible
 3. We will seek to balance the needs of people and nature
 4. We will collaborate, consult, and involve communities and partners
 5. We will allow others to take part and own the project
 6. We will use every opportunity to influence others to follow our example

FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

- 5.11 Working with community groups on planting and activities days can deliver immense opportunity and impact on both community and individuals' health and wellbeing. Together We Grow CIC (TWG) has been a partner of the Woodland and Biodiversity Project since year 1. Given the work that TWG do in terms of community engagement, increasing awareness of the mental and physical benefits of working outdoors in nature and their core remit of nurturing and improving a key public outdoor space, it was felt they would be the right choice to assist in carrying out the community element of the project.
- 5.13 During year 3 of the Woodland & Biodiversity Project, seven different sites were planted and with the help of 425 volunteers, a total of 7,170 young trees were planted with a further 23,000 plants supplied to other organisations.
- 5.14 The team are currently working with six other organisations - The Big Green Internet, the Trust for Conservation Volunteers, The Ministry of Defense, Wivenhoe Town Council, The Unity Academy and Kent Wildlife Trust to identify suitable planting locations for the coming year.

- 5.15 In further highlighting the success of the project, a presentation was given to One Colchester Climate Change Network.
- 5.16 To commemorate the Queen's Jubilee year, we delivered the Jubilee Tree Canopy Project in partnership with our local communities. We received requests for 22 Jubilee Oak Trees from Town and Parish Councils 11 of which have now been planted with a further 11 due to be planted in November 2022 when the planting season begins again..
- 5.17 We delivered a Blossoms Circles programme, commemorating 2020 at King's Meadow. Planting took place early in 2022 and the Council facilitated three planting days. With NHS staff attending the second planting day and various Councillors who joined the launch. Around 124 volunteers helped plant the blossom circles. Four local poets were invited to write poems which are now displayed at the site, and the poetry reading event took place in April which was a huge success.
- 5.18 140 Street Trees were planted during year 3 of the project across 7 locations. Work is underway to identify sites for 2022 and an application form has been completed and sent to ECC which requests funding for 125 street trees to be planted in 16 different locations which have been suggested by local Councillors.
- 5.19 The team are also working on the following activities:

C.1 Deliver an engagement campaign (schools, households, business, care homes)	<p>So residents can make a difference in their own gardens We are developing an online library of resources and videos to provide guidance and top tips on how people can encourage biodiversity in their own spaces. This will be available via colchester.gov.uk and shared in weekly posts via our social media channels.</p> <p>Recognise those residents who support the project Across many sites in the Borough residents are taking it upon themselves to care and protect the newly planted sites. These 'Tree Guardians' are now being recognised and provided with the tools to help them continue with their roles. A campaign to recruit more Tree Guardians and showcase the wonderful work they do and the impact they make is being shared.</p> <p>More communities are aware and involved in projects Local schools (30) have been contacted and offered trees and shrubs, along with farmers, landowners, and businesses for their landholdings.</p>
C.2 Work with Together We Grow and other community organisations on activities	<p>Our new Community Orchards project was launched on 1st August with an open invitation to all community organisations, town & parish councils and schools to propose sites where fruit trees might be grown to provide habitats for wildlife and a food source for people and pollinators alike!</p> <p>To date 4 potential sites have been identified and these are being investigated by our staff to assess their suitability for fruit tree growing.</p>
C.3 Deliver community planting days	<p>The ambition to continue to plant trees and plants has not diminished and the project is continuing to deliver this aim. There have been over 65,000 trees planted so far, and in year 4 there are at least a further 10,000 planned. Officers are</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and spaces contribute to health of individuals • Larger communities' benefit from urban and peri-urban planting 	<p>currently in the process of developing the plans and consulting on community planting days.</p> <p>As in previous years The Woodland Trust (WT) assess the suitability of each site and the location, scale and species mix of the trees being used. They provide funding for this element of the project and have supported and funded the Council's approach of using only biodegradable rabbit guards, reducing the risk of contaminating the local environment with plastic debris.</p>
<p>C.4 Deliver Trees for Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So residents can make a difference in their own gardens 	<p>Trees for Years will be delivered across the Borough much like in 2021. This is to ensure easier access for residents and to reduce travel time for those wishing to collect items. It is estimated that 15,000 trees and shrubs will be provided for residents.</p> <p>To ensure resilience and help manage the process, the distribution will be delivered through a click and collect service as this proved very popular this year and enables residents to book a time to collect their trees as a location near to them.</p> <p>To facilitate the click and collect service, tree packs will be developed to suit different garden sizes.</p> <p>Officers will work with Parish Council and community groups for distribution sites, and it is anticipated the same sites will be used for the coming year.</p>
<p>C.5 Use Street Tag to encourage residents to monitor sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are engaged with the impact of biodiversity and habitat recovery 	<p>Community enabling colleagues, working in partnership with the Essex Local Delivery Pilot have launched Street Tag, a free interactive app that promotes physical activity in a fun and accessible way.</p> <p>Street Tag turns physical activity into a game by converting walking, running, and cycling into Street Tag points (tags). It is a way to transform streets and parks into a giant virtual playground for local communities. Competitors compete to top the leader board and win prizes. More information can be found here: www.colchester.gov.uk/street-tag.</p> <p>In linking to this project, tags have been added to all the rewilding sites and encourage users to monitor the locations (e.g., the number of butterflies they see).</p>
<p>C.7 Greening the Orbital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding, barrier removal, route enhancements as part of Phase 1 of Greening the Orbital programme 	<p>Colchester Orbital wayfinding discs have been installed on all CBC sites. Work is now taking place to install discs on sites that are not owned by CBC</p>

<p>C.8 Undertake (street tree) urban planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More communities benefit from urban and peri-urban planting 	<p>Officers are working with colleagues on other Town Centre projects to establish the opportunity for further tree planting as plans emerge.</p> <p>Officers are also working with Essex County Council and Essex Highways to establish the ability to increase urban planting. One opportunity is planting where dead or dying trees have been removed historically, and not replaced – these locations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.</p>
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FOR OUR WILDLIFE

Continue to deliver the Colchester Greening Policy

- 5.25 The Greening Colchester Policy was presented and agreed by the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 17 September 2020. Its aim was to stop the use of glyphosate-based products through a phased approach on Council owned land. The timeline published has been met and officers continue to work with partner organisations on implementing changes to their policies also.
- 5.26 Currently the following alternative methods of weed control are being trialled on Council owned land:
- Vegetation around obstacles and play areas is being cut back twice per year.
 - Vegetation along fence lines is being left to grow for wildlife and cut once per year
 - Non glyphosate weedkillers are being used on weed growth in car parks and pathways on CBC owned land.
- 5.27 As part of the Council's commitment to remove glyphosate-based products, the policy also introduced the stopping or reducing of grass cutting in specific areas to improve biodiversity and visual amenity of the grass verges, creating rewilded, wildflower or naturalised woodlands.
- 5.28 In 2022, alternatives to using glyphosate were rolled out on all CBH sites and the Cemetery and Crematorium. Agreed alternative for this year included:
- Obstacles to be strimmed every 6 weeks.
 - Hard surfaces to be hand weeded every 4 weeks.
 - Borders to be hand weeded where required on each visit.
 - Additional wildflower areas added for 2022, with one cut in September.
 - Additional "No Mow" butterfly signs delivered and used on CBC parks land.
- 5.29 Now that the policy has been in place and we have extended it to other sites as above, a review is currently being undertaken on the impact and effectiveness, and recommendations or changes will be made as appropriate.
- 5.30 It has been found that there is excessive weed growth on hard surfaces due to the cessation of Glyphosate herbicide and the initial aim to hand weed every 4 weeks has not been able to be achieved, due to the time it takes to weed at each site. The proposal to rectify this is to use non harmful herbicides such as Katoun Gold twice in the growing season - at the start and at the mid-point – this will enable our contractors to attend every 6 weeks and keep on top of weeds in hard surfaces.
- 5.31 Weeds in borders have also been prevalent and much like hard surfaces above, it is proposed to use non harmful herbicides twice during the growing season. This is a

reduction of using harmful herbicides at every visit and it will allow the teams to continue to hand weed on each visit, however the weed growth will be less. The team in partnership with CBH have also trialled using bark mulch on borders and where this is applied, weed growth has been suppressed significantly. As a result of this positive impact and in conversations with other local authorities, it is proposed that a programme of mulching all border sites be undertaken.

5.33 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>W.1 Undertake Phase 1 planting and planning at Cymbeline Meadow to create a new woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new woodland • Recover biodiversity and habitats 	<p>There is an ambition to create a new woodland and Nature Reserve at Cymbeline Meadow. The aim is to replace agricultural land and enhance existing areas to deliver a diverse and rich mosaic of habitats across the whole site, for future generations of Colchester.</p> <p>Initial concept plans have been drawn up detailing areas of hedge planting, pond and wetland creation, areas of nectar rich grassland, scrubland, bird seed rich crop areas and tree planting, including areas for future coppice woodland.</p> <p>Concept plans are being developed and more detail will emerge for consultation.</p> <p>This work helps to deliver objectives of the Greening The Orbital programme.</p>
<p>W.2 Engage and enable Parish Councils to establish new woodlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable others to create new woodlands 	<p>All 31 Town & Parish Councils have been contacted and offered free trees and shrubs for planting on their land or for distribution to their residents</p> <p>The project is partnering with Big Green Internet, Woodland Trust to deliver the Red Squirrel Project to plant up to 4kms (20,000 whips) of new hedgerow on Mersea Island.</p>
<p>W.4 Deliver the Colchester Wetland Restoration Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and habitats are improved and more diverse 	<p>Unfortunately, the team were unsuccessful in their application to the Government's Green Recovery Fund, in partnership with En-Form and Abberton Rural Training. But they will continue to work with these partners and others to source the funding to delivery of this project.</p>
<p>W.5 Continue to deliver the Colchester Greening Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced environmental impact of the Council 	<p>See above</p>

- 5.34 All of the objectives are intrinsically linked and an example of this is the work undertaken with Wivenhoe Town Council.

The Wivenhoe Project (Nature Recovery Sites)

- 5.35 Wivenhoe Town Council (WTC) worked with the Council's officers to trial a "no mow, no sow" management regime between March and September 2021 at 12 designated open spaces and residential verges in the town. The objectives were to work more closely with communities and establish if a local approach could increase biodiversity and to assess public reaction. This would be the first approach of this type undertaken by the project team, undertaken as a trial, so that if it was successful, it could be used as a template and example to roll out to other Councils and partners.
- 5.36 Following the successful trial over the summer of 2021, it was agreed that more sites within Wivenhoe would be left longer incorporating the 'no mow, no sow' principle. A total of 24 sites are now 'no mow, no sow' sites in Wivenhoe.
- 5.37 Other Town and Parish Councils were invited to an open evening where Wivenhoe Councillors and representatives from the Greening Team walked some of the 'no mow, no sow' sites and discussed the projects, shared best practice and issues that arose when changing the management regimes.
- 5.38 Discussions have been held with Ward Members in Greenstead to explore possible Nature Recovery sites. Locations have been agreed at Magnolia Fields and Hickery Avenue to be left as wildflower sites. It is anticipated that more discussions will be held with other Town and Parish Councils and local Councillors to identify further sites across the Borough.
- 5.39 The highlights of the Wivenhoe Project to date include:
- Nearly 150 different species of wildflower have been identified across the sites since March.
 - There were on average 5 times as many wildflowers in the unmown sites, compared to the mown sites.
 - 8 residents have joined the project as volunteers. They are responsible for flower surveys on all the sites.
 - The Council have erected information boards at all sites explaining how the sites are being managed.
 - There have been no problems with mowing. The grounds maintenance contractor has been very receptive and responsive throughout.
 - Separate to the project, there were some concerns from residents about the general length of grass around the town due to the explosive spring growth resulting from the wet winter and late spring. There were almost no concerns about the project sites themselves.
- 5.40 Public response has included:
- 60 letters to neighbours of the project sites were sent explaining the project in March. No objections have been received by WTC in return.
 - No complaints have been received by WTC and only one reported by Council Officers – a repetition of concerns about traffic sight lines at one site.
 - Updates on the project have been posted on the Town Council and Wivenhoe Community Facebook pages. The posts have received widespread approvals and generated many overwhelmingly supportive comments.
 - While most social media comments have been simple statements of support, some important issues have also been raised and resolved, including maintaining safe traffic sight lines at two sites and access to play areas in another.

- Survey volunteers have been approached by 12 members of the public while doing site surveys. All have expressed support for the project, one wanting to join in the surveys with her small children.

5.41 Costs and benefits for Wivenhoe:

- Financial: no costs have been incurred to date by WTC except for the erection of site signage (cost to CBC). Notional savings of contract time are probably too marginal to model reliably at this stage.
- Carbon emissions: sites are cut up to 14 times a year normally. Reducing to one cut a year represents a 93% reduction in carbon emissions on each site included in the project.
- Biodiversity: Five times as many flowering plants have been found in unmown sites compared to mown sites. With plants being able to complete their life cycles we would expect this abundance of wildflowers to increase in future years in unmown areas.
- Public satisfaction: public response has been overwhelmingly positive, with no formal complaints received about the project and strong support expressed on social media and in person by residents.
- The project is showing that summer long “no mow, no sow” is a viable management option for green spaces in residential and urban areas and is effective in increasing native biodiversity at no financial cost to Council taxpayers and with the prospect of cost benefits if it is extended. Key elements to success are local town and parish council buy-in, and positive, explanatory engagement with residents.

5.42 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>E.1 Initiate the setting up a Greening Colchester Network Forum (<i>working title</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross pollination of ideas • Discover what others are doing • Network development • Sharing of activities • Check in and challenge on the project 	<p>Conversations are underway with partners on either establishing or developing an existing forum and network to support connections between groups and organisations, to learn, replicate and scale action across the network</p>
<p>E.3 Roll out the Wivenhoe Project to other Parish Councils</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>E.4 Deliver an education campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform others of our management methods and provide examples of how these can be applied 	<p>Officers continue to deliver presentations and talks to others, sharing the work undertaken by the Woodland and Biodiversity Project, locally, regionally, and nationally.</p>

<p>E.5 Provide help, support, and prepare Colchester for the future changes that may come forward from the new Agriculture and Environment Bills, through conversations and dialogue with farmers and landowners.</p>	<p>Officers are working with The Big Green Internet and Colchester Natural History Society to identify local landowners and farmers willing to plant trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with 3 large land-owning local businesses to plant up to 3,300 trees and shrubs on their land.</p> <p>Officers are working with the current tenant Farmer at High Woods Country Park to develop proposals for meadow improvements.</p> <p>Officers are working to draw up Biodiversity Net Gain guidance for developers, officers, Members, and the public, in anticipation of the Environment Bill being enacted this autumn and to identify sites for Net Gain in the borough.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with partners about how to create a Nature Recovery Network for the borough.</p>
<p>E.6 Influence planning, strategies, policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the environmental impact of the Council 	<p>Officers are working on developments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colchester Orbital Guidelines • Landscape Development Guidance • Green Infrastructure Guide <p>Officers are also updating the Council's natural assets register to assist with conversations and plans for carbon offsetting.</p>

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Throughout the work of this project Officers have taken due care in giving due consideration to equality and diversity and this is demonstrated through the rewording of the project and the commitments that the project team have created

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 This project supports the Councils [Strategic Plan 2020-23](#) of “tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability” and in particular the priorities of “respond to the climate emergency” and “conserve and enhance biodiversity”. It is also contributing towards “creating safe, healthy and active communities” through the various engagement and planting activities outlined in this report.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The approach to consultation on each of the activities will be dependent on the scope and aim of the specific activity due to the diversity of the work undertaken, but as the commitments set out in 5.9:

4. We will collaborate, consult, and involve communities and partners
5. We will allow others to take part and own the project

- 8.2 These commitments will be tested throughout the project and due consideration will be given to the timeliness and method of consultation for each activity.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 As with consultation, due consideration will be given to those who may be affected by activities. The team will consult and listen to feedback and make changes, as can be demonstrated throughout this project.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 Year 4 the Council has provided funding up to £150,000 to deliver most of the work set out above, including the Woodland Project Officer, purchasing of plants and trees, fencing, marketing, equipment and maintenance, and technical assessments.
- 10.2 To deliver on more ambitious schemes, officers are working with the partners and other organisations to source external funding and support.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 It is hoped that working with organisations such as TWG and on community planting days, the project can work towards aims of providing opportunities to support community safety and community cohesion.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 The project does not cause any harm to the health and safety of the general public.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Risks and opportunities are assessed based on each activity due to the variety of the work being undertaken.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The project has very clear aims and objectives for the project in relation to the environment, nature, and sustainability. The outcomes in delivering these for Colchester residents are:

Improving health and well being

- Those living closer to greener space in urban areas have been found to experience lower rates of anxiety -[Imperial College London \(2019\)](#)
- Increasing access/proportion of green space in local areas can help develop more active lives, promote communication and socialising with others, as well as helping to capture carbon and improve air quality ([Public Health England, 2020](#))
- [Around 9 in 10 people surveyed by Natural England in May 2020](#) agreed that natural spaces are good for mental health and wellbeing. More than 40% noticed that nature, wildlife, and visiting local green and natural spaces have been even more important to their wellbeing since the coronavirus restrictions began

Contributing to reducing climate risk:

- It is estimated that there are around 2,000 heat-related deaths each year in England and Wales and this number is expected to more than triple to over 7,000 by the middle of the century, as a result of climate change. ([Link](#))
- Approximately 250,000 properties are at risk of flooding in the East of England, posing risks to mental health and wellbeing of the population as well as the operations of businesses ([source](#))

Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item
10

02 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

Environment and Sustainability Panel
Meeting date / Agenda items -
Environment and Sustainability Panel - 22 June 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Overview of progress on climate emergency2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – progress update.
Environment and Sustainability Panel – 19 July 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update
Environment and Sustainability Panel – 20 September 2022
Meeting postponed.

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

