

11 March 2021

Report of	Assistant Director Place & Client Services	Author	Maggie Ibrahim ☎ 508965
Title	New Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes (previously named the Climate Emergency Strategic Response) and Midterm Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP 2021-23)		
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Colchester Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to become zero net carbon by 2030. This report sets the new framework for managing the programme for sustainability, climate emergency response and carbon reduction as agreed in the previous Environment and Sustainability Panel. This was needed as the previous Environment Sustainability Strategy has recently come to an end. In developing the strategy document, it was recognised that a phased and agile approach was needed, starting off with a short and concise overview of the key strategic themes of the Council's work for further consultation and elaboration with residents and stakeholders. We also recognised the need to update the strategy with the targets and pathway to reach net zero carbon by 2030 which are pieces of work currently underway and should be reflected in our evolving strategy.
- 1.2 In order to be agile and keep stakeholders updated, we will publish on our website this short document for use in consultation to further develop our strategy. This new strategy document is now called the "Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes" (see Appendix 1). This replaces the previously named "Climate Emergency Strategic Response" title as we are departing from the idea of finished document as our response to the climate emergency and instead want to convey an agile and phased approach to developing a more comprehensive strategy. We are also suggesting we rename the strategy as 'Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy' in order to be less jargon heavy.
- 1.2 To ensure that the new strategy engages with key stakeholders within the Council, community groups, businesses and residents, it will be developed through a phased consultation process. The agreed first phase has been to develop a short strategy document through internal consultation, with members of our relevant Amphora companies and the Environment Sustainability Panel members. An engagement plan with further phases will be developed to ensure that we consult with key external stakeholders and elaborate the activities of the next phases of engagement.
- 1.3 The draft first phase of the strategy development is the creation of the 'Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes (CC&SST)'. This is a concise document elaborating: the context of why a new strategy is needed; the key themes of the strategy, a monitoring approach and highlights of the top ten actions from the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) in the 2020-2021 period.

- 1.4 The CEAP has been updated to align to the 8 strategic themes of the CC&SST. In addition, the Climate Opportunities Working Group (COWG), officers from across the Council and Amphora companies, updated the CEAP with new projects underway and upcoming in the next two or more years. Thus, the CEAP 2021-2023 is the new mid-term CEAP and continues to be agile and flexible, enabling changes that are responsive to both national and local initiatives. It will be updated and shared again in 6 months time – September 2021.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree:
- the first phase of the Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes, for consultation on this document.
 - the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2021-2023.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The framework of the chosen approach, with the 2 documents, was agreed at the latest Environmental & Sustainability Panel meeting in January. Since then, work has progressed as directed and the Panel are now able to agree to the phased approach in developing the CC&SS and the CEAP 2021-2023. This first phase of the strategy is the 'Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes' document will allow for further consultation and information sharing with key stakeholders and its aligned and updated, Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-2023.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Panel could consider delaying the sharing of the new Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes – for consultation and its linked Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-2023 document. However, there is no beneficial reason to delay consultation and progress.
- 4.2 The Panel could decide to follow a different framework, but this would be contradictory to the previous decision.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 In 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency, committing to become net zero carbon by 2030. To meet this challenge, a review and update to the existing frameworks for the Council's sustainability and carbon reduction strategies was needed. The review of existing frameworks and documents was conducted and a new consultation document, the Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy Themes (CC&SST) was developed, see Appendix 1. The title of this document has changed from the previous title of Climate Emergency Strategic Response document as it is intended to be the first document for consultation building up to a more comprehensive strategy. It was also noted that the language of climate emergency might not be as accessible as climate challenge. The process in developing the CC&SST document included:
- 5.2 The process to develop the CC&SS 2021- 2023 document included:
- a review of strategic documents related to sustainability and climate change
 - a review of plans related to sustainability and climate change
 - a gap analysis of any themes missing from the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and the previous Environment Sustainability Strategy
 - Consultation with key officers and Amphora company members in order to update elements of the strategy with current strategic plans
 - Presentation to the Council's Sustainability and Climate Challenge Project Board and Policy Senior Management Team for input.
- 5.2 The review and consultation led to the identification of 8 strategic themes. These include:
- I) Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet to help achieve a net zero carbon footprint for Council services by 2030
 - II) Produce renewable energy
 - III) Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment
 - IV) Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester
 - V) Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle
 - VI) Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development
 - VII) Ensure sustainable planning and development
 - VIII) Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment
- 5.3 It also led to an agreed "Top 10" actions from the CEAP to showcase significant progress made to date in line with the strategy, see Appendix 1.
- 5.4 In consulting with internal stakeholders and owned company members, it became evident that a more comprehensive strategy could be developed with time in order to convey what the Council is currently doing, and intends to do, to reach net zero carbon zero. Key pieces of work, such as creating targets for each strategic theme, as well as showing a pathway of carbon reduction through milestone years, is valuable to communicate externally. The appropriate place to communicate such information is within a strategy document as seen in other Council's, such as Bristol' [One City Climate Strategy](#). Hence, a phased approach in developing the strategy is suggested with the short document that is enclosed.

The current first phase strategy document does the following:

- ✓ Captures all strategic ambition of the Council related to sustainability and carbon reduction
- ✓ Frames our updated Climate Emergency Action Plan and aligns to the Strategic Plan
- ✓ Sets out the monitoring and communication of progress for the climate emergency action plan

- ✓ Highlights progress against our Climate Emergency Action Plan in 2019-20
- ✓ Details how residents/stakeholders can get in touch and support the Council's sustainability and climate related work.

The future phases could include:

- ☐ Objectives for each strategic theme
- ☐ Carbon Emissions Reduction Targets and timeframe up to 2030 – externally commissioned
- ☐ Engagement Approach and feedback from residents and other stakeholders
- ☐ Include potentially more themes:
i.e., digital sustainability; financing models for sustainability and climate change (i.e., bonds, crowdsourcing, major donors); carbon offsetting (project exploration and set up).

- 5.5 In addition to the development of the CC&SST, the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) was revamped according to the 8 strategic themes in the strategy and updated to include new projects that are underway or currently planned for 2021-2023, see: Appendix 2. This was done through input from the climate opportunities working group and the manager of Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.6 Highlights of the new actions within the updated CEAP 2021-2023 document include the following:
- Commission a Carbon Management Plan 2021-2026 to sit alongside the Council's Building Maintenance Programme
 - Retrofit or redesign of estate and housing assets: Rowan House, 100 Homes and HRA "Housing Investment Programme", Crematorium, St. Mark's Community Centre, Shrub End Depot, Leisure World and Elfreda House
 - Develop an Asset Management (Housing) Strategy that includes carbon reduction
 - Plant 200,000 trees by 2024 as part of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project to benefit biodiversity and for capturing carbon emissions.
 - Switch Council energy supply to 100% renewable electricity tariff
 - Bring an e-car club to Colchester
 - Develop principles/approach for offsetting and review of natural asset list and project proposals by Carbon Trust
 - Update and produce a new: Procurement Policy to include sustainability, Development Plan Document (DPD) on Sustainability and Carbon Reduction, and an Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy (and procure EV Vehicles/ installing charge points)
 - Review our trade waste collection service to develop additional commercial recycling collections
 - Develop a Climate Emergency communications and engagement plan which will support the delivery of, and engagement around, the Council's Action Plan.
 - Develop and run Carbon Literacy Training for staff and tools page for capacity building, as well as launch the Hero for Zero Challenge for staff behaviour change for increased sustainability and carbon reduction life and workstyles.
- 5.7 The CEAP 2021-23 will be reported on regularly through the Environment Sustainability Panel Progress Reports, as well as through a bi-annual report on progress of, and updates to, the CEAP. These will be available online through the Council's website.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 The CC&SST will continue to support the importance of equality and diversity in all aspects of borough life. Through its component parts, made of elements of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and the CEAP 2000 have been subject to equality impact assessments. Any new project developed will consider its equality, diversity and human rights impact.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The CC&SST underpins and contributes to all areas of the Council's Strategic, but particularly builds on the themes: 'Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability' and 'Creating safe, healthy and active communities'.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 An engagement and consultation process will be developed to learn more from key stakeholders of how they would like to see the Council develop the CC&SST as well as the CEAP. Many of the actions within the CEAP will include consultations and efforts will be made to coordinate across the plan in a coherent manner with residents.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The development of this first phase strategy for consultation and Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2021-2023 will be announced on our website and media channels. In addition, once the engagement plan is finalised there will be an announcement of engagement opportunities/activity via new and existing communications channels including direct, in person, in the media, on social media platforms and on its website.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications directly related to the production of the documents. The wider actions will require individual budgets.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no community safety implications.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There are no risk management implications.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The Council has declared a climate emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. This is one of the key reasons why the new CC&SST has been developed and the CEAP 2021-2023 updated to align with it. It is also why the CEAP 2021-23 was updated with new actions in order to demonstrate progress and forward-looking ambition to achieve the strategic goals.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Sustainability and Climate Challenge Strategy Themes

Appendix 2: Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2021-2023