



Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item
10

21st September 2023

Report of	Head of Sustainability	Author	Ben Plummer
Title	Climate Emergency Action Plan Update		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report details key progress and updates from actions in the [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) (CEAP), and other relevant updates since the last meeting on 22nd June 2023.

1.2 Key highlights include:

- The adoption of the [biodiversity supplementary planning document \(SPD\)](#) at Local Plan Committee. This provides guidance on protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the creation of new developments, including for protected species, creating space for nature in design and on householder applications. The active travel and climate change SPDs are currently out for consultation.
- The introduction of an **electric bike hire scheme** in Colchester, supported by TIER who currently provide the electric scooters for the pilot scheme. There are 100 bikes available for hire, offering another form of shared travel for residents that supports physical activity and reducing emissions.
- The Council has received **£28,288.00 from the Government's Low Carbon Skills Fund** which will help fund surveys and design works for a low carbon heating system and LED lighting at Natural History Museum.
- Castle Park, Highwoods Country Park and Colchester Cemetery and Crematorium all **retain their Green Flag status** commending them as high quality green spaces.
- The Council has **received £21,586 from the [Chewing Gum Task Force](#)** to purchase new vacuum machines to remove chewing gum from streets.
- **51 free bikes** have been distributed through the Essex Pedal Power project in Greenstead to people who can use these to increase access to employment, education and for leisure.
- The Council has launched a [new webpage](#) that will detail how residents who are eligible for **energy efficiency grants** can apply for these.
- Continued availability of [free adult cycle training](#) of varying levels from beginner to advanced level training, to improve cycling confidence and understanding of how to cycle safely.

2. Recommended Decision

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

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

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

4. Alternative Options

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Background Information

Key updates

Biodiversity supplementary planning document

- 5.1 Local Plan Committee have recently approved the adoption of the new Biodiversity supplementary planning document (SPD). The SPD provides developers with what the Council expects to see in terms of the protection of biodiversity in new developments. Information contained in the SPD includes that on protected species, mitigation hierarchy for protecting biodiversity alongside principles to help create space for nature in developments. Guidance is also provided for supporting biodiversity as part of householder planning applications. The SPD can be viewed [here](#). The supplementary documents created on climate change and active travel are currently out for consultation and are available to comment on [here](#).

TIER electric bike hire scheme

- 5.2 The Council has agreed with TIER, the company providing the electric scooters for the pilot in Colchester, to introduce an electric bike hire scheme in Colchester. TIER have provided an initial 100 electric bikes to hire around Colchester. These are not placed in docks, but riders must place the bikes in designated parking bays detailed on the app in the centre of Colchester in order to end their ride, and outside the centre of Colchester riders will be encouraged to leave bikes in designated parking bays through reduced charging rates. This scheme complements existing sustainable travel options for residents including electric scooters, car club and soon to open cargo bike hire scheme in the city centre secure bike park.

Low Carbon Skills Fund

- 5.3 The Council was successful in securing £28,288.00 to fund survey and design works for the proposed installation of an air source heat pump and LED lighting in the Natural History Museum. This museum, which is planned to be going under a major refurbishment to its layout and exhibitions in 2024/25 subject to a National Lottery Heritage bid, would benefit from these works which would complement the educational focus of the museum around conservation and sustainability. The plan is to then bid into the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme this Autumn to receive funding for the installation of the capital works.

Green Flags for Colchester's Parks!

- 5.4 The Castle Park, Highwoods Country Park and Colchester Cemetery and Crematorium have again been awarded Green Flag Awards from Keep Britain Tidy. The award recognises parks and green spaces that are maintained well, achieve high environmental standards and provide excellent visitor facilities.

Funding to remove chewing gum litter

- 5.5 The Council has received £21,586 from the Chewing Gum Task Force, created by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Keep Britain Tidy and major chewing gum manufacturers. The funding has been used to purchase a new electric vacuum machine, plus three handheld electric vacuums to help remove gum from known hotspots.

Essex Pedal Power

- 5.6 The Essex Pedal Power Scheme which aims to increase support more people to cycle in order to enable them to improve their physical and mental health alongside access to job and education opportunities, has been set up in Greenstead for several months. The project part funded through Town Deal funding had distributed 51 free bikes by mid-August, alongside delivering cycle training sessions, with the aim to giveaway 100 bikes by the end of September and develop opportunities for more social rides and bike maintenance workshops.

Energy Efficiency grants

- 5.7 The Council has created a [new webpage](#) detailing the different energy efficiency grants available to residents to help increase the energy efficiency of their homes. More information will be added on the webpage as access to grant opportunities begins to launch in late September – early October. The Council will also be advertising the grants through a series of in-person pop-up events in different locations across Colchester and these will be advertised through local community groups, parish councils, local facilities etc.

Free Adult Cycle Training

- 5.8 Essex County Council are continuing to provide access to [free adult cycle training](#), to improve cycling confidence. These 1:1 sessions range from the ‘adult learn to ride’ sessions for adults at a beginner riding level to ‘adult advanced cycling’ which gives users advice on road positioning, cycling on faster roads and at junctions and roundabouts. Completing the ‘adult advance cycling’ training is a condition of being able to use the pay as you go electric bike and electric cargo bikes in the secure bike park, as well as for staff to use any of the Council’s electric and electric cargo bikes. Find out [more information](#), including the [registration form for sessions here](#).

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 All of the updates provided in this report contribute to the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 theme of ‘Respond to the climate emergency’.

8. Consultation

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

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 There are no specific publicity considerations.

10. Financial implications

10.1 There are no direct financial implications of the updates provided in this report.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 Providing more facilities, and access to training, to support cycling will help encourage more residents to cycle more which can benefit physical and mental health.

11.2 There are no anticipated impacts on community safety from the project updates presented in this report.

12. Health and Safety Implications

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

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no risk management implications from this update.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The project updates in this report all aim to reduce emissions and environmental impacts across the Council.