

29 November 2022

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

1. Executive Summary

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

1.2 Progress/Updates include:

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

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

2. Recommended Decision

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

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

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

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not Applicable

5. Key updates

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

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

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

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

7. Strategic Plan References

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

8. Consultation

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

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 There are no specific publicity considerations.

10. Financial implications

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

11. Community Safety Implications

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

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no risk management implications from this update.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

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