

Environment and Sustainability Panel Meeting

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

Tuesday, 22 March 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.

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Colchester Borough Council

telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number you wish to call
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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
Tuesday, 22 March 2022 at 18:00

The Environment and Sustainability Panel Members are:

Councillor Julie Young
Councillor David King
Councillor Lewis Barber
Councillor Peter Chillingworth
Councillor Mark Cory
Councillor John Jowers
Councillor Lee Scordis

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

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 24 February 2022 are a correct record.
- Environment and Sustainability Panel draft minutes 24-02-2022** 7 - 14
- 6 **Have Your Say!**
Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes.
There is no requirement to pre-register for those attending the meeting in person.
- 7 **Recycling and Waste Strategy development proposal** 15 - 20
The Panel will consider a report setting out a proposed Recycling and Waste Strategy for consideration and approval.
- 8 **Community Engagement and Climate Emergency - Update** 21 - 30
The Panel will consider a report summarising how the Council has engaged with organisations and individuals in the community to deliver work responding to the climate emergency.
- 9 **Climate Emergency Action Plan - Summary of Progress 2021/2022** 31 - 38
The Panel will consider a report on the progress of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan in 2021/2022 along with the key next steps for progressing the action plan in 2022 and beyond.
- 10 **Work Programme 2021-2022** 39 - 42
The Panel will consider a report setting out the work programme for the current municipal year.

Part B
(not open to the public including the press)

Environment and Sustainability Panel

24 February 2022

Present: Councillor Mark Cory
Councillor Peter Chillingworth
Councillor John Jowers
Councillor David King
Councillor Julie Young

Substitutes: Councillor Lilley for Councillor Scordis

55. Minutes of the previous meeting

Councillor Chillingworth requested that the minutes of the previous meeting be amended to show that the central heating system he had installed had replaced an old oil powered system, and not a gas powered system.

RESOLVED that: the amended minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

56. 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, and he made a number of enquiries in relation to the use of glyphosate as part of the grounds maintenance programme at Colchester Borough Homes (CBH). He requested confirmation that there was a clear commitment to phasing out the use of glyphosate weed killer on CBH grounds, to be replaced with other methods of weed control, and that there would be no increase to the maintenance fees of residents as a result of this. He noted that CBH was owned by Colchester Borough Council (the Council), and suggested that the Council should support CBH to achieving these aims. Pesticide Free Essex and Green Action Team would be happy to offer any assistance they could to the Council to find glyphosate alternatives and environmentally friendly maintenance practices.

Mandy Jones, Assistant Director – Place and Client Services was able to provide a comprehensive update on the work which had been undertaken in relation to the provision of a glyphosate free weed control programme which had been the result of an agreement reached between CBH, the Council, and the Council's landscape contractors, I D Verde. Weeds growing in shrub borders and other cultivated areas would be removed by hand or with hand tools as part of the normal border maintenance, undertaken by existing maintenance teams. A regular strimming programme for weeds growing round obstacles and on hard surfaces would be maintained in line with the grass cutting schedule, however, weeds and grass

growing around the base of trees would be left uncut. An alternative herbicide was to be trialled in a specific car park, with results compared to other maintenance methods, and bark mulch would be spread in certain areas to act as a weed suppressant on a trial basis. The effectiveness of the new approach would be carefully monitored to identify whether any improvements were needed.

Although the new approach would increase the cost of weed control, this would be borne by existing budgets, and balanced through a change to the amount of general maintenance works and improvement works. It was likely that weeds would be more visible across the Council's estates as a result of the new approach, and the level of these would be monitored, with 'frequently asked questions' documents being produced to assist CBH in answering queries. Communications would be provided to the public explaining what the new approach was, and why it had been adopted.

57. Sustainable Travel: Our approach and work to date.

The Panel was addressed by Alderman Theresa Higgins, as part of the Have Your Say! provision at the meeting, who was representing the Colchester Cycle Campaign. She wished to encourage Colchester Borough Council (the Council) to do more to encourage cycling in Colchester, and considered that improvements were needed to the town's infrastructure to facilitate this, including the main routes across the town. It was also important to provide secure cycle parking in the town centre, and at Council buildings such as the Town Hall and Rowan House. The cycle parking facilities at Leisure World were particularly unsuitable, and there should be much greater provision for cycle parking on the site. The cycle paths which were in existence required more maintenance than they were receiving, and the lack of secure cycle parking facilities for residents was also a barrier to encouraging cycling in the borough. The Panel were also advised that the lighting on cycle routes needed to be improved, with no lighting being provided along many cycle pathways. From the point of view of promoting sustainable travel in more general terms it was considered that busses needed to be encouraged to use a wider variety of bus stops in the town centre, enabling passengers to be dropped off much nearer to their intended destination without the need to walk for long distances.

Jane Thompson, Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead, acknowledged the issues that had been raised in respect of the cycle routes through the town centre, and the issue of maintaining existing routes had been raised with Essex County Council, together with a request for the provision of additional lighting on cycle routes through the town. With regard to cycle parking, it was hoped that a new secure cycle park would be opening in the spring. Work was ongoing with Essex County Council in relation to their new Bus Strategy, which would address issues such as bus stop availability.

Councillor Young noted that the change in the use of bus stops in the town had caused controversy a number of years ago, and hoped that the current review would be able to address the issues that the changes had caused.

Jane Thompson, Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead, attended the meeting to present the report, and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel had requested that the Council's work on sustainable travel be presented to it. The Council's approach to sustainable transport was embedded within the Strategic Plan and the Climate Emergency Action Plan, and aligned with Essex County Council work streams such as the Active Travel Fund and Colchester Future Transport Strategy, as well as aligning with national government policy. The Council's approach combined awareness of national and regional policy to support funding bids, coupled with community engagement and the constant monitoring of action taken to deliver the goals which had been developed.

Emily Harrup, Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead, advised the Panel that the Council adopted a very collaborative approach to sustainable travel, working with both external and internal partners closely wherever possible. It was especially vital to work closely with Essex County Council as the Highway Authority, and work was also undertaken with the University of Essex and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Examples of projects which had been delivered in partnership with others included the CAREless pollution campaign which was the result of three months of community engagement, the assistance of local businesses in promoting the Council's e-cargo bike scheme, and Colchester's Eco Festival which had yielded valuable feedback. Key barriers to sustainable transport had been highlighted as poor infrastructure, poor air quality and the perception of the lack of safety associated with sustainable transport options. A recent Air Quality Survey had shown that 43% of Colchester residents would consider giving up a first or second car if they had access to a shared transport scheme, and a survey carried out by Essex County Council showed that those who drove short and medium distances would be encouraged to cycle more if segregated routes were provided.

Jane Thompson advised the Panel that two main goals had been identified. The first of these was to increase the proportion of short trips made by sustainable transport, and the second was to reduce air pollutants, which would be achieved by residents and businesses making greater use of shared pay-as-you-go transport schemes such as car clubs, more people choosing to switch off their engines, and enabling local residents to feel more confident about buying electric vehicles. Of critical importance to the Council's goals was the provision of improved infrastructure, and investment to enable the provision of this infrastructure was lobbied for, supported by local walking and cycling infrastructure plans and the development of Active Travel Fund routes. Section 106 contributions had been secured from developers to implement infrastructure projects, and an external partner had been located who would provide secure cycle parking in the town centre, which was due to open in the spring and was the first of its kind in Essex.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding had enabled the provision of two shared transport hubs in the town centre, including access to e-bikes and e-cargo bikes on a pay-as-you-go basis. Two electric cars would also be based in the town centre, and it was hoped that the development of electric car clubs would come forth from this. The Council was working to ensure that wayfinding and signage was improved around the Colchester Orbital route, together with

improvements to the accessibility of the route to disabled users. Work was ongoing with Essex County Council to provide adult cycle training to improve confidence in using bicycles, and consideration was being given to improvements which could be made to the Bikeability Plus scheme to help translate training into an increase in cycling.

The first phase of the Clean Air Colchester campaign had been completed, and phase two would now focus on building a legacy in partnership with the voluntary group Clean Air Colchester to enable the campaign to continue once funding had come to an end.

Councillor King acknowledged that safety while cycling was of paramount importance, and considered that until this could be improved, there would be a continued reluctance for parents to encourage their children to cycle. He praised the breadth of the work that the Council was undertaking, and sought assurances on whether there was sufficient resource internally to support it. He also asked for a view on what was most realisable, in terms of connecting up the areas of existing good infrastructure. Jane confirmed to the Panel that the good work which had been undertaken in identifying key areas for development had placed the Council in a strong position to bid for funding, and work was ongoing with Essex County Council to ensure that Colchester was seen as an ideal place for future investment. The Panel were advised that Essex County Council had adapted its approach to sustainable transport over the past few years, and now had staff in post specifically to promote sustainable schemes, which was considered to be very encouraging.

Councillor Cory also considered safety was a key priority for encouraging cycling, and wondered whether any consideration had been given to painting cycle routes to create a clear demarcation. He considered it was important to encourage people to use the proposed secured cycle parking, and enquired what the cost would be for using this. He considered that the Council should take a firm line with developers and give clear direction on what was expected to be included in planning applications to support sustainable travel. He praised the e-cargo bike scheme, and the training which had enabled his use of an e-cargo bike, but expressed some reservations around the parking of the e-scooters around town which was often obstructive on the pavements.

Mandy Jones confirmed that following the adoption of the Local Plan, two new Supplementary Planning Documents would be introduced, the first of which was Sustainability and Climate Change, and the second of which was Biodiversity Net Gain.

Jane Thompson explained to the Panel that there was balance to be struck when considering painting cycle lanes, many of which ran through conservation areas, and this was something taken into account by Essex County Council. The secure cycle parking was being provided by a commercial operator and would attract a fee for its use. The Council had provided supporting funding to the operator and because of this the costs would be kept low, in the region of £1 per day or £10 per month to park a bicycle. The charging would be kept under constant review, with the key aim being to make the scheme successful, and ultimately duplicate it elsewhere in the town.

The Panel heard that central government had asked for an extension of the current e-scooter trial until November, and the company that ran the scheme, Spin, had undertaken work to limit the use of the e-scooter via geofencing certain roads and areas where their use was not suitable. The Panel were assured that work was already undertaken with developers to encourage the provision of sustainable transport options in the town centre, and more electric car club cars were anticipated in the future. The cost of the secure cycling parking would be tailored to ensure that it was affordable to families travelling together to town.

Councillor Jowers considered that the work and aims of the Council were laudable, however, the plans were totally town focussed, and areas such as Mersea, Tiptree and the smaller villages should also be included in the Council's plans. Although he understood that there was a need to focus on the initially achievable aims, he considered that there would be a demand for a 'park and cycle' site on Mersea which would merit consideration, and that the populations of the outlying areas currently had no choice but to use their cars to access shops and services, even if they would prefer to cycle. Mandy Jones acknowledged the difficulty inherent in linking villages with cycle paths on country lanes, but considered that Tiptree may be able to be considered for sustainable transport projects in the future, and would consider whether it would be appropriate to consider this as part of the Neighbourhood Plans for larger, more urban areas.

Councillor Chillingworth supported the comments made by Councillor Jowers, and considered that the dangers of cycling on the roadways from villages into town would discourage cycling as a method of transport. He wondered whether existing footpaths could be converted into cycleways, and asked Officers to continue their work with Essex County Council to find a solution to the problem.

Councillor Lilley considered that a new park and ride site in the south of the borough would be most useful, and expressed his opinion that bus fares were very high, and could contribute to a reluctance to abandon car use. He believed that radical steps needed to be taken to improve the air quality in Colchester town centre, possibly introducing an additional charge for petrol vehicles entering the town, together with the introduction of electric busses.

The Panel were advised that consideration was being given to a variety of different ways in which people could use their cars to access Colchester town centre, including both 'park and ride' and 'park and stride' schemes, and the addition of electric charging points in car parks. The provision of bus services was also being considered, to ensure that as wide a variety of bus services as possible was provided, to encourage their use.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report be noted.

58. Overview of the Environment Act 2021

Ben Plummer, Climate Emergency Project Officer attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel were advised that the

Environment Act 2021 (the Act) made a number of provisions in relation to targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment, and one of the key impacts that this would have was the creation of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) which would act as a watchdog organisation to monitor the progress that had been made against defined targets. The Act required the secretary of state for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to set long-term legally binding targets on air quality, biodiversity, water, resource efficiency, and waste reduction. These targets would be of at least 15 years in duration and be proposed by late 2022.

The Panel heard that there were three main areas in which the Act affected Colchester Borough Council (the Council). The Government was required to introduce two new air quality targets by 31 October 2022, but these had yet to be set. It was, however, felt that the work that the Council had already undertaken to improve air quality in the town centre, together with the introduction of new air quality monitors, would assist in meeting the targets once these had been set.

The second area in which the Act was expected to impact on the Council was waste and recycling. The Panel had previously been briefed on two key areas of the legislation, Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR), and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). The intention behind the schemes was to ensure that the producers of packaging took far greater responsibility for the costs of collection and disposal of packaging, together with seeking to incentivise recycling of packaging and increasing recycling quality. The Act also sought to improve consistency in household and business recycling, however, it was felt that the Council was performing well in this regard, and some of the actions required by the Act would not impact on the Council's operations. It was intended that the recycling of soft plastic packaging, which is traditionally very difficult to recycle, would become widespread as the recycling infrastructure improved across the country, with the requirement to recycle these plastics likely to be introduced further in the future.

The third main area in which the Act was expected to impact on the Council was in respect of planning. The Act stipulated that developments would have to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain where local habitats were affected. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) would be required, and although the Council would have input into a county-wide LNRS, it would not be the body responsible for enforcing this.

Councillor Jowers, commented that significant volumes of waste were currently being put into ballast, and although new technology was emerging which would allow waste to be disposed of in an ecologically friendly manner, considered that more action was needed. Officers considered that the intention behind the legislation to improve the recycling infrastructure in the United Kingdom was to be welcomed, and noted that the DRS had been successful in other countries around the world.

Councillor Cory considered that even if individuals did what they could to reduce waste, large corporations were still generating huge volumes of carbon emissions, and action needed to be taken to address this. He believed that although improved recycling was necessary, the production of plastic packaging should be stopped

altogether. Concern was also raised with regard to biodiversity net gain, as Councillor Cory believed that it was not possible to simply replace areas of habitat disrupted by development. He considered that the issue was much more complicated than it first appeared and further information was necessary. Mandy Jones confirmed that full guidance was awaited, and once this had been received the practical meaning of 10% biodiversity net gain could be explored further, providing a pathway to developing a Supplementary Planning Document.

Councillor Chillingworth welcomed the Act, and considered that it would have far reaching effects. He was hopeful that the OEP would have the necessary powers to ensure that regulations were complied with. The Panel looked forward to receiving more details in relation to the Act as these became available.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report be noted.

59. 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. At its previous meeting, the Panel had requested details on how many referrals had been received under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme, and it was advised that the most up to date figures showed ninety four referrals in Colchester, the third highest figure in Essex. It was considered that the promotion of the scheme had been very effective through social media and community groups, and it was hoped that this would be expanded upon in the future.

Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s Climate Emergency Action Plan had been reviewed by an external organisation, Climate Emergency UK. The review only looked at the plans and strategies that were contained within the Policy, and did not consider any actions which had been put into practice. The Council's score was 53%, which was above the national average for district councils of 43%, however, the review had highlighted several gaps in the Action Plan which would be addressed. A further analysis of the review would be undertaken at the next meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Chillingworth commented that he had thought the Council was performing better than the review showed, and considered that the review should take into account the action that had been carried out in support of the Plan. Mandy Jones, Assistant Director – Place and Client Services advised the Panel that even though a lot of very good work was being carried out by local authorities across the country, Colchester had still scored 10% higher than the average, which represented a good achievement. Care needed to be taken when considering potential gaps in the Policy to ensure that any changes or amendments were meaningful and not simply implemented for the sake of receiving a few extra marks in the review.

In response to a question from Councillor Jowers, the Panel were advised that the Climate Focus Area had taken a nature based approach, and the intention was that the Area covered both green and blue spaces, together with an urban area. The

purpose of the Area was to support and accelerate net zero and other environmental initiatives.

Councillor Young was pleased that ninety four residents had registered to potentially get assistance with insulating their homes, and she wondered whether there was an opportunity to share the experience of a family that had benefitted, with the aim of encouraging others to come forward. Ben Plummer confirmed that Essex County Council was leading on the project, and was keen to make use of case studies in future promotions. The addresses of those who had registered under the scheme would be acquired so to enable the Council to undertake more targeted promotion to be undertaken under phase 3 of the scheme.

RESOLVED that: the contents of the report be noted.

60. Work Programme 2020-2021

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

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

22 March 2022

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

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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.
- 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 the Environment and Sustainability Panel will work with officers to develop a new strategy for Colchester.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree to the proposed approach, objectives, principles and testing 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 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 the 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. How the Council operates its recycling and waste service since the launch of the vision and strategy has changed very little and there are operational pressures that are emerging. Nevertheless, the service performs very well regionally, sitting in the top performing tier for those in the eastern region for measures around the amount of residual waste and percentage of recycling that residents produce.

5.2 In order to continue to be high performing in the future, and to address strategic and operational drivers for change, the time is right for the Council to review and implement a new strategy.

Strategic and operational drivers for change

5.3 The following section sets out in more detail some of 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 that it 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 potentially 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 as part of the Essex Waste Partnership (EWP). One of the primary roles of the EWP is to consider how the 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 increase the 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 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 most recently storms, has demonstrated to the Council the importance of operational resilience and to that end, the simplification of 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 where the service operates from has demonstrated that capacity is an emerging challenge when faced with increasing tonnages of material and an increasing workforce with limited space and facilities. The fleet is broad and varied, and the Council has set out 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 income generating opportunities too.

Proposed approach

- 5.12 It is proposed that the Environment and Sustainability Panel will work with officers in a combination of workshops and reported meetings to develop the strategy over the next 18 months, using a **three phased approach**:
- Phase 1 will aim to explore in more detail the outline objectives and set out the current operations, as well as the future risks, issues and opportunities forecasted for the future. It will assess the evidence and data captured on the current level of service, benchmark (as like for like as possible), and, consider the approach of other local authorities, undertaking case studies and site visits.
 - Phase 2 will aim to engage partners, stakeholders, and the public. Pilot schemes may be undertaken to test theories of the strategy development, and these will be assessed against agreed outcomes.

- Phase 3 will aim to finalise the Strategic Vision defining what the Council wants to achieve, balancing all the strategic and operational drivers and finally a workplan will be developed.

5.13 The following initial **objectives** are proposed which will be further developed through the programme:

The Colchester Recycling and Waste Strategy, by 2030, will:

- 1 Deliver value for money
- 2 Provide a safe, compliant, and resilient service
- 3 Have a community asset based approach
- 4 Minimise the impact on the environment
- 5 Be transformative

5.14 It is proposed that the strategy is developed with the following **principles** and **testing**, which will evaluate the robustness of the strategy:

The strategy will be developed:

- Using an agreed evaluation process and criteria
- On the basis of evidence and data led forecasting
- Using 'prototypes' and 'pilots' to provide evidence for informed decision making

Tests will be carried out on the strategy in the following areas:

- *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 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 budget implications.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 It is proposed that the strategy will be developed through the Environment and Sustainability Panel at closed workshop style meetings, as well as public meetings as appropriate. Officers will use the Climate Action Plan and Environment Act (2021) as a mechanism for engagement of the strategy and use the opportunity to support public education on the Government changes and impact it may have on their lives, shopping, etc. Officers will also undertake partnership and stakeholder workshops, working groups, surveys, and interviews throughout the programme.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 9.1 This report set 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 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.

13th January 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer
Title	Community Engagement and Climate Emergency – Update		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a summary of how the Council has engaged with various organisations and individuals in the community to deliver work responding to the climate emergency.
- 1.2 The Council engages with a variety of organisations to help deliver its work, and the work of partners, on the climate emergency. These include local businesses, charities, community groups, other local authorities, town and parish councils and more.
- 1.3 The Council engages with the community in many different ways, including to provide information, to collaborate, to share information, influence others, to advise and to network.
- 1.4 The Council will continue to work with communities to harness knowledge and strengths existing within them, and to expand the reach of our work so that more residents are aware of our work and can get involved with it

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The panel note the contents of the report and provide guidance and feedback regarding the Council's approach to community engagement in relation to the climate emergency.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The report is for information only.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Council declared a climate emergency, setting a target to have net zero operational emissions by 2030. To achieve this target, and wider emission reductions in the borough, we also seek to achieve sustainability across a range of services (i.e., waste, transport, economic development).
- 5.2 This report outlines our approach to community engagement to support our work to tackle the climate emergency, giving examples from our workstreams. It then outlines some ways we aim to carry on and build on existing community engagement we have already carried out.
- 5.3 The approach to working with communities is strongly influenced by the Council's 'Communities Can' strategy. This strategy focusses on recognising the knowledge, skills and energy within communities and helping them to harness these to deliver action in their areas. This approach moved away from what problems need to be 'fixed' in communities, and instead focussed on the strengths existing in the communities already, and connecting individuals with one another to deliver greater impact. The approach also aims to be inclusive, enabling all people to have a voice and deliver what they would like to see where they live.

What do we mean by communities?

- 5.4 In this report we class many of the organisations and individuals and organisations we work with as coming under the term 'communities'. These can be identified specifically as:
 - **Residents**
 - **Community groups** e.g. Clean Air Colchester
 - **Educational Institutions** e.g. University of Essex
 - **Local Authorities** e.g. Essex County Council
 - **Town and Parish Councils**
 - **Councillors**
 - **Charities** e.g. Essex Wildlife Trust
 - **Anchor Institutions** – Organisations that are locally based and have a strong stake and influence in Colchester. These can be quite ranging, for example from Colchester Hospital to the Colchester Institute. Some organisations may also fall under multiple categories (e.g. University of Essex is both an anchor and an educational institution)
 - **Businesses**

Why do we engage with the community around climate action?

- 5.5 There are several reasons the Council engages with the community around climate action. These are outlined below.
 - **To consult** – Allow residents to give their views on the development of our projects and actions, through surveys and consultations. This also helps us to give an evidence base for our projects, but is not a truly participative approach to engagement.

- **To inform** – Keep residents/partners informed about our work. Keeping people informed helps us to stay accountable, and can provide inspiration for others to help us achieve our aims, or take action themselves. However, solely informing is only a one way exchange of information and does not allow for collaborative working.
- **To collaborate** – Working together with residents and partners to develop actions and ideas that respond to the climate challenge. The collaboration approach recognises the value of knowledge and skills both residents and partners can have in our projects, contributing to and following an ABCD approach.
- **To share and create dialogue** – Share information on our climate action and hear about how others have been doing the same
- **To influence** – Feed into consultations, planning applications and policy development to ensure climate challenge and sustainability is considered.
- **To advise** – Providing knowledge, training and infrastructure to give individuals a ‘helping hand’ in feeling more informed about the climate challenge, and enabling them to take action on the climate emergency.
- **To network** – Creating connections between organisations and individuals to share expertise and knowledge and create more impact.

5.6 The report will go through each of these priorities in turn, outlining examples of how the Council has demonstrated engagement with against each one.

To consult

- 5.7 Conducting surveys with residents is an important part of our engagement on several projects. This gives residents the opportunity to give their views on our work, and also helps to inform our evidence base and how we deliver our projects in the future. The Council has run numerous surveys in relation to climate change and environment, with a few highlighted below.
- **Clean Air for Colchester surveys** – Numerous surveys and door knocking have been completed during the Clean Air for Colchester project, exploring resident’s knowledge of air quality and understanding what actions would help them to remind them to switch off their engines. Over 3000 people took part in engagement in the first phase of this work, and more have been involved in more recent engagement around the development of the shared travel hubs and home burning campaigns respectively.
 - **Colchester Borough Homes resident consultation** – A survey was completed with residents as part of the development of the new Housing Asset Management Strategy. This explored the priority residents put on tackling climate change and improving energy efficiency within the housing stock. This revealed that this is not a priority for most residents, and showed CBH and the Council that more work needs to go in to getting residents to understand the importance of works that will deliver reductions in emissions in the housing stock and how this will have the potential for social co-benefits (e.g. increased comfort, lower energy bills).
 - **Town Deal surveys** – Online surveys were completed as part of the Town Deal bid. This included questions on opportunities built on during covid, and how can Colchester become greener. Both questions brought answers linked to tackling climate change and greening the borough which have been considered within the development of projects as part of the final Town Deal bid that was put forward.

To inform

- 5.8 Providing residents and partners with information about our work on tackling the climate emergency is one of the key steps of our engagement. Keeping others informed helps provide them with knowledge about our work and keep us accountable to delivering it. This work may also provide inspiration for others, to either take further climate action, or collaborate with us on our work. There are two main ways we work to inform the community about our climate action.
- **Climate Emergency Action Plan** – The guiding document that outlines all our workstreams on the tackling the climate emergency. We will be updating the plan in 2022 to reflect new workstreams and highlight how actions have been delivered in 2021.
 - **Social media/online communication** – Through press releases, infographics, information on our website and social media we provide updates on our climate emergency work, including information on Council campaigns, key progress with actions and ways residents can take action for themselves, as well as support our work. This includes going through other channels, other than CBC communication platforms, such as through borough councillors, Town and Parish Councils and community organisations.

Case study: A-Z waste campaign

Between August-December 2021, the Council held an awareness campaign on social media, highlighting the different ways we can all reduce the amount of waste we produce, reuse materials and recycle more. Tips were given each week for each letter of the alphabet, such as Nappies (reusable), Ink cartridges and Make up wipes. The campaign included tips being given from local residents, as well as local organisations such as the University of Essex, East Essex Cloth Nappy Library, The Ink Bin and others.



To collaborate

- 5.9 The Council recognises that we need to work with residents and other partners to help deliver our projects. Coming together helps to increase the potential impact of projects and acknowledges the lay expertise and skills that residents and partners have that can help to deliver our projects in new ways and help build engagement within the community on the project.
- 5.10 Coming together to co-create the aims for projects and how they should be delivered is a key part of many Council workstreams. It has been beneficial to work with so many

partners in the borough that also have similarly ambitious aims to reduce emissions and their environmental impact.

5.11 Below are some examples of partners we work with, and how we have worked with them.

- **Essex County Council** – There are many projects led by ECC that the Council helps to communicate to its residents such as the Solar Together scheme and the free cycle training on offer. ECC also provide investment in sustainable transport in Colchester, so the Council is in regular contact with ECC to make the case for improvements in sustainable travel infrastructure in Colchester. We also link in with ECC and the Essex Climate Action Commission who are beginning to progress the work on the Climate Focus Area, where 81% of the land in Colchester is included within it.
- **Eco Colchester** – Eco Colchester are a key community group the Council collaborates with to help increase the reach of both our work and theirs. In 2021, Eco Colchester ran the Eco Festival 2021 which the Council helped to support the event, including using the eCargo bikes to transport festival equipment around the park.
- **Shared Travel Hubs** – The Council has funding to create two travel hubs where a variety of push bikes, electric bikes and electric cargo (eCargo) bikes will be available on a pay as you go basis for the community. One hub will be developed by the Council, with the other worked on by the community (supported by the Council). A working group has been assembled which will work on deciding the location for the shared travel hub, what bikes should be available in the hub and how the hub will operate (booking systems, payment mechanisms/amounts etc).
- **Woodland and Biodiversity Project** – This Council project has involved the community in the delivery of the project. Residents have been able to take part in tree planting and act as ‘tree guardians’ to maintain the planted trees. Tree planting days have been supported by Together We Grow CIC. Naturalist groups such as the Natural History Society have been able to advise the Council on suitable areas for planting based on existing habitats and biodiversity in planting areas. School children have also been able to design signage to be placed in areas where green spaces have been left to rewild, to explain how this process is benefitting biodiversity.

Case Study: University of Essex Challenge Lab

The University of Essex Challenge Lab provided the opportunity for Council officers and University academics to come together to brainstorm project ideas to tackle climate related challenges the Council faced.

The challenge lab process occurred over 2 days with 2 project ideas emerging. These ideas will be delivered between the University and the Council in collaboration, applying expertise from existing university research. The challenge lab, and the projects, have been funded through the Economic and Social Research Council.

The project is mutually beneficial for both organisations; university academics get to see their research applied in a real-life context, and the Council gets to receive academic expertise to deliver projects beyond the scope than would otherwise be possible.

Case Study: Clean Air for Colchester

This project has worked in collaboration with many individuals and community groups such as Clean Air Colchester, to develop the CAREless Pollution campaign that raises awareness of air pollution in Colchester.

Many individuals have been involved in a stakeholder group that were involved in developing the look and feel of the campaign. They have also had input into the design of materials such as car stickers, posters and a schools activity toolkit to help spread the message about the campaign in the community. Involving the community in the project now will enable them to take on the project in the future, increasing their capacity.

The CAREless Pollution campaign was recently nominated for the 'Consumer Engagement/Marketing Campaign of the Year' in the Edie Sustainability Leaders Awards.



To share and create dialogue

- 5.12 Many organisations in the borough and in the local authority space, are taking action to reduce their environmental impacts. As we are all trying to do the same thing, it makes sense to share our progress, challenges and solutions on this journey.
- 5.13 There are several forums and networks the Council is part of which provide a platform for this sharing to take place. These are outlined below:
- **Collective for Climate Action** – This is an online forum created for public sector colleagues to discuss action on climate change. There is a separate channel where local authorities can share what they're working on and ask questions to get support from other Council colleagues. Over 170 Councils are on this group, and it has been useful as a sounding board for ideas and exchanging advice
 - **Essex Climate Action Anchors working group** – A group of various 'anchor institutions' across Essex including University of Essex, West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, Colchester Institute and others, that will be co-ordinating climate action across Essex in 2022, providing a platform for discussion and creating networks between organisations.

- **One Colchester Delivery Board** – The Council has attended the monthly Delivery Board meetings to raise key projects of interest with attending community groups and organisations. The meetings are incredibly helpful for reaching a wide cross section of people who can help act as ‘intermediary communicators’ about Council projects, often being trusted contacts with the community.

Case study: Essex CO₂ Reduction Across Essex (CORE) Forum

This is a quarterly forum run by Essex County Council for all district and borough Councils to attend where key climate updates from Essex County Council are shared with all authorities. There is also the space for local authorities to share progress on their respective climate emergency plans.

The forum also allows for collaboration between authorities to create joint projects for delivery. For example, the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme bid emerged from this group.

To influence

5.14 As a local authority, the Council has important role in feeding into and influencing key consultations, strategies and decisions that will affect how climate change is tackled across Essex and in Colchester. Below are some case studies how the Council plays this role:

- **Planning applications** – The Council reviews planning applications for developments within the borough, suggesting where environmental improvements can be funded by developers through section 106 (s106) agreements. Improvements have included the installation of electric vehicle charge points, car club spaces, allotments and other green infrastructure.
- **Essex County Council Sustainable Travel workstreams** – As the Transport and Highways Authority, Essex County Council are responsible for directing investment in promoting active, sustainable travel in Colchester. The Council influences ECC, giving suggestions for where investment is best placed to support active travel in Colchester, for example through the creation of walking and cycling infrastructure.

Case Study: Helping the Borough’s businesses to reduce their carbon footprint

CBC is working in partnership with five other local authorities across north Essex under the auspices of the North Essex Economic Board to support businesses to understand their environmental impact and take steps to reduce it, showing the variety of benefits it can have for them.

This business support programme is being managed by the Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (Colbea) and runs for a year, fully funded, from February 2022.

To advise

5.15 Sometimes all an organisation may need is extra support through funding, expertise or materials to help deliver a project. The Council is often well placed to offer this help, whether through doing presentations or training individuals, being able to loan equipment or being able to offer funding to groups. Some of the Council’s projects that have offered help to the community include:

- **Colchester eCargo bike library** – Using funding from the Energy Saving Trust, the Council bought 25 eCargo bikes and 5 etrailers, several of which are used by the Council. 10 organisations were also given the eCargo bikes/etrailers for free (excluding insurance payments) to use for conducting their deliveries and operations. 6 other bikes and a trailer are available on short term loans, enabling others to get an understanding of how their organisation could use an eCargo bike for their work. The project also supported the set-up of the Colchester eCargo bike delivery project that makes eCargo bike deliveries for a variety of local businesses and charities in Colchester.
- **Colchester Association of Local Councils Presentation** – In Summer 2021, the Council held a presentation and Q and A for Colchester based town and parish councils to hear about the Council's work on the climate emergency, and to share help as to how they could take action on their climate emergency in their areas. The session produced a lively Q and A with parish clerks keen to learn about more climate action they could take in their local areas. The Council also presented to the same group, giving an update on the e-scooter trial in Colchester.

Case Study: Multi Schools Council Essex Wide Green Day

The Schools 'Green Day' has been launched by the Multi Schools Council, an organisation where school council pupils across Essex are brought together to discuss key topics that matter to them, and to break down barriers and stigma around mental health and learning difficulties.

The group identified they would like to run an annual 'green day' for schools, so that students could learn more about environmental issues, hear what organisations are doing to take climate action and to hopefully take some environmental steps themselves.

The day ran for the first time in 2021, with the Council running activities such as a bug hunt and air quality awareness activities. In 2022, the Council will be supporting more schools in the borough and is helping to get local businesses and organisations to sign up to support the day in any way they can – whether through recording videos about environmental action they are doing, running talks on environmental action or providing funding to support the day!



To Network

5.16 As the Council collaborates and knows of lots of different organisations in the borough, it is in a good position to be able to link up organisations and individuals who may be able to offer support to each other and deliver greater impact. Below are some examples of how the Council has linked up organisations to deliver benefits:

- **Eco Colchester and Colchester Institute** – Eco Colchester had been running a water saving campaign in Colchester, offering tips and freebies for residents to cut their water usage. The opportunity for collaboration with the Colchester Institute became apparent

with the courses that it ran on plumbing. Since linking up these groups, Eco Colchester have been able to deliver talks to students on water saving, and the plumbing students have run a free workshop for residents on how to fix leaking taps.

- **Re-Cycle and Essex County Council** – Re-Cycle are a local charity who collect second hand and used bikes, fix them up and send them off to Africa for communities to use. It was identified that there were several bikes being left at the recycling centre in Colchester that could be taken by Re-Cycle. CBC contacts are putting the two organisations in contact to direct the bikes away to be reused by others

Case Study: Together We Grow CIC and Unity Primary Academy

Through the 'Go Green Schools' project the Council has run in collaboration with the University of Essex, a lot of environmental improvements have been made at the school, including setting up bird and bat boxes, planting trees and bulbs and running environmental education sessions.

It was identified that it would be beneficial for the school to continue to receive outdoor education sessions after the Council's project finished, both for environmental protection but also for the wellbeing of students which was noticeably positive when activities were taking place. During the project Together We Grow (TWG) CIC took part in delivering some activities, and an agreement was reached for TWG to continue delivering outdoor environmental sessions with the school, with supporting funding from a councillor.



Future work

- 5.17 There are several areas in which the Council will continue to deliver engagement work with communities to deliver action on climate change. Some of these are outlined below:
- An **update of our Climate Emergency Action Plan**, with further actions to tackle the climate emergency, plus more detailed case studies to show how key projects have been progressing
 - Plans to hold **Q and A sessions** with residents, community groups and other stakeholders on our Climate Emergency Action Plan, to enable to individuals to have their say on where there are opportunities to improve it, build synergies and increase understanding of how the Council intends to tackle the climate emergency.
 - **Increase support available to schools** in Colchester to help them to reduce their environmental impacts, including organising a range of local organisations to provide support and resources for the schools 'Green Day' taking place on 6th July 2022
 - **Exploring collaboration with Colchester Institute** to see where there may be opportunities for an apprentice to join the Council in the Sustainability, Transport and climate change team.
 - Help deliver projects to emerge out of the **University of Essex Challenge Lab**

- Climate change related engagement as part of the **development of new Council strategies**, including the Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Waste Strategy, as well as mainstreaming sustainability into the delivery of other projects such as the Town Deal.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 There are no equality, diversity and human rights implications of the report.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 This report directly links 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 publicity considerations.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications.

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 report details how the Council is taking action on the climate emergency by working with a variety of different individuals and partners.

22nd March 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer
Title	Summary of progress 2021/22		☎ 508965
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details progress that has been made with actions in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan in 2021/22. A summary of the review of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan by Climate Emergency UK is detailed, along with key next steps for progressing the Action Plan in 2022 and beyond.
- 1.2 Key highlights from 2021/22 include:
 - Reported emissions reduction of 12.8% between FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21
 - Transition to electric vehicles in the CBC fleet with 4 hybrid vehicles, and the installation of electric vehicle charge points in Council car parks
 - Beginning the creation of a business case for a solar farm to contribute to powering the Northern Gateway Development
 - Involvement of 400 volunteers in the planting of 20,000 trees on Council green spaces as part of the Woodland and Biodiversity Project
 - 100,000 miles travelled on eCargo bikes in just over a year through the Colchester eCargo bike delivery project.
 - CAREless Pollution campaign and no-idling signage help to increase awareness and action to improve air quality in Colchester
 - Investment in 4 smart waste bins as part of a trial to test the effectiveness of these bins for collection efficiencies.
 - Supporting the Eco Festival 2021, with over 3500 attendees to provide a good platform to advertise the Council's environmental projects and engage with residents.
- 1.3 The Council received an overall score of 52% for its Climate Emergency Action Plan, greater than the district average score of 43%. In the review of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, it was identified that the Council could improve significantly in the review sections 'Diversity and Inclusion', 'Education, Skills and Training' and 'Mitigation and Adaptation'.
- 1.4 Actions to respond to these 'gaps' in the Council's action plan are outlined in the report, including establishing clearer actions in relation to climate adaptation and adding in actions around the Town Deal and the Green Homes Grant scheme which relate to supporting vulnerable people to become greener (and to save money).

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the report and provide any guidance with regard to the progress of the action plan.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure that the Panel is content with the progress made to date, and to provide any feedback on work carried out so far.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not Applicable

5. Background information

- 5.1 An update to the Council's original Climate Emergency Action Plan was created in June 2021, structuring it into 8 key themes and containing over 50 actions under these themes. Key highlights and progress under each theme is provided below.

Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet

- 5.2 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Reported emissions reduction of **12.8% between FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21**. Covid-19 impacted these emissions, but it did help us to understand the difference home working and a reduction in commuting can make to our emissions.
- Updating our **emissions pathway to 2030**, identifying the difference planned actions will make to our emissions and understanding where gaps exist for further emissions reductions to occur.
- Beginning the **transition to electric vehicles** (EVs), with the purchase of 4 hybrid vehicles that arrived in January 2022, with 6 electric vehicles arriving in April 2022, and a further nine after that. EV charge points are also beginning to be installed in St John's Car park, which will be followed by Rowan House, to support this transition
- Development of a **Housing Asset Management Strategy**, which outlined the target for all Council owned homes to reach a minimum EPC rating of C by 2030.
- Start of the process to **rebuild Elfreda House to Future Homes Standard**, due for completion in May 2023.

Produce renewable energy

- 5.3 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Furthering the development of the **Northern Gateway Heat Network** to the stage where post contract negotiations are underway for the contract award to build the central energy centre and network infrastructure to link the network to buildings that will be part of the Northern Gateway development.
- Budgeted £5.76m for the creation of a solar park and microgrid subject to a detailed business case being developed, which will contribute to powering the Northern Gateway development with renewable energy.

Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment

- 5.4 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Planting of 20,000 trees on 11 different Council green spaces as part of the **Woodland and Biodiversity Project** during the Winter 21/22 planting season. Over 400 people have volunteered to help plant the trees. A further 23,000 have been delivered to parish councils, local schools and landowners. The project has managed to engage with a variety of stakeholders including town and parish councils, local schools, community organisations such as Together We Grow CIC and Refugee Action Colchester, and residents some of which have become highly involved in the project as tree guardians.
- Successful trials of **changes to mowing regimes and phasing out of glyphosate** on some Council green spaces. Wivenhoe Town Council also took part in this trial, identifying 150 different wildflower species and 3-29 more flowers in the unmown areas

compared to mown. The trials are being reviewed and will continue to be delivered in 2022.

Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester

5.5 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Delivering the **Colchester eCargo bike library project** to promote eCargo bikes as a viable option for organisations and businesses to use for their deliveries and options instead of cars or vans. Over 100,000 miles have been travelled by project champions, Council officers and other organisations and individuals who have been using the bikes on short term loans. The launch of the eCargo bike delivery project has been significant for engaging with local businesses and charities in Colchester to arrange to make deliveries by eCargo bike for them.
- Increasing the awareness of air quality and the impact of no idling across Colchester through the **CAREless Pollution campaign** and signage trials to promote no idling. The CAREless Pollution campaign has engaged with businesses, schools, religious groups and has been shown at a variety of community events, earning it a nomination for the best 'Consumer Engagement/Marketing Campaign of the Year' at the Edie Sustainability Leaders Awards. Evaluation of the first 8 months of the signage trial show behavioural changes occurring, with a 9% increase in engine switch-offs in some locations.
- Progressing the creation of a **secure cycle park** in the town centre to provide a highly safe place for residents to store their bikes while visiting the town. Within the secure cycle park, will also be a shared bike hub for residents to access push bikes, electric bikes and eCargo bikes on a pay as you go basis. Both projects are hoped to be finished by late Spring 2022.
- Improvements and updates to the route from North Station to the Town Centre as part of **Fixing the Link** project. Plans are in progress to refurbish the Middleborough fountain, plant trees in planters, as well as replace the yellow flags that line the route.
- Supporting the development of the **Colchester Orbital**, with the creation of online maps showing the 14-15 mile walking and cycling route being produced.
- Facilitating the operation of the **e-scooter trials** in Colchester which have seen 250,000 journeys completed in the urban area since February 2021.
- Installation of 3 EV charge points at **Priory Street Car Park** as the start of a programme to support the use of electric vehicles in Colchester, with more charge points going in other Council car parks in 2022.

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

5.6 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Introduced programme to **reduce recycling contamination** and save time on waste collection routes by collecting cans and glass in separate containers
- Creation of a **community engagement team** to engage with residents and schools about waste reduction and recycling. The team have helped school children be involved in naming one of the Council's food waste vehicles, and are helping to restart the Council's Litter Warriors programme, with expansion to allow residents to carry out other tasks such as weeding of paths.

- Beginning the **investment in smart waste technology**, with the introduction of 4 smart waste bins in Dedham to help improve collection efficiencies and store more waste in bins. This will begin as a trial and the effectiveness assessed to inform future deployment.

Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development

5.7 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Supporting Eco Colchester with the delivery of the **Eco Festival** in 2021. This event attracted over 3500 of attendees, and gave the Council a great opportunity to showcase its projects that are contributing to sustainability in the borough.
- Building up **collaboration with University of Essex** to help inform the development of our Council projects. Collaborations include on the Clean Air for Colchester project and Go Green Schools project, as well as through other one-off engagement projects such as through the University Challenge Lab.
- **Increase engagement with primary schools** to understand the challenges face in becoming greener, and carry out environmental engagement activities with one school in Colchester to enable staff and students to understand the benefits of outdoor environmental activity. Through this work, the Council has managed to link up the school with further ongoing support through Together We Grow CIC.
- Work with Community 360 and other **community-based organisations** such as Age Concern, Warm and Toasty Club and Citizen's Advice Bureau to promote some of the Council's projects and activities such as the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme funding to a wider audience.
- Deliver a presentation and Q and A session with the **Colchester Association of Local Councils** about the Council's work on the climate emergency, and how town and parish councils can be linked into this and take their own action to reduce their environmental impact. Regular communication now happens between the town and parish councils and CBC to ensure they are kept up to date with CBC projects and activities that they can publicise to residents.

Ensure sustainable planning and development

5.8 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Creation of the **Planning Sustainability Checklist** to help planning staff assess the sustainability of planning applications going forward. This is useful guidance for ensuring planning applications are taking due consideration to the impact they can have on the environment.
- Working alongside the sustainable travel team, to ensure **s106 funding** has been allocated to accommodate and support sustainable travel as part of new developments. This has included the allocated of spaces for electric car clubs and electric vehicle charge points amongst others.

Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment

5.9 Key highlights from this theme include:

- Creation of the **Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Assessment** (and guidance) that has helped staff to provide further information on how their projects are reducing their negative environmental impacts and producing positive environmental impacts.
- Provided input into the development of **several key strategies** at the Council including the Housing Asset Management Strategy, Cultural Strategy and Communities Can Strategy.
- Developing the **Council's travel plan** through engaging with staff working across Colchester including Rowan House and Shrub End Depot, to understand how staff anticipate travelling to work in the future and to continue to work to provide support for staff to travel sustainably to work. Significant engagement has been carried out at Shrub End Depot, providing Dr Bike maintenance sessions, and providing staff with bike equipment and tools so that they can continue to cycle safely to work.

Climate Emergency Action Plan Review

- 5.10 In January 2022, all local authorities in the UK received a rating of their climate emergency action plans and/or strategies by Climate Emergency UK. The organisation reviewed the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan against the content and actions outlined within the plan. This did not review the action that has actually been implemented in the plan, only that which has been written down within plans. Additionally, there is some action the Council has taken on the climate emergency that was not included in the the plan at the time of writing which may have affected the score (e.g. Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme). The Council's Action Plan received an overall score of 52%, higher than the district council average score of 43%. A detailed review of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, including where it did and did not score marks, can be viewed [here](#). All the Council Action Plan scorecards can be viewed [here](#).
- 5.11 Overall, compared to other Councils, CBC's action plan is less comprehensive in terms of the background information given about climate change risks and impacts specific to Colchester. This is one of the main areas in where the plan lost marks, as it was not communicated how the action plan linked to a CBC strategic approach to tackling the climate emergency. However, there were also more specific 'gaps' in the action plan which the review identified and are mentioned below.
- 5.12 The Climate Emergency Action Plan was reviewed against nine criteria which were:
- **Governance, Development and Funding** – Who leads, monitors and updates the plan? Is funding outlined for actions?
 - **Mitigation and Adaptation** – Have implications of climate change been outlined?, How have strategies and actions been set out to decarbonise and adapt to climate change in key areas e.g. heating, transport, energy generation
 - **Commitment and Integration** – How well has plan been integrated into existing policies/strategies? Are actions SMART?
 - **Community Engagement and Communications** – Who is involved in development of plan? How easy is the plan to find on website? Is a comms plan in place?

- **Measuring and setting emissions targets** – Are baseline emissions outlined? Are emission reductions prioritised over offsetting?
- **Co-benefits** – Does the plan consider climate action co-benefits and are these communicated?
- **Diversity and social inclusion** - Does plan outline the unequal impact of climate change on certain communities? How will it support vulnerable communities?
- **Education, skills and training** – Is training outlined for staff, councillors, public education and upskilling of the local workforce?
- **Ecological Emergency** – Does plan include actions to address ecological emergency? Are nature based solutions considered?

- 5.14 The Council performed strongest in the areas of Commitment and Integration, Community engagement and communications and co-benefits. This reflected the way that the Climate Emergency Action Plan has been integrated with existing Council plans and strategies, and how actions have been developed with measurable targets and timescales. The plan also outlines how it will collaborate with residents and partner organisations in the delivery of its projects, highlighting how the delivery of actions produces other benefits than just environmental ones (e.g. job creation, improved wellbeing, improved physical health).
- 5.15 However, the review identified where there are currently gaps in the action plan, particularly in the sections of diversity and inclusion, education, skills and training and mitigation and adaptation. This reflected that the current plan does not highlight how different residents will be impacted by climate change and how they will be supported. It also doesn't identify actions involved with climate education of the public, and upskilling of the workforce to support a low carbon economy. Additionally, the plan does not reference climate adaptation within it.
- 5.16 To address these areas and build upon existing actions, the Council is updating its Climate Emergency Action Plan. Below are some of the actions that will be added or brought out more clearly in the action plan:
- Clearly addressing how Council actions are addressing climate adaptation. This could be through expressing this clearly as part of actions, or creating a new theme on climate adaptation. Existing and future actions the Council will address in relation to climate adaptation include the plans it has for extreme weather and the management of green space to reduce flooding (with tree planting along the River Colne in the Castle Park).
 - Identifying the grant support that the Council has through the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme to help residents on low incomes increase the energy efficiency of their homes.
 - Inclusion of projects as part of the Town Deal within the plan. For example, the Heart of Greenstead work, that will involve the provision of bikes for residents in a deprived community to enable them to travel around and improve their health, and the work occurring to improve active travel routes between Greenstead, University and the Town Centre.
 - Explore the development of climate emergency training for all new starters at the Council, so that they understand how action can be taken in their personal and work life to reduce their environmental footprint.
 - Outlining in the plan how we will work with Essex County Council on several actions that they are leading on tackling climate change. The County Council has greater scope for

delivering larger projects that CBC as a district can support and take part in, enhancing the diversity and scope of action that can be taken.

5.16 Further actions will continue to be outlined and developed in response to the review.

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.

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.

Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item
10

22 March 2022

Report of	Assistant Director Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Matthew Evans ☎ ext. 8006
Title	Work Programme 2021-2022		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2021-2022 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 2021-2022.

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 2021-22

Environment and Sustainability Panel
Meeting date / Agenda items -
Environment and Sustainability Panel - 24 June 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work recap and plan for the year ahead.2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update.
Environment and Sustainability Panel – 22 July 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Waste & Recycling and the Environment Bill2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update
Environment and Sustainability Panel – 16 September 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Woodland and Biodiversity Update2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update

Environment and Sustainability Panel – **7 December 2021**

1. Social Value Portal and green procurement
2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update

Environment and Sustainability Panel – **13 January 2022**

1. Pathway for net zero emissions by 2030
2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update

Environment and Sustainability Panel – **24 February 2022**

1. Sustainable Modes of Travel
2. Overview of the Environment Act 2021
3. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update

Environment and Sustainability Panel – **22 March 2022**

1. Summary of progress in 2021/2022
2. Draft Waste Strategy
3. Community Engagement update

