

Environment and Sustainability Panel Meeting

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

Thursday, 23 September 2021 at 18:00

The Environment and Sustainability Panel explores methods of conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity through adapting existing practices or creating new ecologically diverse environments. The Panel encourages renewable energy generation and carbon footprint reduction in both the public and private sectors by examining air and water quality, plastic and waste reduction and renewable energy generation. The Panel monitors the progress and implementation of the Council's Emergency Climate Action Plan and regularly reports to Cabinet and Full Council.

Access to information and meetings

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<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

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Colchester Borough Council

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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
Thursday, 23 September 2021 at 18:00

The Environment and Sustainability Panel Members are:

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

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 to the meeting and remind those participating to mute their microphones when not talking. The Chairman will invite all Councillors and Officers participating in the meeting to 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 meetings held on 24 June 2021 and 22 July 2021 are a correct record.

Environment and Sustainability Panel draft minutes - 24-06-2021 9 - 20

Environment and Sustainability Panel draft minutes - 22-07-2021 21 - 30

6 Have Your Say!

The Chairman will invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition on any item included on the agenda or any other matter relating to the terms of reference of the meeting. Please indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

7 Year 3 – The Woodland & Biodiversity Project 31 - 44

The Panel will consider a report setting out and reviewing the progress that has been made through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project which is now in year 3 of its five-year programme.

8 Climate Emergency Action Plan Update 45 - 88

The Panel will consider a report detailing key progress made with the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), and other relevant updates since the previous meeting on 22nd July 2021.

9 Environment and Sustainability Work Programme 2020-2021 89 - 92

The Panel will consider a report setting out the work programme of the Environment and Sustainability Panel for the current municipal year.

Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Part B

(not open to the public including the press)

Environment and Sustainability Panel

24 June 2021

Present: Councillor Mark Cory
Councillor John Jowers
Councillor David King
Councillor Lee Scordis
Councillor Julie Young

Substitutes: Councillor Hazell for Councillor Barber

32. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

33. Have Your Say!

Councillor Goacher attended the meeting and addressed the Panel and advised that he had been approached by market traders on Culver Street who had sought his assistance with providing reusable cotton bags, as they were very keen to stop the current use of plastic bags. He noted that large high street retailers in the area were now providing cotton bags to their customers but for the street traders this was not economically viable without assistance. It was suggested that possibly Members could assist via their locality budgets, with the Council and the traders themselves also contributing. Councillor Goacher stated that he had been contacted by a local resident who had requested assistance with recycling plastic bags, as these were not accepted by the Council's recycling service.

Councillor Julie Young noted that in the past Colchester Borough Council (the Council) had moved away from the use of plastic bags toward paper bags for its own services, and she further noted that the food bank had been requesting plastic bags, and it may be possible for bags to be collected and then passed on.

Councillor Cory supported the idea, and suggested that the Panel may wish to make a recommendation to Cabinet that this be explored further. He noted that the Council had been in receipt of funding via the Reopening High Street Safely Fund, and wondered whether this funding could assist, together with exploring the idea of matched funding supported by Colchester's Business Improvement District (BID).

Councillor King also supported the proposal and recommended that Officers look at the options that may be available, potentially including considering the use of fully compostable biodegradable plastic bags. He did, however, urge caution in relation to the Council being seen to favour one small business over another, and suggested that the BID be the first point of consultation.

Mandy Jones, Assistant Director – Place and Client Services noted the suggestions made and referred to the Council's desire to make climate change and sustainability part of all projects in the future, which could potentially be included within the scope of the funding obtained. She explained that the different financial options would need to be considered carefully before deciding on any action.

The Panel had received a written representation from Mr Dave Smith, which was read out by Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer. Mr Smith expressed his concern about the continued flooding that was experienced at the Hythe, and the significant disruption that this caused to visitors to the area, as well as residents and local business. He noted that recently a doctor on call had been forced to abandon her car which had become stranded in floodwater, and he urged the Panel to consider what solutions may be available.

Councillor Scordis explained that a Hythe task force had been set up with the local Member of Parliament and other partner agencies with a view to seeking a solution to the problems, which were a major source of disruption in the area. He noted that a solution to the problem would likely take a long time to find, but expressed hope in the fact that interested partner agencies were now working together to address the issue.

Councillor Jowers, commented that in his view the issues in the area had started when the Council had stopped dredging the river twenty years ago, allowing silt to build up which contributed to the problem. He explained that he was a member of the Regional Flood Defence Body for East Anglia, and resolved to raise this matter as a matter of urgency, noting the importance of the road that was affected which operated as Colchester's south circular road. He considered that the responsibility lay with Anglia Water and the Environment Agency to address the issues, and he was pleased to note that the Council was applying pressure to get remedial works carried out.

Rory Doyle, Assistant Director – Environment, advised the Panel that the issue required a multi-agency response, and he confirmed that a task force had been set up recently to look at the issues. He advised that work had been undertaken recently by Anglia Water, in liaison with the Council's own engineers. He understood that the work carried out had been successful to a degree, and that at a spring high tide today, the same level of flooding had not been observed, leading to less disruption. With regard to work at Distillery Pond, Rory confirmed that Essex County Council had undertaken a significant amount of work in this area looking at surface water and draining from the pond. He confirmed that the flooding was a complex issue and Haven Road itself was below the high tide line and so would always be subject to a degree of risk in that area leading to a need to mitigate the effects of such flooding.

Cyril Liddy addressed the Panel and noted the poor state of the River Colne, which, in his view had started deteriorating following the Colchester Borough Council Act 2001 which had allowed the Council to close the harbour to commercial shipping. He requested that the Panel give consideration to acquiring the middle part of Ferry Marsh which was a nature reserve and prone to serious flooding due to the silting up of a poorly constructed sluice. He noted that during flooding, the Wivenhoe Trail became almost impassable, and mosquitos bred on the site, constituting a potential

public health risk, and he considered that there was a risk that flood water could erode the nearby railway embankment. He urged the Council to take its custodianship of the river seriously and not abdicate this responsibility to other agencies that managed rivers. He advised that the Council should act decisively to acquire the middle part of Ferry Marsh at no cost as per the section 106 agreement reached with the developers, and to apply any unspent funds to constructing a properly functioning sluice.

Councillor Cory confirmed that he had recently been in correspondence with Officers who had been working to bring any land that was in the Crown Estate into Colchester Borough Council ownership to allow the sluice to be reached more easily to assist in reaching a sustainable solution. He noted that although it used to be possible to walk through the centre of the marsh, it should now be accepted that the area had changed and this would no longer be possible, however, he completely supported preserving the Wivenhoe Trail and confirmed that he had been in communication with a local sailing club with a view to attempting to clean the sluice from the river. He further advised the Panel that the Environment Agency had recently confirmed that following budget cuts they were no longer able to support the maintenance of waterways to the extent that they would like.

Councillor Jowers supported the views of Councillor Cory and considered that the marsh was environmentally useful and noted that in the past the owner of the lease of the river had been resistant to working with the Council, an issue which he now believed had been resolved. The management of the area was a massive undertaking, and there was a need to balance management of the land with financial constraints to make the area environmentally sustainable and also human friendly. He noted the beauty of the river, and considered that more use could be made of it, possibly by increasing access points for members of the public. He offered his support for Mt Liddy's suggestion, but considered that a much wider view needed to be taken of the area.

Councillor King supported the views of Councillor Jowers, and noted that some consideration had been given to how best to approach the issue, and it had been advised that the issue was best dealt with via the Council's Policy Panel. He did request that future updates on the emerging stewardship of the river be brought back to this Panel as events unfolded and the opportunities afforded by this area were explored.

Councillor Scordis expressed his reservations about referring the issue to Policy Panel, noting that this area had been considered by that Panel in the past and was worried that no progress would be made. He considered that significant parts of the work were suitable for this Panel and was therefore not in favour of passing all the matter to Policy Panel, considering that environmental aspects could be considered by the Environment and Sustainability Panel, with the Policy Panel focussing on potential commercial elements of any scheme. Speaking as a Member of the Policy Panel, Councillor Jowers agreed with this proposal and suggested that this Panel work up a scheme considering the environmental impacts and associated costs, and refer this scheme to Policy Panel to insist that it then be referred on to Cabinet to consider. He considered that grants would be available to support any work that was necessary.

Councillor Young supported the suggestion that this Panel consider the environmental elements of a river management scheme, with the potential commercial elements of the scheme being referred to Policy Panel. Councillor Jowers suggested that the Chair of the Policy Panel be consulted to seek his views on where the division should lie.

Councillor King advised the Panel that Essex County Council had recently introduced a walking strategy which included a concentration on nature walks and the undiscovered coastline of Essex, and suggested that it may be possible to take advantage of this.

Rory Doyle acknowledged the wide range of opportunities that the river provided in respect of its contribution to the regeneration of the town, economic prosperity and health and wellbeing, in addition to its environmental qualities, and he suggested that it was difficult to separate out each individual element. The Panel were advised that the work programme proposed was quite full, whereas there was space on the Policy Panel work programme where any report dealing with the river would receive the necessary level of scrutiny. He confirmed that the Council's Countryside Team had been liaising with developers in respect of the marsh and sluice gate.

Cyril Liddy suggested that the Council's legal department should speak to the Treasury Solicitor to make enquiries as to the cost of acquiring Ferry Marsh as he considered this was the appropriate action to be taken, a stance that was supported by Councillor Cory.

Councillor Jowers suggested that the Policy Panel be asked to consider the management of the river, but that the Policy Panel be asked to refer the environmental aspects of the management of the river to be referred back to this Panel, prior to a referral being made to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: that Officers ask that Leadership Board request that an agenda item on the management of the River Colne be put forward to the Policy Panel.

The Panel had received a written representation from Andrew Wilkinson representing En-form and Eco Colchester, which was read out by Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer. Mr Wilkinson referred to the previous meeting of the Panel, and enquired when the development document on sustainability and carbon reduction that had been suggested for the Local Plan be produced. He further enquired what the natural asset list was, and where this could be located, and he suggested that Local Plan needed to reflect wild areas and open space as well as housing and development as well as local farmland.

Mandy Jones advised the Panel that the document referred to by Mr Wilkinson was the supplementary planning document (SPD) which would support the Local Plan in terms of environment and sustainability. The SPD needed to be linked with the emerging Local Plan and work on this was expected to take place later on in the year following adoption of the Local Plan and the completion of this SPD was anticipated by autumn 2022. She advised the Panel that the Local Plan did take account of areas of the natural environment which required protection, as well as housing

development. The Panel were advised that there was no specific natural asset list, but rather several ways that natural assets were recorded both locally and nationally and could be accessed on a variety of websites, as well as in the evidence base for the Local Plan. Protected species were also routinely surveyed, and a variety of environmental suitability checks were made in respect of each major planning application.

Grace Darke, representing En-form and Eco Colchester attended the meeting and addressed the Panel. She expressed concern that until recently no training had been offered to Councillors in relation to environmental matters, which was surprising considering that the Council had declared a climate emergency. She acknowledged that training had recently been offered, and sought confirmation on the level of attendance for the session. She further called for additional training for all Councillors and staff on environmental issues to be made compulsory in order to raise awareness and understanding of the issues. She believed that the lack of training and understanding was causing confusion, and would welcome the opportunity to attend any future training sessions in order that feedback could be provided. Concern was raised on how the Council's environmental policies and projects were being communicated to Councillors and residents, and the 'No Mow' policy was given as an example of this. The challenge of communicating the Council's policies to local residents was acknowledged, however, it was suggested that more could be done to inform Council staff, Councillors and local residents of these.

Councillor Young noted that a number of Councillors did communicate with En-Form on a variety of social media channels, including debates with local residents on Facebook community pages, however, she acknowledged that future training was important to assist Councillors with their role as community leaders to champion the policies adopted by the Council. The training that had been provided had taken place soon after the local elections had taken place, and it was acknowledged that not all Councillors had been able to attend due to other commitments.

Councillor Cory acknowledged the work that had been undertaken by the Council over the preceding years, but conceded that there was still work to be done and improvements in the communication of Council projects could be made. It was noted that training on environmental issues was included for the first time in the new Member induction programme, but it was suggested that this should now be offered as stand alone training, possibly supported by additional briefings as necessary to ensure that all Councillors understood current policy issues, potentially attended by Eco Colchester and En-Form who Councillor Cory was keen to work with.

Councillor King acknowledged the progress that had been made by the Council and although he conceded that there was still some way to go, he did not feel that compulsory training was the answer, preferring that Councillors and Officers were drawn in to support the work of the Council voluntarily through the offering of smaller, more digestible training sessions. It was suggested that there may be scope for mandatory training on the climate challenge as part of the new Member induction process as this was key to the environmental work of the Council, and it was noted

that very good attendance had been obtained over the previous year in relation to financial and pandemic briefings. Councillor King confirmed that he would raise this issue as a member of the Member Development Group to ensure that training may be incorporated in the future, stating that environmental issues were widely supported by the Council as a whole, regardless of individual politics.

Councillor Jowers confirmed that he was a member of the Climate Change Commission of Essex County Council, and hoped that the work of this Panel would compliment that which was being aimed for at County level. He supported the comments of other Councillors with regard to training and said that in his opinion training should not be compulsory, and while it may be productive to include training on environmental issues as part of the induction process, care had to be taken that Members were not overloaded.

Councillor Hazell also did not feel that training should be compulsory, and made the point that if any Councillors were unable to attend a training or briefing session then they were presented with the relevant training documents to enable them to peruse these and undertake the training in their own time, something which she felt should continue.

Mandy Jones, Assistant Director – Place and Client Services confirmed that the recent Climate Change and Sustainability induction session had been aimed at new Members, and agreed that future engagement with a much wider audience was important in the future. To this end, a sub-group of the One Colchester group had been set up to consider different engagement methods and future engagement was planned with the University of Essex and Essex County Council.

Maggie Ibrahim, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager, welcomed the offer that had been made by En-Form and Eco Colchester to provide input on future training, and confirmed that of key importance was that Councillors understood the link between sustainability and carbon reduction for any decisions that were taken. It was confirmed that all the training materials and documentation from the recent Climate Change and Sustainability session was available online, and that attendance at this training had encompassed approximately half of all Councillors. The Panel was advised that staff and Councillors were passionate about the Council's strategies and projects, and work was ongoing to support the behaviour change necessary to deliver the Council's climate change goals. The Council had developed a strategy which was supported by more than fifty action plans, and a community consultation on the strategic themes was planned with the aim of deepening engagement through a wide variety of partners. Over the coming months, it was intended that the Council's environmental policies would be more conspicuously promoted, supported by new designs and branding. The recent training had ended with a request to Councillors to indicate areas that they felt they needed more information, be it fleet management, biodiversity or energy management to enable targeted follow up sessions, which were more successfully delivered to willing participants.

Grace Darke welcomed the comments that had been made, and was encouraged by the stance that the Council was taking. She noted that Eco Colchester and En-Form

operated at a very local level and had experienced the confusion that was sometimes felt by local residents in relation to environment issues, and she welcomed the progress that she felt would be made by the Council in the near future. She reiterated that En-Form and Eco Colchester would be keen to provide any assistance that they could to Officers in the future.

34. Overview of the Sustainability and Climate Challenge stream and next steps

Maggie Ibrahim, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that although a recent independent assessment of the United Kingdom's climate risk had provided worrying information, the steps that Colchester Borough Council (the Council) had taken provided some hope for the future. The Panel were reminded that the Council had declared a climate emergency in 2019, had developed an action plan in 2020 and had started a consultation looking at eight strategic themes. It was explained that this was necessary due to the dangers posed by global warming, and the United Kingdom had pledged to reduce emissions by 2030, recognising that the impact that reducing emissions had on global temperatures was subject to a thirty year lag.

The Council's net zero emissions target was set at zero by 2030, and the main sources of the Council's emissions were the Council's assets, fleet, and staff travel. Council assets comprised Council operated buildings and sheltered housing stock which used electricity and gas, together with waste production and water consumption. The Panel heard that the Council's direct emissions accounted for approximately 6,000 tonnes of CO₂, however, its indirect emissions, which were outside the scope of the 2030 zero net emissions target, accounted for approximately 27,500 tonnes of CO₂. The indirect emissions were produced by the Council's leased buildings, investments and procured goods and services, and the Panel were assured that where possible it was ensured that companies associated with the Council were aligned with the Council's commitments to reducing emissions, which was anticipated would lead to a reduction in indirect emissions over the forthcoming years.

The Panel heard that the Council had concluded work to determine where its emissions were coming from, and had developed an Action Plan comprising of fifty actions which was aligned to a new Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy (CCSS) which contained eight themes. A lot of work was being undertaken in support of the Council's Strategy around transportation and infrastructure with alternative mode of transport being explored such as e-cargo bikes and e-scooter, and there had been significant investment in staff training to encourage behaviour change. It was noted that between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, there had been a reduction in direct carbon emissions of 5.4% and further work was planned with the Carbon Trust to establish milestones that would illustrate the rate of decrease that should be sought in the future.

The Panel heard an update on the work supporting the eight themes contained within the CCSS:

- **Reduce carbon emissions from the Council's buildings and fleet;**
It had been determined that the Council's fleet and some key assets were high emitters of carbon and work was being undertaken to reduce these levels including decarbonising work in Rowan House, and future studies planned for Leisure World and the Shrub End Depot. The Energy Saving Trust had highlighted that reducing emissions from the Council's fleet should be carried out gradually over time, taking advantage of new technologies as they became available and the Fleet Transition Plan would be continually evaluated in the future to ensure that appropriate and necessary changes were made.
- **The production of renewable energy;**
The Panel were advised that the Council were leading in comparison to other Local Authorities in the production of renewal energy, delivered via the Northern Gateway heat network which produced renewable energy for commercial spaces as well as homes and which would be completed by 2024. A solar power energy farm was also under consideration for the future, and the Panel were advised that renewal sources of energy would be linked to the Council's assets wherever possible to assist emission reduction.
- **Enhance Biodiversity and Protect Environment**
The work of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project was highlighted, which had been expanded from just looking at woodland areas to include a much broader range of biodiversity issues as well. Trees and shrubs had been planted and wildlife corridors were being considered to assist pollinators through introducing wildflowers.
- **Walking, Cycling and Sustainable Transport**
The introduction of e-cargo bikes had been successful, and a variety of local businesses taking part in the pilot scheme, as well as Council staff. The Council had won an award from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for implementing new modes of sustainable transport such as an electric car club, wayfinding and cycle routes. The Council's CAREless Pollution Campaign had been launched which was aimed to reduce vehicle pollution, and Colchester had been made available for an e-scooter trial which had been highly successful.
- **Sustainable Waste Management**
Glass and can collections were being separated for recycling and residents were being encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle. Technology had also been introduced to pinpoint which areas were not active in their recycling behaviours to allow further engagement and encouragement.

- **Enabling: Partnerships and Community Action**

The Panel were advised that partnership working was essential to drive down the Council's indirect emissions, and the Council currently engaged with a very wide range of partners including Eco Colchester, Essex County Council and the Colchester Institute. Work was being undertaken with Community 360 to reach the wider demographic of Colchester's residents, including those most vulnerable and members of BAME groups. Regular meetings were held with Essex County Council, and work was ongoing with Colchester Institute to support residents in gaining the skills needed for a green economy. The University of Essex had provided support and technical expertise in areas such as strategy development as well as assisting with areas such as consultations and participatory budgeting.

- **Sustainable Planning and Development**

Although it had not been possible to implement a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) yet, new developments were being asked to consider a Planning and Sustainability checklist, as a way of demonstrating that they had thought about key environmental issues. The use of the checklist was being monitored, and this would be used to help in the development of the forthcoming SPD once the Local Plan had been approved.

- **Changing the way we work**

A Climate Opportunities Working Group had been put in place which covered all of the Council's service areas, as well as the commercial companies, to ensure that there was understanding of the impact of projects on emissions and the environment. Key messages had been relayed to the Group in relation to the impacts of projects in terms of carbon generation and reduction, and the net impact of projects. A social value portal had also been implemented, and the Panel would receive a report on this at its November meeting.

The Panel heard that work had been undertaken with Councillors, Officers and residents to identify forthcoming areas of work related to carbon reduction, helping to establish key performance indicators to support the Council's aim to be carbon net zero by 2030. As part of the ongoing key asset decarbonisation review, the Council's housing stock would be considered, culminating in the agreement of future homes standards up to 2025 to ensure that all new homes were emission net zero ready, including social housing with any retrofitting necessary. A key area of work was the implementation of a new Carbon Management Plan for 2022-2027 which would provide the cost and plan for decarbonising each of the Council's assets, which would allow an assessment to be carried out to determine which decarbonising works would represent the best value for money.

The Council, together with the Council's commercial companies, would each have a travel plan which would consider details such as how many parking spaces are available at Rowan House, and this would be published online shortly. Additional

consultation on the CCSS was planned, and it was hoped that community engagement would be deepened to support the aim of net zero carbon by 2030, in terms of the Council's direct and indirect emissions.

Councillor Cory praised the work that had been undertaken by Officers, particularly the breadth of the work and impact that this had achieved, with a particular emphasis on making the whole organisation aware of the impact on the environment and biodiversity of each decision that was taken. Noting the comments that had been made around communication, he suggested that some of the key achievable goals, outcomes and objectives be the focus of future communication, to make the message of the Council more easily accessible to the public and partners. He expressed his pleasure at the engagement work that had been undertaken with Parish Councils and other partners, and singled out projects such as the Northern Gateway Heat Network and the possibility of a solar panel farm as being worthy of particular note.

Councillor Scordis offered his support to the suggestion of greater publicity of the work and principles contained within the CCSS, commenting that although he had seen very clear promotional graphics in the past, he had seen nothing recently. He asked what powers the Council had to enforce more sustainable developments, saying that although the Council could encourage developers to be more environmentally friendly, if this led to a loss of income it was, in practice, unlikely to happen. Support was offered for secure cycle parking in the town, and the location of this was requested. Echoing previous comments made, Councillor Scordis noted that some members of his Political Group had not been aware of the 'No Mow May' project, and suggested increased communications around this would have been helpful.

Maggie Ibrahim confirmed that once the Local Plan had been through its examination period it would be possible to look more closely at an SPD, which would give the Council more authority to require environmental issues be considered as part of a planning application, but until this happened the Council was encouraging developers to take these issues into account. The encouragement was in a manner that highlighted the cost benefits that were available of providing more ecologically friendly developments, and the Panel heard that some developers were leading examples of low carbon designs. It was confirmed that there was a communication plan in place for the Climate Emergency Action Plan as a whole, as well as key projects that would be delivered under this, and it was intended to share with Parish Councils areas that would be affected by 'No Mow May' in order that local residents could be kept informed.

Councillor King observed that an admirable ambition had been demonstrated by Officers in their work, and suggested that external resource may be required to support the Council's desire for greater engagement and participatory development. He suggested to adequately communicate the scope of the Council's ambition across such a broad range of projects required an excellent communications team,

and enquired whether Officers considered that there was currently adequate support for this, and to what extent staff had been emotionally engaged with this work. Maggie Ibrahim explained that care had to be taken when balancing the language of emergency and threat discourse with the language of hope, and communications set out what the challenges were in terms of service delivery and environment, together with how it was proposed to meet those challenges. The point was made that Council staff were also local residents, and any behaviour change that staff experienced would therefore extend out into the local community. Work had been undertaken with local community groups looking at greening and landscaping issues, and it was hoped to be able to provide everyone in the borough opportunities to take climate action in the future. With regard to future resourcing, the Panel heard that it was intended to work with Climate Kic to explore the possibilities of internal investments, as well as potential partnerships with other Local Authorities.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

35. Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

Maggie Ibrahim, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that work had been undertaken with the Carbon Trust over the preceding years to develop a detailed understanding of the scope of the Council's carbon emissions, and that a new element of the work being undertaken was in relation to thinking strategically about carbon offsetting in the future. Natural assets would be considered, together with the benefits to be gained from additional tree planting and providing renewable energy with a view to offsetting any emissions that may remain once all possible work to remove these had been completed. Some of the Council's assets, such as the Town Hall, were not suitable for retrofitting to reduce emissions, and additional strategies therefore had to be considered in respect of these assets.

Councillor Jowers praised the depth of work that had been undertaken, and the high level of detail in the information that had been provided, and he looked forward to receiving the scheduled updates in the future. He noted that the contents of the report were very positive, and hoped to see e-cargo bikes in more rural areas soon.

Councillor Cory confirmed that four e-cargo bikes were currently in use in Wivenhoe, including two used by Wivenhoe Town Council, and a further two used by local businesses. He noted the excellent work that had been undertaken with the assistance of partners, and called for greater understanding of the negative impact that small changes such as paving a driveway had on the environment, and he wondered whether there was scope for parishes to be encouraged to carry out an audit of their environmental assets.

Councillor Scordis commented on the 'No Mow May' scheme, and praised the work that had been undertaken to engage local schools, which he considered would prove most effective in influencing behaviour as well as providing benefits for the schools themselves. He echoed the views of the Panel with regard to greater promotion of the excellent work that was being undertaken by the Council. Councillor Hazell confirmed that a number of environmental projects had been undertaken by schools in Shrub End, and expressed her opinion that

greater engagement with, and awareness of, environmental issues served to improve quality of life for everyone.

Rory Doyle, Assistant Director – Environment, noted the need for Members and residents to be able to distinguish between grass that was being deliberately re-wilded, and that which was going to be cut, but which had not yet been mowed. The Panel were advised that there had been no reduction in the number of cuts to verges in the borough during May, and every area that was due to be maintained as part of the grounds maintenance regime would continue to be maintained. The exception to this was the list of sites where naturalisation was taking place, which were being closely monitored and managed in order to understand the impact of the approach which the Council was taking before the project was expanded in the future. It was confirmed that each of the sites that had been designated for naturalisation had been paired with a local school, and the schools had designed signs for the sites to indicate that they had been designated for naturalisation.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

36. Work Programme 2020-2021

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with their enquiries. The Panel heard that an additional meeting had been scheduled for 22 July 2021, and that the meetings that had been scheduled for 16 September and 25 November would also be rescheduled in the near future.

RESOLVED that the contents of the work programme be noted.

Environment and Sustainability Panel

22 July 2021

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

Substitutes: Councillor McCarthy for Councillor Cory
Councillor Whitehead for Councillor Scordis

37. Have Your Say!

Councillor Young addressed the Panel and assured the members of the public who had contributed to the Have Your Say element of the previous meeting that their questions had not been forgotten and would be addressed during the course of the meeting. It had been agreed that the Policy Panel would consider the management of the River Colne as a whole, but that this Panel would consider any environmental issues that may arise.

A written representation had been submitted to the Panel by Cyril Liddy, and Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer, read this out to the Panel. Mr Liddy made reference to previous points he had made to the Panel requesting that leadership was shown in respect of taking stewardship of the River Colne, and that consideration be given to the acquisition of the middle part and river frontage of Ferry Marsh, Wivenhoe by the Council in order to facilitate a remedy of the flooding caused by the defective sluice there. Mr Liddy enquired what progress had been made in this regard. Concern was also expressed that flooding had caused erosion that affected the cycle path and may lead to damage to the railway line, although Network Rail had not expressed concern at this possibility yet. The point was made that the cost of replacing the defective sluice would be a fraction of the cost associated with managing claims that may be made as a result of the damage caused. Mr Liddy did appreciate that dealing with these issues would not be straightforward, but suggested that other agencies such as the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation should also be engaged in the project. Officers were asked to identify alternative approaches to the issue of the flooding, if the suggestion made by Mr Liddy were not adopted.

A further written representation had been received from Dilly Meyer, Chair of the Wivenhoe Society, which was read to the Panel by Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer. The attention of the Panel was drawn to an article in the Essex County Standard concerning the history of the Hythe and the flooding that takes place there, and it was suggested that the current flooding issues were due, at least in part, to the cessation of dredging associated with commercial shipping on the River Colne. Damage caused by the flooding of Ferry Marsh and along the Wivenhoe Trail was highlighted, and it was questioned who was responsible for

maintaining the sluices on the river, and the Panel were asked why dredging could not be started again. The Council was urged to take action to address the issues that had been identified.

Rory Doyle, Assistant Director – Environment, addressed the Panel and advised that contact had been made with the Treasury Solicitor who had clarified the position of the Crown, and conversations with the developers had been constructive, and Officers were actively working with one developer in particular to find a solution to the flooding at Ferry Marsh. A short term solution to the flooding was to repair the sluice to support drainage of the area, however, although the acquisition of the land could be part of a longer term solution, the Council needed to be wary taking on liabilities, and the ecological implications of any works undertaken needed to be considered very carefully.

With regard to the comments made regarding the dredging of the river, the Panel heard that there was an upcoming meeting of the River Taskforce, chaired by the Member of Parliament, and which was a multi-agency taskforce likely to consider the possibility of dredging. The Panel were advised that dredging could have unintended consequences on habitats both up and down stream, could only be carried out at vast expense, and could potentially have little impact as removed silt and mud would return to the riverbed.

Councillor King noted that expenditure on the river would have to be at the expense of other projects, although he acknowledged that there would be wide support for action taken both in Wivenhoe and elsewhere. He noted that Essex County Council were focusing on a number of strategic aims and goals which included focus on coastal and river areas, and he wondered whether there was an opportunity for the Council to engage with the County Council on this issue with a view to securing supporting funding.

Councillor Jowers spoke as someone who had used the river commercially for forty years, and voiced his opinion that the river had been mismanaged for some time. He highlighted two turning bays on the river including one opposite the student accommodation which had cost over £1 million, and was used by one ship, and the other turning bay just above Ferry Marsh which was rarely used. Councillor Jowers requested information on the current legal status of the Council, and asked what power the Council possessed to form any kind of management forum or carry out any works. It was suggested that difficulties had arisen with the leaseholder in the past which may hamper any future work being undertaken. The large expense associated with undertaking works on the river was again noted, and it was suggested that the Regional Flood Defence Committees may be able to assist with this. By way of response, Rory Doyle indicated that he believed that issues with the had been resolved very recently, and Councillor Jowers asked whether the rights and obligations of the Council could now be clarified.

38. Environment Bill: Waste and Recycling

Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager - Neighbourhood Services, attended the meeting to present an overview of the latest proposals from central Government in relation to the Environment Bill, and the impact that this would have on the Council's services. The information presented to the Panel was based on the latest consultation that had been carried out.

The Panel heard that through the Environment Bill, central Government were seeking to promote clean air, reduce waste and improve the management of resources. Three consultations had been carried out recently, and the proposals that were now being made would constitute the biggest change in waste services in years across the whole United Kingdom (UK), impacting the way that services were provided, the infrastructure necessary to support them and the costs of providing them.

The Panel were advised that three main elements were being considered, starting with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which would require packaging producers responsible for the full net costs of managing packaging that they placed in the market, including costs incurred from collection, sorting and recycling as well as litter and refuse management costs. The second proposal was a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), which proposed introducing up front deposits for plastic, glass and metal drinks containers, which would be reimbursed when the container was returned to a recycling point. The third elements that the Panel were briefed about was the aim to increase consistency in household and business recycling through standardised collections.

The Panel were advised that the EPR scheme was intended to ensure that producers bore much more of the cost associated with the collection and recycling of packaging waste that they present to the market. Fees would be paid by producers and used to support Local Authority and local businesses providing recycling services, and in turn the increased quality of recycling would assist producers in meeting their packaging obligations. One of the overarching principles of the scheme was that of 'producer pays', in order to cover the costs associated with packaging deposited in the litter stream, and to encourage the design of reusable packaging. Producers would pay into the supply chain to support a cost effective and efficient system for managing packaging waste, including the collection of common packaging materials from households and business. As part of the net cost payments, producers of commonly littered packaging, such as fast food packaging would be made responsible for the costs of this. It was proposed that a variety of stakeholders would take on a waste management cost, in addition to the costs associated with running the scheme such as regulator administration costs and national communication campaigns. It was hoped that the actions of producers would enable consumers to more actively pay their part in recycling packaging waste through providing good services, correct labelling and other means that told consumers how to recycle and dispose of packaging. In addition to placing the costs associated with packaging waste on to producers, there would also be a requirement to label all packaging as recyclable or non-recyclable, supporting consumers to dispose of it correctly.

The Panel heard that with regard to litter, it was the Government's belief that litter should remain within the full scope of the costs of managing packaging recycling and disposal, with the aim of reducing the amount of packaging that is littered, increasing the amount of packaging that is recycled and ensuring that the costs associated with the disposal of packaging were met by the producers. This stance recognises that it is producers who profit from the sale of packaged items and the increase in popularity of 'on the go' products has

had an associated environmental impact. Through making producers responsible for the costs of packaging disposal, it was intended that producers should be required to cover the costs of all littered packaging, including packaging in litter bins and ground litter. Local Authorities and other public sector organisations such as schools and hospitals all incur costs for the management of packaging waste, but under the current proposal this cost would be transferred to the producer. It was proposed that a scheme administrator would be introduced who would be required to develop and implement the system that would ensure that the producers were paying the full costs of managing their packaging and ensuring that effective services were being provided across the UK. Local authorities with efficient waste management services would have the full cost of providing these services met through the scheme which it was proposed would be implemented via a phased approach commencing in 2023. It was confirmed that the administrator of the scheme was likely to be a central body appointed by Government, with no powers being devolved to local authorities to make their own decisions in relation to the scheme.

The second consultation being carried out was in relation to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), which was another example of producer responsibility in that manufacturers and importers of packaging would be held responsible for the end of life environmental impact of the packaging. Consumers would be asked to pay a higher price for products at the point of purchase, which would include a deposit which would be returned to them if the item was returned to a designated return point. It was believed that even a small financial incentive would encourage significant increases in recycling. A further advantage of such a scheme would be the creation of specialised item recycling streams with less chance of contamination and therefore a higher quality yield, which it was hoped could place UK producers at an advantage by reducing the need for sourcing materials from abroad. Producers would be required to place a redeemable deposit on drinks containers that they placed on the market which would be on top of the price of the drink. The producer would pay the deposit money received to the Deposit Management Organisation which would then ensure that the deposit amount was transferred through the supply chain. All producers or importers would be obliged to sign up to the DRS before placing any drinks on the market. The ongoing management of the scheme would be paid for by a producer registration fee to the Deposit Management Organisation. All retailers would be obliged to accept DRS containers and refund the deposit to the consumer, and in addition, retailers would be obliged to add the deposit to the purchase price and ensure that pricing information was clearly on display explaining this.

In the first consultation carried out in relation to the proposed scheme, two options had been given for a deposit return scheme – an ‘all in’ scheme which would have no restrictions on the size of the container, and an ‘on the go’ scheme with scope restricted to containers less than 750ml in size. It was considered that the scope of the DRS should be related to the material that the container was made from, and not what was inside it, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, glass and aluminium containers would be included. The use of clear labelling was considered to be of crucial importance to the proposal, to ensure that containers which were within the scope of the scheme were easily identified. The Deposit Management Organisation would have three funding streams, consisting of the money generated through the sale of the high quality materials that would be collected via the scheme, registration fees paid by producers and importers and unredeemed deposits. It was not intended to set the level of deposit through primary legislation, however, secondary legislation may provide a minimum and maximum level of deposit that could be charged, allowing the Deposit Management Organisation to adjust the level of deposit payable to ensure that statutory targets are met. A fundamental element of the proposed scheme was that returning a drinks container should be as easy as purchasing one in the first place, and

in order to facilitate this it was proposed that legislation would require any retailer of drinks to accept all deposit return containers and to refund the deposit. The retailer would receive a handling fee to compensate them for hosting a return point, which would be based on a series of criteria to be set out in legislation. When the scheme was in place, it was inevitable that some DRS containers would end up in household refuse and as litter, and Government was keen to ensure that local authorities were not disadvantaged by this. Positive impacts of the DRS had been identified through consultation, including less waste and litter, increased recycling rates and positive impacts on attitudes to recycling in general. Potential negative impacts identified included loss of net additional costs to local authorities, the loss of revenue from recycling and the difficulty of implementing systems across devolved administrations.

Once a DRS was up and running, it was anticipated that 90% of eligible containers would be collected through the scheme, with 70% of the remaining 10% of containers being processed by local authorities, meaning that approximately 7% of containers placed on the market would continue to be collected by local authorities at the kerbside. It was accepted that the costs of sorting DRS containers from the general waste stream may be prohibitive for local authorities, and three options were considered in relation to this:

- Option 1: do nothing and allow local authorities to redeem deposits of DRS containers in collection streams.
- Option 2: the Deposit Management Organisation make payments for DRS containers appearing in local authority waste streams.
- Option 3: the Deposit Management Organisation pays a deposit value on containers returned and any additional DRS material in local authority waste streams is covered by a funding formula.

Councillor Chillingworth enquired whether there was any timescale associated with the introduction of the scheme, and he also enquired whether the Deposit Management Organisation would have local branches. It was confirmed to the Panel that the Deposit Management Organisation would be a central organisation which would not make any reference to local areas.

The Panel heard that the third scheme that was subject to consultation was designed to achieve consistency in household and business recycling, and this was anticipated to have the greatest impact on local authorities of all the proposals. Government was committed to achieving a recycling rate of 65% by 2035, and it was intended to legislate to increase the consistency of recycling collected from households and businesses to support this aim. It was anticipated that across the UK, every resident would have the same types of material collected from their kerbside, including separate food, garden waste, cardboard and plastic collections. Government recognised that the proposed new duties could impose additional costs on local authorities, and would use new burden guidance to ensure that any increase in costs to local authorities was covered.

The Panel heard that it was necessary to include the DRS and EPR schemes when considering consistency in household waste collection, as the three proposals were interlinked. Of the materials that it was proposed would be covered by the new consistency in household and business recycling requirements, the Panel heard that Colchester Borough Council (the Council) was in a very strong position, as it already collected all the materials mentioned, save for plastic films.

The Environment Bill would require that food waste would have to be collected at least weekly, separately from other household waste, and the definition provided of food waste

was consistent with the collection model currently used by the Council. The free provision of caddy liners for food waste had been considered, as part of the consultation, with householders broadly supportive of this proposal, and it was believed that the use of caddy liners for the collection of food waste greatly increased the volume that was collected.

The Panel heard that local authorities were allowed to charge for the collection of garden waste, but it was now proposed that garden waste collection would be free and take place fortnightly for up to a two hundred and forty litre bag or sack, with local authorities being allowed to charge for more frequent collections or for great volumes of waste.

The Government envisaged that it should be possible to collect plastic films (which the Council did not currently recycle) for recycling by the end of the financial year 2026/2027. The specific requirements cover plastic film and flexible packaging, including crisp packets and pet and baby food pouches.

It was proposed that waste and recycling collections of the same materials that were collected from residential properties were also collected from businesses in the financial year 2023/2024, with recyclable plastics introduced from 2024/2025. It was acknowledged that these proposals would impact businesses, and work was being carried out to explore how costs on businesses could be reduced through direct support, collaborative procurement projects, local franchising of waste collection services, combined household and business collections, more commercial waste drop-offs or financial incentives to business waste producers.

The Panel were advised that Government was keen to introduce the EPR scheme as soon as possible, with a proposal to introduce the scheme with a phased approach from 2023, while it was hoped to appoint the Scheme Administrator in early 2023. It was considered that the scale of the proposals contained within the scheme made an implementation date of 2023 ambitious as there were two key elements which had to be in place to support this; the necessary regulations and the appointment of the Scheme Administrator. In terms of the consistency of collections, the separation of dry recycling was to be introduced from October 2023, weekly separate food collections introduced from the end of the financial year 2023/2024, together with separate garden waste collections and plastic films being collected by the end of 2026/2027, however, all the proposed timings were subject to Parliamentary approval of the Environment Bill. The Panel were advised that there were still a number of areas of uncertainty surrounding the proposals, including the apparent lack of localism contained in the schemes, the funding and regulation of the schemes, the potential for the loss of income for local authorities together with the potential need for new or improved infrastructure.

The Council had submitted views through the consultation process, and Officers now needed to consider the impact that the proposals could have, as more detail and information became available. It was proposed that the Council's Waste and Recycling Strategy was reviewed in line with the proposals to ensure that the Council was in the best position possible in the future.

Councillor Jowers noted the excellent position that the Council was in but expressed some concern about the economies of scale that he felt were represented in the proposals, noting that the schemes would seem to work better with much larger metropolitan authorities or unitary authorities, and he welcomed greater detail being provided in due course. He further considered that the proposed scheme would highlight the contrast between rural and urban areas, and would mean that any local consultation on the proposals would need to be

handled with care. Councillor Jowers, expressed his broad support for the proposals, although did consider that the timeline associated with them was extremely ambitious.

Councillor Young considered that the logistical implications of introducing the proposals would be very significant for the Council and would impact on decisions being taken about the Council's depot and the fleet that would be required. She highlighted the potential risk of losing income to private companies, and noted the need for a revised Waste Policy, which she felt should be brought back to the Panel in the future to enable Members to be kept informed and feed into the revision process.

Councillor King requested an early evaluation of the role to be played by the Council, together with the associated costs, as he acknowledged that the areas of uncertainty that had been highlighted would be key in the future. Support was expressed for the proposals and the general principle behind them, however, in Councillor King's opinion Government should be challenged on the model proposed, with local resources and structures given much influence over how the schemes were implemented.

Councillor Jowers reminded the Panel that a similar scheme had been trialled on Mersea Island in the past, and although this scheme had been successful, it had been very labour intensive and costly. He suggested that it may be appropriate to look at speaking with other local authorities to explore the idea of joint waste collections.

39. Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

Ben Plummer, Climate Emergency Project Officer, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Panel with its enquiries. The Panel heard that the report that was presented to it was by way of a regular update to be provided at every meeting of the Panel on the work that had been undertaken in relation to the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, and questions and comments on the report and its appendix were invited.

Councillor McCarthy noted that it was planned to identify a site in the town centre for secure cycle parking and consider how this would be managed, and he asked a question that had been received from Colchester Cycling Charter who wondered whether there was any scope for introducing cycling hangars for residents who had no space for storing a cycle at their property. It was suggested that a good cycling hangar would take up the space of two parking spaces but could potentially accommodate up to forty bicycles, and these could be dotted around the borough. Although more detailed information was not available on the proposals at the meeting, the Panel would receive further information on this topic by way of the next update report to be delivered to it.

Councillor King noted the range of ambition that was displayed in the Climate Emergency Action Plan, and enquired whether there was sufficient resource available to deliver on these aims. Ben Plummer confirmed that the actions contained within the Plan were spread across different areas of the Council, allowing a wide range of resources to be brought to bear on delivering projects, and in addition to this an Active Environment Officer would start work shortly to directly support the aims of the Plan. It was confirmed to the Panel that the Action Plan was under continuous review, and as projects developed additional risks may be identified that would require additional resourcing, which would be dealt with in an appropriate manner at that time.

Councillor Chillingworth made reference to the presentation that had been delivered to the Parish Councils, which had been very well received, and he asked that the slides that had

been used in the presentation be made available to all Parish Councils so that these could be used at their meetings in the future. It was confirmed to the Panel that all training material had been forwarded to the Parish Councils following the session, which it was felt had been extremely successful, and a number of questions that had been asked would be considered as part of the Action Plan as it developed in the future.

Councillor Whitehead praised the scope of the Plan, and noted that for a variety of valid reasons new vehicles purchased for the Council's fleet had been diesel vehicles and he wondered whether there was any capacity for using vehicles powered by hydrogenated vegetable oil as he was aware of a number of other local authorities who were trialling such vehicles. He also referred to the Council's rewinding policy with regard to areas that were managed and maintained by the Council, and wondered whether it would be possible to approach private landowners and developers to seek their involvement in this scheme to expand its scope.

Rory Doyle, Assistant Director – Environment, confirmed to the Panel that the Council had adopted a Fleet Transition Plan, and, as part of this Plan, it was always the aim to procure low emission vehicles wherever possible. It was explained that the use of hydrogenated vegetable oil had been explored as an alternative fuel source for Council fleet vehicles, but that there was a misconception that these vehicles would provide a reduction in carbon emissions when in fact they would not, and this had been confirmed by advice provided by the Energy Savings Trust and the Carbon Trust. There was a strategy for the transition of the Council's large fleet, and where technology allowed this would be brought forward where possible. With regard to the Council's Greening Policy, it was intended to work with as wide a variety of partners and stakeholders as possible and it was hoped that a network would be set up to allow the Council to fulfil its role as a leader and influencer in this respect.

Councillor Young supported this approach and reminded the Panel that Councillors also had a duty to lead their local communities in adopting new practices. She considered that ongoing school projects were crucial in supporting the environmental aims of the Council, and confirmed that she was to speak at the Eco Festival in September, which would provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the Council's projects.

Councillor Chillingworth noted that pollution levels had been the subject of past debate, and he wondered whether it was possible to confirm what the current pollution levels were, and whether these had been affected by any action taken by the Council. Ben Plummer confirmed that as part of the Council's Air Quality Project, two types of signage had been placed around the air quality management area around Brook Street and East Hill, with the more successful style of sign reducing air pollution by approximately 9%. The more effective signage would now be installed in these areas. Testing was to take place in the area around the crematorium to monitor the effect that it had on nitrogen dioxide levels in the area, and if this was significant the purchase of new equipment would be considered to reduce this impact. Detailed figures in relation to air pollution levels could be provided to the Panel at future meetings.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

36. 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, and that an additional agenda item in relation to the Council's Waste Strategy be added to the February meeting of the Panel.

23 September 2021

Report of	Assistant Director of Environment	Author	Rosa Tanfield
Title	Year 3 – The Woodland & Biodiversity Project		☎ 03300538047
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out and reviews the progress that has been made through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project which is now in year 3 of its five-year programme.
- 1.2 The project has evolved over the 3 years and has a clear objective and statement of purpose set out. The project focuses on three, intrinsically linked areas of work:
 - For our communities
 - For our wildlife
 - For our environment
- 1.3 The report sets out the activities being undertaken across these areas and highlights particular projects that demonstrate the impact being made in each.

2. Recommended Decision

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

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 This report is for information only.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. Background Information

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

Year 1 (2019/20)

- 5.2 'The Colchester Woodland Project'

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

Year 2 (2020/21)

- 5.3 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

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

Year 3 (2021/22)

- 5.4 'The Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project'

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

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

Year 3 in detail

- 5.5 Whilst the number of plants the project aims to plan has been removed from the project description, the ambition to deliver on 200,000 trees and plants has not diminished and the project is continuing to deliver this aim, having planted 28,120 so far, and in year 3 there are at least a further 34,000 planned and larger sites are in early discussions as outline later in this report. However, year 3 of the project sees an important shift in the how such an ambition might be delivered and the articulates important outcomes from the project. The focus is on providing a unique opportunity for everyone (no matter what background, location, age, etc) to collaborate with others and create a legacy of a greener place for Colchester in the future. To ensure that this aim is met, the project focuses on three intrinsically linked areas which it sets out to make tangible outcomes:

COMMUNITIES

- 5.6 To add value to the health and wellbeing of our communities and support the development of deep-rooted connection. We will:

- Improve physical health by enabling access to green spaces for everyone
- Enable more people to be involved in nature based outdoor activities to improve physical and mental health

- Help communities to benefit from urban planting
- Help families create precious memories and stories

WILDLIFE

5.7 To develop, enhance and diversify our wildlife within Colchester. We will:

- Enable 200,000 new plants to thrive
- Create new woodlands
- Recover and improve wildlife corridors and networks

ENVIRONMENT

5.8 Reduce the environmental impact of the Council and influence others to follow our lead: We will

- Help residents and businesses to make informed decisions about their impact on the environment in Colchester
- Conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Contribute to the reduction in drought and flood risk

5.9 In working towards these outcomes and to deliver the best possible approach, the team have committed to the following:

1. We will not harm existing habitats
2. We will use natural processes as far as practicable and possible
3. We will seek to balance the needs of people and nature
4. We will collaborate, consult and involve communities and partners
5. We will allow others to take part and own the project
6. We will use every opportunity to influence others to follow our example

FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

5.10 Working with community groups on planting and activities days can deliver immense opportunity and impact on both community and individuals' health and wellbeing. In particular the work delivered in partnership with not-for-profit, social enterprise Together We Grow CIC (TWG) in 2020 provides evidence of this and this has been recognised recently through the nomination of an award in the prestigious Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards 2021. These awards identify the best and most innovative Councils in the UK. More than 320 submissions were submitted to award organisers with the Council being shortlisted in the Best Community & Neighbourhood Initiative category for its work in partnership with TWG during the pandemic. The following paragraphs set out how the project team, working with TWG, were able to make a difference in communities through planting trees in 2020.

Together We Grow Communities

5.11 TWG has been a partner of the Woodland and Biodiversity Project since year 1. Given the work that TWG do in terms of community engagement, increasing awareness of the mental and physical benefits of working outdoors in nature and their core remit of nurturing and improving a key public outdoor space, it was felt they would be the right choice to assist in carrying out the community element of the project.

5.12 2020 was a particularly challenging year in planning community planting days and it was incredibly disappointing for everyone, including local communities, when it was clear that public planting days could not go ahead. But this did not stop the team.

5.13 TWG had begun working on a project with Refugee Action Colchester called '[Together we Grow at home](#)' encouraging individuals and families to start growing edible plants at home, and the project ended with a celebration of everyone's efforts in September.

- 5.14 As a direct result of the 'Together we Grow at home' project the organisations realized that some of the men in the refugee community were harder to reach and that their needs were very different. TWG and Refugee Action Colchester developed a Men's Mental Health Winter group. It was clear to the organisations that the men wanted to work: they wanted to work hard, and they wanted physical work. TWG nurtured this concept during the first month of winter and then gave them the option of being the lead group in planting trees in their community as part of the Woodland and Biodiversity Project.
- 5.15 The men took to the project with more enthusiasm and passion than had been expected; they retold stories of similar activities from their own countries, about planting with families and tales of now lost spaces. Continuing the project work in a different setting provided huge emotional benefit to these men, building a community, and giving the Woodland & Biodiversity Project a wellbeing focus. And so, the challenge of not being able to open fully to the public became a huge opportunity.
- 5.16 In tangible terms, 14,000 trees and shrubs were planted across the Borough in Year 2. But the most significant outcomes, were from those people involved: community cohesion and improved physical and mental health for the individuals.
- 5.17 Another example of the type of experiences on planting days can be read in Appendix A.
- 5.18 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>C.1 Deliver an engagement campaign (schools, households, business, care homes)</p>	<p>So residents can make a difference in their own gardens</p> <p>We are developing an online library of resources and videos to provide guidance and top tips on how people can encourage biodiversity in their own spaces. This will be available via colchester.gov.uk and shared in weekly posts via our social media channels.</p> <p>Recognise those residents who support the project</p> <p>Across many sites in the Borough local residents are taking it upon themselves to care and protect the newly planted sites. These 'Tree Guardians' are now being recognised and provided with the tools to help them continue with their roles. A campaign to recruit more Tree Guardians and showcase the wonderful work they do and the impact they make is being shared.</p> <p>More communities are aware and involved in projects</p> <p>Local schools (30) have been contacted and offered trees and shrubs, along with farmers, landowners and businesses for their landholdings.</p>
<p>C.2 Work with Together We Grow and other community organisations on activities</p>	<p>See 5.10-5.17</p> <p>Conversations remain ongoing with TWG to see how the programme of work can be further expanded.</p>

<p>C.3 Deliver community planting days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity and spaces contribute to health of individuals • Larger communities' benefit from urban and peri-urban planting 	<p>Officers are currently in the process of developing the plans and consulting on community planting days at the following locations for 2020/21. It is estimated over 13,000 trees and shrubs will be planted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kings Head Meadow • Magnolia Drive Open Space • St Johns Open Space • Wheatfield Road Open Space • Community Orchard – Colchester Cemetery • Great Horkesley Jubilee Green • Speedwell Road Open Space • Queen Elizabeth Way Open Space • Salary Brook Greenstead • Henrietta Close Open Space <p>Relevant Ward Members have been contacted and invitations for site meetings have been sent and are being arranged.</p> <p>As in previous years The Woodland Trust (WT) assess the suitability of each site and the location, scale and species mix of the trees being used. They provide funding for this element of the project and have supported and funded the Council's approach of using only biodegradable rabbit guards, reducing the risk of contaminating the local environment with plastic debris.</p>
<p>C.4 Deliver Trees for Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So residents can make a difference in their own gardens 	<p>Trees for Years, unlike previous years will not be delivered in one specific location in 2021 but will be delivered across the Borough to ensure easier access for residents and to reduce travel time for those wishing to collect items. It is estimated that 15,000 trees and shrubs will be provided for residents.</p> <p>To ensure resilience and help manage the process, the distribution will be delivered through a click and collect service, which reduces risk should there be a need to reintroduce Covid safety measures as has been experienced in the last 18 months.</p> <p>To facilitate a click and collect service, tree packs will be developed to suit different garden sizes.</p> <p>Officers will work with Parish Council and community groups for distribution sites, and through the analyse of postcode data from previous events, identify popular areas of the borough residents are travelling from and to help identify click and collect locations.</p>
<p>C.5 Use Street Tag to encourage residents to monitor sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are engaged with the impact of 	<p>Community enabling colleagues, working in partnership with the Essex Local Delivery Pilot have launched Street Tag, a free interactive app that promotes physical activity in a fun and accessible way.</p> <p>Street Tag turns physical activity into a game by converting walking, running, and cycling into Street Tag points (tags). It is a</p>

biodiversity and habitat recovery	<p>way to transform streets and parks into a giant virtual playground for local communities. Competitors compete to top the leader board and win prizes. More information can be found here: www.colchester.gov.uk/street-tag.</p> <p>In linking to this project, tags have been added to all the rewilding sites and encourage users to monitor the locations (e.g. the number of butterflies they see).</p>
C.6 Deliver a Blossoms Circles programme, commemorating 2020	This is being considered through the Policy Panel as part of a wider programme of commemoration.
<p>C.7 Greening the Orbital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayfinding, barrier removal, route enhancements as part of Phase 1 of Greening the Orbital programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colchester Orbital wayfinding discs have been delivered and working with Walk Colchester and their volunteers, these will be installed imminently on CBC sites Walk Colchester have created an Orbital leaflet which is in production The Orbital has also been added to the Go Jauntly App (ECC led) by Walk Colchester Officers will continue to work to seek funding and implement the Greening the Orbital programme around the recommended improvements to the route
<p>C.8 Undertake (street tree) urban planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More communities benefit from urban and peri-urban planting 	<p>Trees are being provided for the parklets which are to be located along the High Street in a project delivered in partnership between the Council and Our Colchester, Business Improvement District. This will introduce trees to the Town Centre.</p> <p>Officers are working with colleagues on other Town Centre projects to establish the opportunity for further tree planting as plans emerge.</p> <p>Officers are also working with Essex County Council and Essex Highways to establish the ability to increase urban planting. One opportunity is planting where dead or dying trees have been removed historically, and not replaced – these locations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.</p>

FOR OUR WILDLIFE

Wetland Restoration Programme

- 5.19 The project team have an ambition to work with partners and others to develop a restoration programme of Colchester's wetlands. The public are largely unaware of wetland's ability to offer nature-based solutions to problems associated with climate change. As carbon sinks, flooding buffers, wildlife refuges and water purifiers, wetland restoration and protection can help the wildlife and people of Colchester deal with, and potentially reverse, the onset of climate-associated risks. This work also helps to deliver objectives of the Greening the Orbital programme.

- 5.20 The team are working to develop a programme along the River Colne corridor, river valley, and catchment. In Year 3, the project team have focused on two wetland restoration sites as a start to this larger and rolling programme of wetland restoration: Hilly Fields and Cymbeline Meadows have been selected because:
- These sites have wetland improvement plans already written and ready to implement
 - These sites are opposite each other on either side of the river Colne so provide a focused area of input to start the programme
 - With a plan to improve all the wetland habitat along the Borough's stretch of the River Colne corridor, these two sites are at the 'beginning', or 'inflow' of this stretch with all the other wetland improvement sites located down river of them.
 - Hilly Fields is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Cymbeline is a designated Local Wildlife site (LoWs).
 - The project team can connect easily with local schools and others to develop engagement and activities: Hilly Fields already has schools using the site - it has 'forest school' areas set up. Kingswode Hoe School is located on the boundary of the site, and they regularly use the site.
 - Cymbeline Meadows already has other biodiversity improvement projects planned for the site (see below)
 - Both sites are connected via the Colchester Orbital
- 5.21 The wetland habitats at Cymbeline and Hillyfields have been degrading for several years and it is important to preserve and improve the wildlife corridors to help combat climate change and habitat loss.
- 5.22 Wetland specialists such as Pink Water Speedwell, Water Horsetail and Willow Emerald Damselfly, as well as a host of lowland breeding wading birds in England are only found across a handful of sites nationwide, could be lost and all other currently common wetland specialist species, if our wetlands become degraded and depleted. Many Odonta, the order of insects that include Dragonflies and Damselflies, are experiencing range changes, potentially due to climate change. Good quality wetlands can provide the habitat for these species. This is another reason why connectivity between our sites is so important.
- 5.23 Unfortunately, the team were unsuccessful in their application to the Government's Green Recovery Fund, in partnership with En-Form and Abberton Rural Training. But they will continue to work with these partners and others to source the funding to delivery of this project.
- 5.24 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>W.1 Undertake Phase 1 planting and planning at Cymbeline Meadow to create a new woodland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new woodland • Recover biodiversity and habitats 	<p>There is an ambition to create a new woodland and Nature Reserve at Cymbeline Meadow. The aim is to replace agricultural land and enhance existing areas to deliver a diverse and rich mosaic of habitats across the whole site, for future generations of Colchester.</p> <p>Initial concept plans have been drawn up detailing areas of hedge planting, pond and wetland creation, areas of nectar rich grassland, scrubland, bird seed rich crop areas and tree planting, including areas for future coppice woodland.</p> <p>During phase 1 it is important for officers to work collaboratively with the current Tenant Farmer and seek advice and guidance</p>
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	<p>from a variety of organisations such as Natural England, Essex Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and others.</p> <p>Officers are also working with the Council's Archaeological Advisor, organising, and carrying out impact assessments and archaeological assessments. Once complete, these will better inform the concept plans and more detail will emerge for consultation.</p> <p>It is hoped that 10,000 whips/trees will be planted in the current financial year, along with some wildflower meadow management, however this will be dependent on the assessments outlined above.</p> <p>This work helps to deliver objectives of the Greening The Orbital programme.</p>
<p>W.2 Engage and enable Parish Councils to establish new woodlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable others to create new woodlands • Recover biodiversity and habitats 	<p>All 31 Town & Parish Councils have been contacted and offered free trees and shrubs for planting on their land or for distribution to their residents – 15 have expressed an interest with up to 6,000 trees being requested.</p> <p>The project is partnering with Big Green Internet, Woodland Trust to deliver the Red Squirrel Project to plant up to 4kms (20,000 whips) of new hedgerow on Mersea Island.</p>
<p>W.3 Undertake planting at Colchester Northern Gateway</p>	<p>Potential planting sites around the boundary of the site and access road from the rear of the Park and Ride have been identified. Site surveys are being carried out to identify tree numbers and species.</p>
<p>W.4 Deliver the Colchester Wetland Restoration Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and habitats are improved and more diverse 	<p>See above</p>
<p>W.5 Continue to deliver the Colchester Greening Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced environmental impact of the Council 	<p>The Greening Colchester Policy was presented and agreed by the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 17 September 2020. Its aim was to stop the use of glyphosate-based products through a phased approach on Council owned land. The timeline published has been met and officers continue to work with partner organisations on implementing changes to their policies also.</p> <p>Currently the following alternative methods of weed control are being trialled on Council owned land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation around obstacles and play areas is being cut back twice per year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetation along fence lines is being left to grow for wildlife and cut once per year • Non glyphosate weedkillers are being trialled on weed growth in car parks and pathways on CBC owned land. <p>As part of the Council's commitment to remove of glyphosate-based products, the policy also introduced the stopping or reducing of grass cutting in specific areas to improve biodiversity and visual amenity of the grass verges, creating rewilded, wildflower or naturalised woodlands.</p> <p>Now that the policy has been in place for 12 months, a review will be undertaken on the impact and effectiveness, and recommendations or changes will be made as appropriate.</p>
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FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

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

The Wivenhoe Project

5.26 In January, Wivenhoe Town Council (WTC) worked with the Council's officers to trial "no mow" management regimes between March and September at 12 designated open spaces and residential verges in the town. The objectives were to work more closely with communities and establish if a local approach could increase biodiversity and to assess public reaction. This would be the first approach of this type undertaken by the project team, undertaken as trial, so that if it was successful, it could be used as a template and example to roll out to other Councils and partners. The project is led by WTC, with support as and when needed by Council officers. WTC have reported the following:

5.27 The highlights to date include:

- Nearly 150 different species of wildflower have been identified across the sites since March.
- There were on average 5 times as many wildflowers in the unmown sites, compared to the mown sites.
- 8 local residents have joined the project as volunteers. They are responsible for flower surveys on all the sites.
- The Council have erected 16 information boards at all sites explaining how the sites are being managed.
- There have been no problems with mowing. The grounds maintenance contractor has been very receptive and responsive throughout.
- Separate to the project, there were some concerns from residents about the general length of grass around the town due to the explosive spring growth resulting from the wet winter and late spring. There were almost no concerns about the project sites themselves.

5.28 Public response has included:

- 60 letters to neighbours of the project sites were sent explaining the project in March. No objections have been received by WTC in return.
- No complaints have been received by WTC and only one reported by Council Officers – a repetition of concerns about traffic sight lines at one site.

- Updates on the project have been posted on the Town Council and Wivenhoe Community Facebook pages. The posts have received widespread approvals and generated many overwhelmingly supportive comments.
- While the vast majority of social media comments have been simple statements of support, some important issues have also been raised and resolved, including maintaining safe traffic sight lines at two sites and access to play areas in another.
- Survey volunteers have been approached by 12 members of the public while doing site surveys. All have expressed support for the project, one wanting to join in the surveys with her small children.

5.29 Costs and benefits for Wivenhoe:

- Financial: no costs have been incurred to date by WTC except for the erection of site signage (cost to CBC). Notional savings of contract time are probably too marginal to model reliably at this stage.
- Carbon emissions: sites are cut up to 14 times a year normally. Reducing to x1 cut a year represents a 93% reduction in carbon emissions on each site included in the project.
- Biodiversity: Five times as many flowering plants have been found in unmown sites compared to mown sites. With plants being able to complete their life cycles we would expect this abundance of wildflowers to increase in future years in unmown areas.
- Public satisfaction: public response has been overwhelmingly positive, with no formal complaints received about the project and strong support expressed on social media and in person by residents.
- The project is showing that summer long “no mow” is a viable management option for green spaces in residential and urban areas and is effective in increasing native biodiversity at no financial cost to Council taxpayers and with the prospect of cost benefits if it is extended. Key elements to success are local town and parish council buy-in, and positive, explanatory engagement with residents.

5.30 The project team are keen to complete 12 months of this trial, to assess the impact and understand what lessons have been learnt, what improvements can be made, and to the establish a roll-out of this initiative to other interested Parish and Town Councils, and partners or organisations.

5.31 The team are also working on the following activities:

<p>E.1 Initiate the setting up a Greening Colchester Network Forum (<i>working title</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross pollination of ideas • Discover what others are doing • Network development • Sharing of activities • Check in and challenge on the project 	<p>Conversations are underway with partners on either establishing or developing an existing forum and network to support connections between groups and organisations, to learn, replicate and scale action across the network</p>
<p>E.2 Deliver (if successful) on the H2020 project</p>	<p>Officers worked closely with Writtle College and Earth Watch to submit a funding bid for a project that would focus on climate change mitigation and social well-being projects that could be</p>

	<p>delivered in Colchester over a period of a couple of years, where the project, impact and evaluation would then be shared with others as case studies. This would have included establishment of tiny forests, forage forests and social forests. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful.</p>
E.3 Roll out the Wivenhoe Project to other Parish Councils	See 5.29-5.33
<p>E.4 Deliver an education campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform others of our management methods and provide examples of how these can be applied 	<p>Officers have worked with Anglia Ruskin University, Romsey Mill and other partners to submit an application for funding towards a project that aims to uncover the secret behind why greenspaces remain hidden and what actions or steps can facilitate further usage among young people and inform the future design of urban green spaces.</p> <p>The project will engage with school aged children (primary and secondary) to involve them in climate actions through art-based workshops and other psychologically inspired creative approaches.</p> <p>These art-based engagements will inform the research team in the development of potential solutions to further increased awareness of climate change (e.g., mobile apps and tree tags highlighting the benefits of trees for carbon reduction and more).</p>
E.5 Provide help, support and prepare Colchester for the future changes that may come forward from the new Agriculture and Environment Bills, through conversations and dialogue with farmers and landowners.	<p>Officers are working with The Big Green Internet and Colchester Natural History Society to identify local landowners and farmers willing to plant trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with 3 large land-owning local businesses to plant up to 3,300 trees and shrubs on their land.</p> <p>Officers are working with the current tenant Farmer at High Woods Country Park to develop proposals for meadow improvements.</p> <p>Officers are working to draw up Biodiversity Net Gain guidance for developers, officers, Members and the public, in anticipation of the Environment Bill being enacted this autumn and to identify sites for Net Gain in the borough.</p> <p>Officers are in discussion with partners about how to create a Nature Recovery Network for the borough.</p>
<p>E.6 Influence planning, strategies, policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the environmental impact of the Council 	<p>Officers are working on developments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colchester Orbital Guidelines Landscape Development Guidance Green Infrastructure Guide <p>Officers are also updating the Council's natural assets register to assist with conversations and plans for carbon offsetting.</p>

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

7. Strategic Plan References

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

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The approach to consultation on each of the activities will be dependent on the scope and aim of the specific activity due to the diversity of the work undertaken, but as the commitments set out in 5.9:
- 4. We will collaborate, consult and involve communities and partners
 - 5. We will allow others to take part and own the project
- 8.2 These commitments will be tested throughout the project and due consideration will be given to the timeliness and method of consultation for each activity.

9. Publicity Considerations

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

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 Year 3 the Council has provided funding up to £150,000 to deliver most of the work set out above, including the Woodland Project Officer, purchasing of plants and trees, fencing, marketing, equipment and maintenance, and technical assessments.
- 10.2 To deliver on more ambitious schemes, officers are working with the partners and other organisations to source external funding and support.

11. Community Safety Implications

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

12. Health and Safety Implications

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

13. Risk Management Implications

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

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

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

Improving health and well being

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

Contributing to reducing climate risk:

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

Appendix A

Account from Wayne at TWG:

I was gathering some more trees from the church area when I was 'taunted' by two young lads who had been playing basketball.

'Oi Oi, tree man, what you doing tree man?!' one of them was holding up a tree which was now devoid of its clay and root cage. So, I approached and said, 'this one will be fine it just needs planting quickly'. I asked them if they wanted to help, they tried to negotiate a fiver per tree. I said it was no more than a quid's worth and I didn't have a quid, but did they want to help anyway.....they did.

So, Frankie and Bailey had their induction whilst telling me about a Youtuber called Mister Beast who they were very much in to. He had pledged to plant a million trees to save the planet, they thought this was a great idea.

So, I told them they needed to be safe and therefore should wear gloves, hard hats, and steel boots. They were more than happy.

They brought over another 4 trees with me plus the posts, real resilient lads. They chose the spot, dug the hole, and even used the post rammer (Which is 20kg).

'We love building, we want to be builders when we are older' The weather turned and then-started to sleet, but they wouldn't go and just wanted to finish the full task, the fully put in two trees with posts and ties and prepared for others.

Whilst talking about school it turned out one was a refuser/ not at school due to anger issues and the other attends NEECA (alternative provision) I saw no sign of behavioural issues, in fact quite the opposite. I saw engaged and interested humans with a firm link to their community. They knew a lot of people passing and were proud to tell them what they were doing. They vowed to look after these trees into the future.

I sent them on their way after a handshake and a conversation about them being ' the only 2 people who had seen what we were doing, showed an interest and offered to help and how proud of that they should be'

They skipped off no doubt to be told off about the state of their clothes.

23 September 2021

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer and Maggie Ibrahim ☎ 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 the previous meeting on 22nd July 2021.

1.2 Progress includes:

- **Council emissions** reduced by 12.8% in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20. Within emissions monitoring the Council estimated the emissions associated with working from home. Biggest decreases in emissions by percentage were seen in relation to staff commuting and business travel.
- **Clean Air for Colchester update** – Phase 1 of the DEFRA funded signage study saw three psychological behaviour change messages trialled on signs on Brook Street and at East Gates from March 2021 through to May 2021. Two of the messages resulted in a **9% increase in vehicles switching off** their engines compared to before the signs went up. ECC have also received funding to install air quality sensors in Brook Street and the town centre in October. These sensors will monitor short term fluctuations in pollution levels, complementing diffusion tube monitoring in place at the air quality management areas in Colchester.
- **Residential Secure Cycle Parking** – The Council is in the process of agreeing a location for town centre secure cycle parking which is at the planning application stage. The application to change the use of the premises was submitted and now draws close to being decided; with the premises then ready to move into subject to gaining that permission. The learnings from this strand of the project will inform the creation of secure cycle parking in a residential area.
- **Shared travel hubs survey launched** to understand what residents would like to see from a shared travel hub. Two hubs are proposed to be created, with a range of bikes, electric bikes, electric cargo bikes, electric car club vehicles and more being available for residents to use.
- **New social media campaign** on reducing, reusing and recycling waste advice launched in August and will run to end of December 2021. Input from residents, local organisations and Council staff will help to get across messages from a 'real person'
- **Strategy Dialogue with University of Essex Business School** researchers proceeded well. Over 20 participants from Colchester Borough Council (CBC), Essex County Council (ECC) and Community 360 attended the workshop to identify the outcomes, outputs, activities and indicators for the strategy and related action plan. This included a considerations of how the action would be achieved, including the risks and assumptions associated with doing this, as well as the behaviour changes that would be required. This content will inform the creation of the Climate Challenge

and Sustainability Strategy, contributed to by each service area and company. Overall, participant feedback was positive, stating that it gave them a useful way of approaching their work to demonstrate how change could be delivered.

- **Staff travel survey produced as part of the Rowan House use survey.** The travel questions were aimed to review how staff anticipate travelling to work in the future (mode of travel and how often). This was delivered online, as well as visiting Shrub End Depot to gain views of these staff directly where IT access is more limited. These findings will inform the Council's travel plan and the findings will be available for the next panel report.
- **Funding for improving energy efficiency** of homes in Colchester available for residents on low incomes and with homes with low energy efficiency through the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme phase 2.
- **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, charities and schools can bid for funding of up to £20,000.
- The Council has investigated the option of providing **cloth or hessian reusable bags for market stall holders** and has obtained quotes from its supplier. Options for funding these bags are now being discussed with councillors.

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.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

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

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not Applicable

5. Background Information

Council emissions

- 5.1 The Council monitors and reports on its emissions annually. The Council separates its emissions into two groups; those within its net zero emissions target and those that are not, where these are the Council's indirect emissions.
- 5.2 Within the net zero target are emissions from gas and electricity consumption, fuel consumption (from fleet, staff commuting and business travel), water consumption and waste production. Sources of indirect emissions include those from procured goods and services, investments (Colchester Borough Homes and Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd), leased buildings and upstream fuel and energy activities.
- 5.3 Emissions reporting for 2020-21 on the Council's net zero emissions target revealed that overall emissions decreased by 12.8% compared with 2019/20 (see Figure 1 below). The majority of this reduction was produced by reduced gas and electricity consumption in Council assets due to these being closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. A substantial reduction in emissions was also seen in staff commuting and business travel as a result of most staff working from home.

Figure 1: Council Emissions 2018/19 to 2020/21

Emission Source	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Council fleet and gas consumption within Council buildings (Scope 1) - Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e)	4271.9	4258.6	4077
Electricity consumption within Council buildings and from fleet (scope 2) - Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e)	1687.3	1340.8	1093.1
Indirect emissions from Council operations included in 2030 target - Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e)	590.1	598.5	236.3
Total emissions within Council's net zero emissions target - Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e)	6549.3	6197.9 (5.4% reduction compared to 18/19)	5406.4 (12.8% compared to 19/20)
Indirect emissions from Council operations not included in 2030 target - Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e)	27293.6	26940.8	TBC

- 5.4 However, working from home has an impact on emissions and the Council estimated this in 2020/21. It was found that although gas and electricity consumption increased, the reduction in staff commuting outweighed this emissions increase. Therefore, working from home is estimated to have produced a net negative reduction in the Council's emissions. See information on all emissions on the Council's ['Our Emissions' webpage](#).

- 5.5 Despite this, it is important that staff continue to be supported about ways to work from home in more sustainable ways. Opportunities for doing this and changing behaviours will be highlighted to staff such as changing to greener energy providers and installing LED lighting. Alongside this, staff will continue to receive support about sustainable travel to work, through the Council's updated travel plan.

Clean Air for Colchester Update

- 5.6 Phase 1 of the DEFRA funded signage study saw three psychological behaviour change messages trialled on signs on Brook Street and at East Gates from March 2021 through to May 2021. Two of the messages resulted in a **9% increase in vehicles switching off** their engines compared to before the signs went up.
- 5.7 Phase 2 of the study began on the 10 July and saw larger signage put up in the area. The signage will be up until 12 September, at which point the University of Essex will analyse the data collected to establish the effectiveness of each of the messages to inform the final phase of the study starting in October. Findings from Phase 2 will be available towards the end of September and can be provided to the Panel in an interim report.
- 5.8 In regards to pollution data, the Council monitors pollution at 62 sites across Colchester. Pollution data from 2020 can be found in [the Annual Status Report](#), however due to COVID restrictions and national lockdowns the figures are not representative of normal traffic flow and can't therefore be as used an indicator for the effectiveness of any measures introduced. Essex County Council are installing additional real time pollution monitors throughout the Air Quality Management Area's in October 2021, part of a joint successful bid to DEFRA, which will allow us to monitor more closely going forward the impact the signage is having on pollution levels in these areas.

Other updates

- 5.9 The Council is currently waiting on planning permission to be agreed for a secure cycle parking facility in the town centre. It is the intention that a community bike group will operate out of this facility, providing bike maintenance and repair services. Learning from creating the town centre secure cycle parking facility in the town centre will be incorporated into the residential facility.
- 5.10 The Council has launched a survey to understand what residents would like to see from a shared travel hub in the town centre. Two hubs are proposed to be created using funding from a successful DEFRA bid. The hubs would contain a range of bikes, electric bikes, electric cargo bikes, electric car club vehicles and more being available for residents to use to travel sustainably in and around the town centre on a pay as you go basis.
- 5.11 The Council is seeking views on what modes of transport residents would use/like to be available and where these hubs should be located. A link to the survey is [here](#).
- 5.12 The Council is running a social media campaign throughout August-end of December 2021, highlighting tips and advice to help residents reduce, reuse and recycle their waste. This will include features from local organisations such as Eco Colchester, University of Essex, residents and Council staff to promote the messages. Tips so far have included reusing aluminium foil, using reusable bags and cups and signposting

people to the clothes swap shop that was set up in the run-up to the Eco Festival as well as being there on the day.

- 5.13 In July, staff from CBC, ECC and Community 360 attended a workshop run by researchers from the business school at the University of Essex. The workshop was about creating change and understanding how to review a strategy on creating a change outcome and actions. The [Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy](#) and aligned [action plan](#) was used as an example. The outcomes we wanted to achieve from completing actions were examined in more detail, and performance measures, risks to achievement, and behaviour changes required to complete the action were considered. Staff from across CBC attended and found it useful in finding out more about the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and enjoyed collaborating across service areas.
- 5.14 The Council is reviewing its staff travel plan as part of the Rowan House use survey to see how sustainable travel to work can be promoted, in light of changing working patterns of staff in the future. An online survey was filled in by staff as well as feedback collected in person from staff working from Shrub End Depot.
- 5.15 The Council has funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements to homes in Colchester that are of low energy efficiency (have Energy Performance Certificate below D) and where residents have a combined income of no more than £30,000/they receive benefits. Vouchers of up to £10,000 are available for those living in owner occupier homes to fully cover the costs of improvements such as wall and loft insulation. Those living in rented homes can also get receive 2/3 of the costs of funding improvements, with their landlord needing to contribute 1/3 of overall costs. This funding has been made available through the Government's Green Homes Grant LAD scheme phase 2. Residents who think they might be eligible to the scheme should email climate.change@colchester.gov.uk.
- 5.16 Essex County Council have recently launched a [Climate Action Challenge Fund](#) pot for communities to bid into to carry out projects that tackle a climate related challenge. Community groups, charities and schools amongst others can bid for funding of up to £20,000 and is open until March 31, 2022 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.
- 5.17 The Council has investigated providing cloth or hessian reusable bags for market stall holders to give out. A figure for these has been received from the supplier, and the options are being discussed with councillors.

5.18 For further information see appendix 1.

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.
- 14.2 The Council's emissions reduced by 791.5 tCO₂e in 2020/21 compared to emissions in 2019/20. It is important to note that much of this reduction was caused by the closure of Council buildings and facilities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite increases in emissions associated with working from home, positive impacts from reduced travel by staff was noted. As working patterns change, we will continue to offer ways for staff to travel into work actively and sustainably to improve their wellbeing, health and reduce emissions.
- 14.3 Notable changes in behaviour regarding drivers switching off their engines when stationary have been observed during the Clean Air for Colchester project. Improving the air quality in Colchester produces many benefits including reduced occurrence of health problems such as asthma, strokes and heart disease and improved wellbeing.
- 14.4 Several of the actions mentioned in the report (e.g. creation of shared travel hubs and secure cycle parking facility) all help to promote active, sustainable travel. As well as reducing emissions within Colchester, these actions also aim to reduce congestion and improve air quality. They will also help to produce benefits such as improved physical and mental health/wellbeing as well as economic benefits for the town centre through [greater high street spend](#).

Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021-23 (23rd September 2021 update)

[Theme 1 – Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030](#)

[Theme 2 – Produce renewable energy](#)

[Theme 3 – Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment](#)

[Theme 4 – Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester](#)

[Theme 5 – Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle](#)

[Theme 6 – Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development](#)

[Theme 7 – Ensure sustainable planning and development](#)

[Theme 8 – Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment](#)

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
1.1 Development of a new Carbon Management Plan (CMP) based on insight and evidence gathered from a detailed pathway modelling of the current CBC footprint.	Work with the Carbon Trust to develop a new CMP for 2022-27	Consultancy work to inform basis of work for CMP started in May 2021 and will be completed in November 2021.	November 2021 – April 2022	New Carbon Management Plan produced by June 2022
1.2 Review CMP 2016-2020 to address any outstanding projects and see if these can be carried out	Review projects to identify technical feasibility and budget available	Actions will be reviewed at time when CMP work begins – November 2021	Jan 21 - Dec 21	Actions reviewed and identified for completion in new CMP if required
1.3 Continue to report on our emissions annually, and look to collect more refined data on our indirect emissions	Explore ways of accessing data from contractors on their emissions in relation to procured goods and services Review other data sources and report annually, including calculating emissions associated with working from home.	To be investigated as part of procurement review in Autumn/Winter Data collection nearly complete for all emissions. Emissions within the net zero target figures for 20/21 have been published on the CBC website	Emissions reported annually	Report on emissions, in better detail where possible.
1.4 Take steps to ensure the council's future electricity	Source Council's electricity from a supplier	Green tariff procured	Dec 20-Apr 21	Get a 100% renewable electricity green tariff in new procurement of utility supplier

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
supply is provided by 100% renewably generated sources	<p>providing 100% renewable electricity</p> <p>Explore opportunities for renewable energy generation such as solar PV that can be used to contribute directly to powering Council buildings (see 2.2)</p>	See 2.2	May 2021 – April 2022	Business case produced for generating renewable energy to contribute to powering Council buildings (see 2.2).
1.5 Review our estate and assets to investigate means of increasing energy efficiency of heating, lighting and cooling systems	New Estate Asset Strategy to include decarbonisation plan	Building maintenance programme to involve investigating opportunities for decarbonisation as part of building surveys	April 2021- April 2022	Building Maintenance Survey & Programme includes carbon reduction assessment and activities.

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
1.6 Decarbonisation of Rowan House, the Council's main office	<p>Replacement of existing heating and ventilation systems with heat pump. Also adding in extra roof insulation and LED lighting</p> <p>Installation of 18 electric vehicle (EV) charge points at Rowan House</p>	<p>Work ongoing to plan different elements of project and to fit with Rowan House refurbishment.</p> <p>Awaiting UKPN and NCC work programme. Contamination report complete and ok to proceed.</p>	<p>February 2021 – June 2022</p> <p>January 2021 – April 2022</p>	<p>Realization of predicted energy savings during first full year of operation.</p> <p>Installation complete to support purchase of new EVs</p>
1.7 Creation of an Asset (Housing) Management Strategy that will establish plans for reducing emissions from the housing stock	Reviewing plans for upgrading assets and setting an appropriate target for reducing emissions from the housing stock	On track – software being used to produce scenarios for reducing carbon emissions from sheltered stock. Carbon Trust providing support on setting targets for reducing emissions.	January 21 - September 21	Strategy produced which sets targets for carbon reduction
1.8 Increasing the energy performance of 100 Homes to reduce energy use and tackle fuel poverty	100 Homes Project – Purchasing 100 former Council homes to increase energy performance certificate (EPC) rating to an average of B.	Overall Average EPC Rating expected at B (84). Actual EPCs to be determined once the homes are ready for handover	September 2020 – March 2022	Increase EPC rating to average of B for the 100 properties

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
1.9 Decarbonising the housing stock through the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP)	<p>Housing Improvement Programme Works to upgrade most energy inefficient properties to an EPC of C or above.</p> <p>Replacement of heating system at Mary Frank House with an air source heat pump (ASHP)</p> <p>Installation of monitoring equipment in accordance with Heating regulations</p> <p>Boiler replacement works – Replacement of outdated and inefficient boilers</p>	<p>On track – bid being made to Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund</p> <p>On track</p> <p>On track</p> <p>On track</p>	April 2021 – March 2022	<p>40 properties to be raised above D in 12 months</p> <p>Installation of ASHP and working to design expectations</p> <p>To be compliant with Heat regulations</p> <p>405 boilers to be replaced, of which 20 will be air source heat pumps</p>
1.11 Redevelopment of Elfreda House to reduce carbon emissions	Redevelopment of Elfreda House to Future Homes 2025 standard	Contract awarded to Kier Construction June 21. Project on track	April 2021 – April 2023	Site built to standard to produce no more than 33.4 kg/m ² CO ₂ per year

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
1.12 Take a phased approach to the renewal of the fleet to meet our target of having a fully electric vehicle fleet by 2030	<p>Publishing of a first draft of a fleet transition programme towards 2030</p> <p>In 2021, 15 EVs and 4 hybrid vehicles will be purchased to replace existing small vehicles fuelled by diesel</p> <p>NEPP fleet review underway and to be published Summer 2021.</p> <p>Procurement of at least 1 EV for the Park Safe scheme in 2021.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Vehicles in process of being procured</p> <p>Strategy planning and procurement discussions underway.</p>	<p>1st draft produced in December 2020 – reviewed regularly</p> <p>February 2021 – August 2021</p> <p>May 2021– September 2021</p> <p>May 2021- April 2022</p>	<p>Programme published and reviewed as technologies develop</p> <p>Procurement of electric vehicles and achievement of carbon emission savings</p> <p>Procurement of electric vehicles and associated charging infrastructure with achievement of carbon emission savings</p>
1.13 Creation of an EV charging Strategy to guide provision of EV charging at housing developments and in Council owned car parks	Production of an initial strategy to set out guidance for provision of EV charge points	Engagement with EST and ECC ongoing as part of research/ scoping phase. Survey published to understand demand for EVs and the support people would need to use them in the Colchester.	March 21 – December 2021	Strategy approved and in place

1. Reduce carbon emissions from our buildings & fleet to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
1.14 Investigate emissions of nitrogen dioxide from Crematorium and explore opportunity to purchase deNox equipment to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions	<p>Install diffusion tubes upwind of crematorium to measure nitrogen dioxide concentrations in air. Measure nitrogen dioxide as part of cremator emissions testing.</p> <p>Depending on results look to purchase deNox equipment to help reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions from crematorium to improve air quality.</p>	<p>Diffusion tubes installed in The Willows and areas surrounding crematorium.</p> <p>Cremator testing still taking place</p> <p>TBC</p>	<p>May 2021 – October 2021</p> <p>TBC</p>	<p>Nitrogen dioxide concentrations measured in air surrounding Crematorium and from cremators</p> <p>TBC</p>
1.15 Develop Milestones and Pathway to reach net zero for direct emissions by 2030.	Work with Carbon Trust to develop milestones for emission reductions between now and 2030.	On track	May 2021- November 2021	Several milestones developed for emission reduction between now and 2030 to ensure we stay on track to reach net zero emissions by 2030.

2. Produce Renewable Energy				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
2.1 Continued development of Northern Gateway Heat Network site to generate low carbon energy	Construction of the main energy centre and beginning to build connections to residential, commercial, health and leisure sites.	D&B tender progress	Q2 2021/Connections up until 2024	Heat Network site fully complete and operating
2.2 Explore the creation of a microgrid to link up new sites of solar PV generation to Council assets to decarbonise our energy use	Conduct feasibility study and development of a business case for a solar PV farm.	Stage 2 Feasibility in progress	2021	Business case produced for production of renewable energy from solar farm

3. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
3.1 Plant 200,000 trees by 2024 as part of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project to benefit biodiversity and for capturing carbon emissions.	<p>Volunteer planting days in Autumn for residents to help with planting around 20,000 trees on 11 different Council sites</p> <p>Work with relevant experts to ensure planting sites are chosen appropriately to ensure tree planting will benefit biodiversity. Environmental Impact Assessments will also be undertaken on new tree planting sites.</p> <p>Establishment of tree seed nursery at Highwoods Country Park so</p>	See full update on Woodland and Biodiversity Project in committee report to Environment and Sustainability Panel on 23 rd September 2021	<p>November 2021 – March 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Tree seed nursery established,</p>	<p>Planting of 20,000 trees in 2021/22</p> <p>Continue to work with experts/communities to ensure tree planting is carried out at appropriate sites</p> <p>Management of nursery, so that future trees planted in the project can be sourced locally.</p>

3. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	<p>trees can be grown from seed for future use in project.</p> <p>Vision, objectives and principles of project for Year 3 being drawn up based on learnings from previous 2 years</p>		just needs management	
3.2 Review the Council's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, exploring opportunities to tackle climate change and to safeguard and enhance existing habitats and species.	Data and consultation will be used to inform the strategy	On track	April 2021 – April 2022	Approval of revised strategy
3.3 Improve the ecological and amenity value of the riverside lake and island near the Castle	Plans in early development and will be expanded on in future update of the action plan	Investigation into carrying out works to reduce flooding of the riverside lake is being started, subject to permit from Environment Agency	August 2021 -tbc	tbc

3. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
Park to enhance biodiversity, capture carbon and allow better access to the site.				
3.4 Ceasing the use of glyphosate herbicides in Council operations through a phased approach as a way to manage weeds, and encouraging other stakeholders to do the same	<p>Agreement reached to phase out glyphosate use for general maintenance by end of March 2021</p> <p>Alternative ways of managing weeds without glyphosate will commence at the start of the growing season</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Trials begun. Results emerging towards end of 2021</p>	<p>September 2020 - April 2021</p> <p>April 2021- April 2022</p>	<p>Significant reduction in glyphosate use. Increases in biodiversity found on Council green spaces.</p> <p>New methods adopted for managing weeds going forward.</p>
3.6 Trialling 'no mow' or reduced mow approaches to rewild Council green spaces and support biodiversity, particularly pollinators.	14 green spaces identified where areas of reduced frequency mowing will occur, allowing for the growth of grasses and wildflowers, with rewilding approach developed through	Trials underway	May 2021 – April 2022	<p>Weed and verge maintenance policy agreed and implemented</p> <p>Trial for no mow/reduced mow approaches leads to formally adopting new mowing regimes for Council green spaces going forward.</p>

3. Enhance biodiversity and protect our environment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	<p>engagement with Town and Parish Councils</p> <p>Engagement with local schools led to pupils producing designs for signs explaining why the Council is changing its mowing regimes.</p>	Some schools have helped to produce signage for the activity.	Ongoing	Signs developed that help to explain reason for changes to mowing regimes.

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
4.1 Continue to support local organisations to encourage active travel through the Travel Plan Club	Work and support local organisations to encourage active travel and reduce reliance on private car for commuting through creating workplace travel plans	Help with CBC and CBH travel survey to understand staff working patterns and how this related to promoting sustainable travel	Ongoing action	Deliver annual plan of action with helping to review and refresh workplace travel plans
4.2 Implement the Electric Cargo (eCargo) bike project to reduce emissions from travel and operations of the Councils and local organisations	<p>Using eCargo bikes within Council operations to reduce emissions from travel</p> <p>Providing eCargo bikes to 10 organisations (project champions) to break down barriers to using eCargo bikes as a sustainable mode of travel for conducting deliveries and other operations.</p> <p>Loaning eCargo bikes out to local organisations to promote this mode of</p>	<p>5070 miles travelled using eCargo bikes by all organisations (end of May 2021) – Updated figure to be provided for next Panel</p> <p>Bikes provided and being used successfully by champions. CBC has let local businesses know about a new Energy Saving Trust grant fund for getting discounts on eCargo bikes.</p> <p>ECargo bikes are now being let out on short term loans. 4 ecargo bikes and 1 trailer are currently on loan. Some bikes are to be moved to</p>	May 2020-May 2023	<p>eCargo bikes used for several routine Council services</p> <p>Normalisation of ecargo bikes in Colchester and businesses buying their own to replace cars/vans for their operations</p>

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	travel, in a 'try before you buy' approach.	business improvement district (BID) office to provide ad hoc usage by CBC staff and interested town centre businesses Training for adult Bikeability to support the project has been secured through a further successful Defra grant		
4.3 Improve air quality in the borough by promoting the adoption of no idling and encouraging cycling and walking for shorter journeys	No idling behaviour change campaign led by the community. Behaviour change work with a resident community and 4 schools to support walking and cycling for short journeys, particularly through air quality management areas (AQMA's)	Further public promotion at Sports Park, Firstsite and Leisure World – To understand impact of project on people's beliefs and behaviours associated with air quality as campaign ends. Funding secured to move this project forward – As presented at last ESP meeting on 22 nd July 2021 (also see action 4.10). Survey launched to understand needs/wants of residents from a shared travel hub containing bikes, ebikes etc.	June 2019- June 2021 for behaviour change campaigns	Post project survey results which demonstrate increased awareness of pollution and its effects and a change in attitudes towards idling (including understanding effectiveness of different signage messaging) Evidence of increased walking and cycling amongst target schools/resident group

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	Psychological signage encouraging no idling to be installed in East Street/ Brook Street and monitored for effectiveness.	2 nd phase of signage study has begun and will run until October 2021. See analysis of effect of phase 1 in main progress committee report (23 rd September)	March 2021 – August 2022	Evidence of reduction in air pollution and idling (particularly in Brook St/East St)
4.4 Provide enabling policies and strategies to promote walking and cycling in Colchester	<p>Influence:</p> <p>Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD</p> <p>Vehicle Parking Standards review</p> <p>ECC's Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIPs)</p> <p>Rail operators Integrated Transport Forum and liaison with Network Rail</p> <p>Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership</p>	<p>New SPD text to be drafted Autumn 2021</p> <p>On track</p> <p>Responded to LCWIP consultation – Awaiting results</p> <p>On track</p> <p>On track</p>	<p>April 2021 – April 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Influence future developments and lobby for funding</p> <p>Influence others to increase uptake for sustainable travel</p>

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
4.5 Promote walking and cycling routes in Colchester through improving signage and wayfinding	<p>Introduce wayfinding signage along the University to Town Centre routes to encourage walking</p> <p>Making improvements to the wayfinding signage between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town centre and port - North Station and Colchester General Hospital 	<p>Pending s106 funding allocation – will aim to link in with Greenstead too.</p> <p>On track</p> <p>On track</p>	<p>April 2021 – April 2022</p> <p>April 2021 – April 2022</p> <p>April 2021 – December 2022</p>	Signage improved and more people using the routes on foot
4.6 Improve infrastructure along the route from North Station to Town Centre to encourage walking and cycling.	Fixing the Link – Project to encourage those arriving at Colchester Station to walk the route to Town Centre through installing better wayfinding and public realm improvements.	Proposals for greenery (e.g. tree planting) along the route set to go ahead	April 2021 – April 2022	Increased numbers of people walking the route, by clear wayfinding and enjoying a quality welcome experience.
4.7 Map and promote use of the Colchester Orbital	Mapping a circular walking and cycling route around Colchester and	Promotion of orbital and other walking and cycling routes in Colchester being considered by new Active Environments Officer	Map already produced – Will be updated when	Map produced that can be used by residents and making changes to route where appropriate to ensure it remains accessible for all

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	<p>ensuring routes are accessible for all.</p> <p>Adding greenery to orbital and expand</p>	<p>Greening the Orbital final report received – being considered</p>	<p>required with new information</p>	<p>Parts of orbital made more natural with added greenery along route.</p>
4.8 Encourage the uptake of alternative sustainable travel methods for work and leisure purposes	<p>Taking part in electric scooter (escooter) trial</p> <p>Colchester Future Transport Strategy – Work with ECC to review consultation responses ready to finalise the Strategy and promote schemes which will help implement the initiatives contained within the Strategy.</p> <p>Influence Rapid Transit system linking Garden Communities, park and ride/choose site with town centre, hospital and</p>	<p>Scooter trial proceeding well. CBC thoughts fed back to ECC. Trials may extend until March 2022.</p> <p>On track</p> <p>On track</p>	<p>February 2021 – October 2021</p> <p>February 2021 – September 2021</p> <p>April 2021 – April 2022</p>	<p>Learn how scooters could be used as a sustainable mode of travel for getting around Colchester</p> <p>Input into and influence ECC's Strategy to enable projects which promote sustainable travel are taken forward</p>

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	Colchester Station, route and provision. The Council's Scrutiny Panel to review bus operations in Colchester and to consider how to increase use of this sustainable mode of travel.	Waiting on Cabinet approval for recommendations on changes to promote bus travel.	Spring - Autumn 2021	Encourage greater uptake of buses in Colchester
4.9 Facilitate walking and cycling in Colchester by providing suitable infrastructure.	Identifying funding for, and a site in, the Town Centre to create a secure cycle parking facility, and plan how this will be managed.	Premises identified for town centre secure cycle parking – Waiting on planning permission	January 2021 – December 2021	Secure cycle parking facility identified and created
	Working with ECC to support the introduction of infrastructure such as segregated cycle lanes and school streets along key routes in and around Colchester Town Centre	Consultations on designs launched in May 2021 – CBC helped get as much feedback as possible. 800 responses from Colchester residents received.	January 2021 – January 2022	Improvement of cycling infrastructure in and around the town centre meaning greater uptake of cycling
	Reviewing S106 funding to plan and work with others to install and	See updates below r.e. Wivenhoe Trail/Stanway to Tollgate		S106 identified and schemes promoted/designed ready for implementation.

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	<p>improve a range of measures and infrastructure</p> <p>Wivenhoe Trail - identify funding for and implement improvements. Work with partners to agree future maintenance plan.</p> <p>Stanway to Tollgate - identify funding and working with others to initiate improved links</p>	<p>Funding from s106 secured to conduct repairs to route and plan long term maintenance</p> <p>Stanway Parish Council lost use of land where improvements planned – pending ECC view on whether funding could be targeted at another access point.</p>	<p>April 2021- April 2022</p>	<p>Funding mechanism identified to implement schemes. Greater numbers of people walking and cycling along the Wivenhoe Trail.</p> <p>Better access between local communities and growing major retail area.</p>

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
4.10 Bring an electric vehicle car club to Colchester	Identify funding to create a network of electric car club vehicles in Colchester to support sustainable travel and move away from private car ownership	<p>Funding secured for 2 e carclub cars for the town centre through a 3rd successful Defra grant. 2 ebike/ecargo bike hubs for residents will also be set up.</p> <p>Started this project off with some community engagement at Eco Festival (and survey online) to identify needs and interest in joining a working group to develop the project.</p>	January 2021 – December 2021	Car Club provider starts electric vehicle car club in Colchester
4.11 Develop actions as part of the Positive Parking Strategy that will help to reduce congestion in the town centre and promote sustainability.	<p>Park Active – A project to encourage people to park in car parks on the outside of the town centre – This will help encourage walking/cycling into town and reduce congestion.</p> <p>Installing electric vehicle charge points in Council owned car parks</p> <p>Review usage and requirements of Council</p>	<p>Project ongoing</p> <p>Being consider by North Essex Parking Partnership</p> <p>On track</p>	April 2021 – April 2022 (for all projects)	<p>Fewer cars parking in the town centre and encouraging active travel</p> <p>Charge points installed to support a transition to electric vehicles</p> <p>Ensuring car parking is used more efficiently and in a way that</p>

4. Facilitate walking, cycling and sustainable transport around Colchester				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	<p>car parks to determine the quantity of parking required, where parking should be located and parking tariffs.</p> <p>Promotion of the Park and Ride service in Colchester</p>	Inputted into ECC discussions about how this could be done.		<p>promotes active, and greener forms of travel.</p> <p>More people using the Park and Ride service.</p>

5. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
5.1 Improve systems for collecting household waste, recycling, food and garden waste with a focus on waste minimization, increased recycling and composting	<p>Re-establishing textiles recycling collections</p> <p>Rolling out programme to encourage residents to separate cans and glass</p> <p>Improvements in data collection to track recycling collections and identifying where recycling rates can be improved</p> <p>Improving recycling equipment distribution to residents</p>	<p>Textile collections re-established</p> <p>Campaign through social media/stickers on containers started, building up to June 2021 when changes enforced</p> <p>On track</p> <p>Trial for 'click and collect' garden sacks collection set up.</p>	<p>Completed in April 2021</p> <p>April 2021 – April 2022 for rest of projects</p>	<p>Reintroduction of the service</p> <p>Reduced contamination of cans/glass and reduced operational time on these collection routes</p> <p>Improved information and engagement through the website on waste collection services</p> <p>Improve solutions for distributing recycling containers to residents, ensuring containers are used with care</p>
5.2 Develop trade waste collection service to offer further commercial recycling	<p>Establish profitability of current operations and identify new recycling options for businesses</p>	<p>Action discussed as part of workshop led by University of Essex researchers – Useful for brainstorming approach and thinking of options to promote trade waste.</p>	<p>April 2021 – April 2022</p>	<p>Improved commerciality of trade waste collections</p> <p>Improve customer experience based on customer need, demand and feedback</p>

5. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
collections for businesses				
5.3 Improving communication with Colchester residents to improve participation in recycling and waste minimization work	Establishment of Community Education and Engagement team to deliver this work	New social media campaign running between August-December 2021 on tips for reducing, reusing and recycling, collaborating with local organisations and residents	April 2021 – April 2022	Data insight captured and used to inform a communication and campaign plan
5.4 Work actively within communities to promote recycling, reuse, upcycling and repairing opportunities	Introduction of new Community Engagement and Education Team within Neighbourhood Services, working collaboratively with the Community Engagement Team	New team restructure started in May related to this work	April 2021 – ongoing action	Community group engaged and suitable campaign delivered around this topic

5. Provide sustainable waste management and support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
5.5 Explore trialling smart waste technology to improve efficiency of waste collections in the Borough	<p>Support the introduction of smart waste technology within new developments</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities for the introduction of 'smart' waste bins</p>	On track	October 2021 – April 2022	Incorporate smart waste technologies into Waste Strategy

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
6.1 Support community organisations in the borough to	Work with community organisations/individuals to help spread the message of their work	New webpages developed that signpost to community groups providing support/information on environment/climate change.	Ongoing	Raise awareness of existing community groups that are acting to produce positive environmental change

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
help deliver environmental benefits within communities	<p>and provide expertise where required.</p> <p>Support the Dedham Value Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley project team to product a 5 year Management Plan to conserve and enhance natural beauty.</p> <p>Support the delivery of Eco Festival 2021 with Council staff volunteering and contributing to the event where possible.</p>	<p>Dedham Value AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan to launch on 17th September 2021</p> <p>Council supported set up and delivery at event with several projects (including air quality, eCargo bikes, Woodland and Biodiversity) to advertise to community and get feedback/views. Around 80-100 people trialled eCargo bikes on the day</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2021 – September 2021</p>	Continue to support the project team to help protect the AONB site for future generations of people/wildlife.

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
6.2 Provide opportunities for residents to participate in Council decision making and action on environmental issues	<p>Provision and promotion of the 'have your say' option at the Environment and Sustainability Panel (ESP)</p> <p>Providing opportunities for residents to volunteer on Council environmental projects such as tree planting and monitoring air quality.</p>	<p>Noted that increased engagement has occurred at most recent ESP meetings</p> <p>Tree Planting opportunities for residents released for November 2021-February 2022</p>	<p>Sept 2020 – Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing action</p>	<p>Increased numbers of residents attending Panel meetings to have their say on what action they would like the Council to take on the climate emergency</p> <p>More opportunities provided for residents and increased numbers of residents taking part in this.</p>
6.3 Support the Colchester Business Centre (Colbea) to develop policies and practices within their corporate strategy to include corporate environmental responsibility	Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) in Colbea's lease agreement for the North Colchester Business Incubation Centre	Colbea agreed to include environmental impact / carbon reduction in its lease KPIs for the North Colchester Business Incubation Centre from 2021 onwards	Will be subject to annual review March 2021 – April 2022	Maximise use of resources and minimise the occurrence of activities that may cause negative environmental impacts.

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
6.4 Collaborate with the University of Essex to ensure actions we develop are informed by academic expertise (where appropriate)	<p>Take part in a university 'challenge lab' to co-develop with researchers, solutions to a particular climate challenge in Colchester</p> <p>Build rapport with researchers on existing Council projects, and understand the expertise available at the University.</p>	<p>Initial conversation had with University of Essex about setting it up</p> <p>Recently worked with UoE Business School researchers to inform development of strategy and help with organisational change</p>	<p>September 21/2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>1 challenge lab completed, with solutions developed to tackle a climate challenge in the borough</p> <p>Continue work with the University of Essex to inform design/operation of our projects and actions.</p>
6.5 Work with anchor/key organisations in the borough to promote the uptake of sustainable actions across the borough and improve engagement on taking action on climate change.	Creation of a network of key organisations in Colchester to share learning on good practice and provide a platform for ideas developed to be informed by detailed resident engagement.	<p>One Colchester sub-group created – First meeting held in June 2021 – 2nd meeting scheduled for September 2021 to discuss organisational challenges to becoming more environmentally friendly.</p>	April 2021 – April 2022	Network developed that is effective for sharing solutions to tackle climate related challenges, ensuring these are informed by resident views.

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
6.6 Increase engagement with schools in Colchester to promote and support awareness raising and behaviour change around environmental issues	<p>Pilot a project with one primary school in Colchester to understand the challenges with embedding environmental content into lessons and school life, and use this to better design resources to help schools reduce their environmental impact</p> <p>Conduct interviews/focus groups with other primary schools to understand challenges faced with becoming more environmentally friendly and to understand best practice that can be shared between other schools</p>	<p>Interviews/surveys carried out with teachers to understand challenges and state of play.</p> <p>Project environmental days went well at pilot school on 8th and 15th July 2021, supported by local councillors.</p> <p>interviews/visits being arranged in September with other schools</p>	January 2021 - October 2021	<p>A document of 'learnings' produced that summarises the challenges schools face with engagement on environmental issues</p> <p>Best practice collected which can then be shared with schools to help them become greener.</p>

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
6.7 Develop a Climate Emergency communications and engagement plan which will support the delivery of, and engagement around, the Council's Action Plan.	<p>Survey with residents to help understand how residents prefer hearing about work to tackle the climate emergency.</p> <p>Use survey insight to develop an external communications plan with key messages and content to deliver to our residents.</p>	<p>Survey completed – Insights noted</p> <p>Comms Plan with key dates being developed and is adapted as we go.</p>	<p>March 2021 – April 2021</p> <p>May 2021 – ongoing</p>	<p>Survey completed with residents and used to inform Communication and Engagement plan</p> <p>External Communication Plan produced and is updated regularly.</p>
6.8 Collaborate with Essex County Council and other local authorities in Essex and those in the UK to share learnings around work on the climate emergency	<p>Take part in Carbon Reduction Across Essex (CORE) meetings with other Essex local authorities.</p> <p>Where appropriate, join grant funding bids with ECC to increase access to funding for environmental projects</p>	<p>Attending when these take place, alongside District and Borough Climate Action Forum</p> <p>No grant bids to join at current time, but sharing Essex Climate Challenge Action Fund for Communities</p>	<p>Ongoing action</p> <p>Ongoing action</p>	<p>Build up a relationship with Essex County Council and other Essex LA's to help share learning</p> <p>Opportunities utilised to collaborate with ECC on grant funding bids</p>

6. Enable partnerships and community action for sustainability and low carbon development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	Participate in national local authority forums such as the Collective for Climate Action to share learning and ask questions about work on the climate emergency.	Regular activity in forums	Ongoing action	Use forums to gain ideas, knowledge and experience from other LAs on how to tackle the climate emergency.
6.9 Communicate with Town and Parish Councils to understand how we can work together to tackle the climate emergency and ensure this reflects the wishes of communities we serve	<p>Sharing resources with Town and Parish Councils that will help them reduce their environmental impact.</p> <p>Conduct a presentation with Town and Parish Councils to share our work, and show how they can take action on the climate emergency</p> <p>Provide opportunities to collaborate on Council projects e.g. eCargo bikes, Rewilding plans</p>	<p>See below</p> <p>Presentation to Town and Parish Councils went well on 24th June, with opportunities for Towns/Parishes to tackle the climate emergency highlighted in this.</p> <p>On track</p>	<p>Ongoing action</p> <p>June 2021</p> <p>Ongoing action</p>	Successful collaboration and communication with Town and Parish Councils on climate emergency related work.

7. Ensure sustainable planning and development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
7.1 Create a Planning Sustainability Checklist so decision makers can understand the sustainability of proposals	Planning Sustainability Checklist is drafted, brought to the ESP and then following consultation the Checklist will become a local validation requirement	ESP approved consultation on the Checklist in January 2021.	October 20 – May 2021	Checklist is required & used by decision makers Greatest success will be if developers incorporate sustainability measures highlighted in the checklist
7.2 Create & adopt a new Supplementary Plan Document (SPD) on sustainability and carbon reduction	Creation of a new Supplementary Planning Document to provide guidance and encouragement to developers to consider carbon reduction and sustainable design within new developments (including biodiversity net gain)	A sub-group of the Climate Opportunities Working Group (COWG) has been set up to work on the SPD.	January 2022 – January 2023	Supplementary Planning Document adopted and used as a material planning consideration
7.3 Information on sustainable travel choices to be included in marketing of residential properties for developments where there are good sustainable transport options to encourage	Provision of leaflet detailing walking and cycling routes, as well as public transport options in the locality of the development Research and training for members on car free developments in accessible locations	On track	April 2021 – April 2022	Information on sustainable travel options is included in all new homes

7. Ensure sustainable planning and development				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
reduced car use and ownership.				
7.4 Consideration given to car free developments and other approaches to reducing car parking provision and encouraging car free lifestyles	Adoption of new ECC parking standards, which includes car free developments	On track	April 2021 – April 2022	More developments in Colchester to become car-free in accessible locations and support car-free lifestyles

8. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
8.1 Development of the Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy to provide oversight for the Council's work on the climate emergency	<p>Review previous Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Action Plan and Strategic Plan 2020-2023.</p> <p>Develop strategic themes for Strategy and to guide action plan</p> <p>Produce full strategy, detailing key outcomes and objectives for each strategic theme and provide opportunity for consultation on this</p>	<p>Action complete</p> <p>Strategic themes of this document created and shared on website and on social media.</p> <p>Being developed further with cross service working facilitated by workshop ran by University of Essex</p>	<p>Dec 2020 – March 2021</p> <p>March 2021 – June 2021</p> <p>May 2021 – December 2021</p>	New strategy created
8.2 Ensuring internal strategies and policies are consistent with the climate change emergency	Review of internal core strategies with at least 3 updated to show consideration of the climate emergency – This will include the Housing Asset Management Strategy	Recently inputted into Council's new cultural strategy from a sustainability/climate emergency point of view	February 2021 – February 2022	<p>At least 3 key strategies reviewed and updated by 2022</p> <p>Future workplans for these strategies to embed decarbonisation and sustainability as detailed in the supporting strategy</p>
8.3 Write and agree an internal data management plan which sets out roles and responsibilities for	Set up monitoring and reporting template for Climate Emergency Action Plan which will align with reporting to Environment and Sustainability Panel	Complete	January 2021 – March 2021	Monitoring and reporting plan produced

8. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
data capture and verification as well as a timetable for reporting				
8.4 Develop a learning and development programme for staff (and members) on climate change and environmental issues to help increase awareness and promote behaviour change	Utilise training for planning officers provided by Essex County Council (ECC) to help planners understand how they can mitigate environmental impacts within their role.	On track	June 2021/Dec 2021	Planning staff become more aware of how to practically implement steps to reduce environmental impacts in the work they do e.g. with developers
	Deliver a presentation to councillors explaining the Council's climate emergency declaration and how councillors can support this work.	Further training with councillors planned for the Autumn/Winter, in addition to the session run in June 2021	June 2021	
	Use resources developed by the Carbon Literacy Project to deliver sessions to staff to increase awareness of climate change, and the action we can take within our roles to reduce our environmental impact.	On track	September 2021 – April 2022	Pilot session delivered with small group of staff and then rolled out more widely to increase staff environmental awareness

8. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
8.5 Embed consideration of the environment and climate change within internal communications to promote awareness and behaviour change of environmental issues and the climate challenge	<p>Develop an internal comms strategy to plan out how to inform staff of environmental work and projects.</p> <p>Run a pilot behaviour change challenge to promote the uptake of environmentally friendly behaviours</p>	<p>Messages planned as and when and adapted to key events/actions.</p> <p>Pilot run, and will inform future engagement with staff</p>	<p>Ongoing action</p> <p>March 2021 – April 2021</p>	<p>Strategy developed</p> <p>Pilot run successfully and insights used to inform future engagement with staff</p>
8.6 Strengthen assessment of environmental impacts in all levels of Council decision making	<p>Develop sustainability and carbon reduction assessment (and associated guidance) to help staff consider and reduce the environmental impacts/emissions throughout their projects, drawing on learnings from the environmental checklist originally developed.</p> <p>Creation of internal KPIs linked to environmental performance to monitor how Council operations and projects are becoming more environmentally friendly e.g. emissions reporting, all staff</p>	<p>New Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Assessment produced (with guidance) within project management, launched in May 2021. Progress of assessment completion is being monitored and staff are so far completing these well.</p> <p>Being progressed and will be developed by Winter 2021</p>	<p>February 2021 – May 2021</p> <p>Ongoing action</p>	<p>New assessment and guidance created that staff use effectively to increase their knowledge of environmental impacts/emissions from their projects and how these can be reduced.</p> <p>Progress seen regarding several KPIs - i.e. consistent reductions in emissions, 100% of staff completing sustainability and carbon reduction assessments</p>

8. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
	completing sustainability and carbon reduction assessments.			
8.7 Improve our procurement processes so that environmental considerations are made within sourcing goods, service and works	<p>Develop guidance to help staff include more environmental considerations within procurement specifications.</p> <p>Review use of Social Value Portal (SVP) and its ability to help the Council work with greener contractors and recognise the positive env benefits delivered through specific contracts</p>	<p>To be explored, pending publication of sustainable procurement guide by LGA and more capacity in CBC procurement team</p> <p>Use of SVP for few initial contracts started – Summary of how it is working to be presented to Environment and Sustainability Panel in December</p>	<p>July 2021 – December 2021</p> <p>September 2021 – December 2021</p>	<p>Procurement specifications developed that support carbon reduction and sustainability</p> <p>The Council is more informed about the environmental credentials of the contractors it works with</p>
8.8 Reviewing the Council's Travel Plan to ensure this continues to promote sustainable travel to staff	Review the Council's Travel Plan in light of changes to staff working location patterns to ensure Travel Plan facilitates sustainable travel to staff going forward	<p>Being reviewed in co-ordination with changes to Rowan House – Staff travel survey put out to all staff to explore this.</p> <p>This involved visiting Shrub End to do paper surveys with them and understand how sustainable travel can be promoted there too.</p>	Jan 21-Dec 21	Council Travel Plan reviewed and updated

8. Change the way we work to achieve our climate commitment				
Action	How will action be achieved?	September 23 rd update	Date Started/ Finish	Measurement of Success (MoS)
8.9 Reduce the environmental impacts of events organised by Colchester Events Company	Review the Events Policy and associated documents to see how events could be made more sustainable in the long term.	Inspired by the Eco Festival, a sustainable events guide is being written, in collaboration with Eco Colchester – Will use this to review Events Policy for improvements on environmental sustainability.	July 2021 – December 2021	<p>Successfully pilot several ways to make an event more environmentally friendly in 2021</p> <p>A revised Events Policy and other documents that help to promote sustainability further in events.</p>
8.10 Ensure our ICT systems are environmentally sustainable	<p>Ensure that sustainability is considered in the lifecycle of using ICT equipment (from procurement to disposal)</p> <p>Use of the cloud to store files resulting in lower emissions than using a data centre (more efficient equipment used for operating cloud)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Current CBC practice</p>	<p>Ongoing action</p> <p>Ongoing action</p>	<p>Council assesses need for ICT equipment and looks to dispose of equipment responsibly after use (e.g. getting it repaired, giving to other organisations to reuse, sending parts for recycling)</p> <p>Calculator provided by Microsoft to show and estimate our IT based emissions savings from storing files in the cloud.</p>

Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item
9

23 September 2021

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. Panel Members are asked to note the addition of an item for the February meeting of the Panel in relation to the Council's draft Waste Strategy.

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 – **25 November 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 Strategy & Electric Vehicles
2. Draft Waste Strategy
3. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update

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

1. Summary of progress in 2021/2022
2. Climate Emergency Action Plan – Progress Update

