



Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item

8

22 July 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 24th June 2021.

1.2 Progress includes:

- Branding has been produced for the Council's climate emergency work. This includes a logo and strapline developed through a staff competition gaining interest from across the Council. Design templates for key reports and documents are also now available which include images from across the sector area of work as well as aims to represent the diversity of residents. All Councillors are encouraged to make use of the banner as appropriate in their email signatures.
- The Council produced another infographic of achievements relating to the climate emergency in 2020-21. Additionally, the Council is proposing a refresh of the communications plan to simplify the message to residents as well as allow for dialogue through strategic blogging by appearing on other sites and a CBC blog, with managed feedback through polls/surveys for residents ensuring an avenue for engagement without the risk of communications overload. This updated communications plan for the Climate Challenge and Sustainability strategy and Action Plan is to update residents about the work on the climate emergency throughout the year. More detail to follow on the Council's communications plan developed through communications staff and climate related staff and will be shared with appropriate officers/board members and the communications portfolio holder.
- Supporting schools in Colchester to become more environmentally friendly through visits to Oxford House School and Unity Primary Academy, and production of air quality toolkit for schools.
- £248,700 received to extend Clean Air for Colchester project. In addition to extending the 'no idling' aims of the project, the funding will go towards further awareness about what types of pollution are in the air, promoting responsible home burning and encouraging the take up of low-emission transport. This latter activity will involve providing practical alternatives to the car such as shared electric bikes, eCargo bikes and electric car clubs in two resident areas.
- New signage to be installed on Brook Street/Eastgates to encourage no idling as part of 2nd phase of psychological signage study as part of Clean Air for Colchester.
- Presentation to Colchester Association of Local Councils to talk about the Council's work on the climate emergency and what town and parish Councils to take their own action.
- Presentation planned through Community 360 to tell residents more about our work, and how they can get involved in reducing their environmental impact. This will take place on 4th August from 10-11am.

- Updated Council Report template – section 14 on environment and sustainability is now updated to include more current guidance on how to include impact on sustainability and carbon reduction by including emissions information where possible for buildings, fleet and travel projects. The aim is that Cllrs are able to be informed on the proposals impact on sustainability and carbon reduction and to consider any uplifts in relation to multiple benefits/outcomes for health, wellbeing, environment and carbon reduction, as well as cost savings over the long term.
- Members briefing as well as a separate briefing to the Association of Parish Councils was delivered on the Council Sustainability and Climate Challenge with approximately a 50% turn out for each event. Interest and follow up sessions were requested on topics such as sustainable modes of travel, energy and sustainable development and planning.
- A new Active Environment Officer is to begin at the end of July to mainstream environmental assessments into planning and development as well as work with local organisations to facilitate active living. This is fully funded fulltime post for 2-year period by the LDP. This work will enable engagement for the Town Deal around transportation and other active modes of travel engagement plans.

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

Supporting schools to become more environmentally friendly

- 5.1 Council staff made a visit to Oxford House School on 28th June after receiving enthusiastic letters from pupils who were learning about climate change and the environment. Staff talked about some of the Council's projects to tackle the climate emergency and heard what students had been learning about.
- 5.2 On 8th July, an [Essex wide 'Green Day'](#) took place for schools in Essex to carry out activities to raise environmental awareness and show what they are doing to reduce their environmental impact. 7 schools in Colchester signed up to show their support for the day hosted by the [Multi Schools Council](#). The Council visited Unity Primary Academy to support activities being carried out at the school as part of the 'Go Green Schools' project. These included a marine wildlife talk, minibeast hunting, planting of a herb garden and a chance for the pupils to see one of the Council's eCargo bikes.
- 5.3 In addition to this, the Council has recently produced a [toolkit for schools](#) to take action on air quality. The toolkit includes quizzes, colouring sheets and other activities based around increasing awareness about air quality and has been shared with all councils in the borough.

Clean Air for Colchester update

- 5.4 In March 2021, the Council received £248,700 to extend the Clean Air for Colchester project. In addition to continuing to raise awareness and promote action around no idling, the funding will go towards:
- **Raising awareness of what pollution is in the air and linking this to the promotion of responsible home burning** (woodburning stoves and coal fires are largest source of fine particulate matter in the UK). However, wet, unseasoned wood causes biggest contribution to air pollution, therefore the Council will work with local suppliers to promote the use of clean fuel.
 - **Promoting use of low-emission transport in Colchester for resident journeys that pass through the air quality management areas (AQMAs)**. Changing journeys through shared bikes, electric and eCargo will be investigated. These will be set up in a pay as you go bike hub, and complemented by 2 electric pay as you go electric car club cars. The resident areas where this will be trialled are located off East Hill.
- 5.5 The 1st phase of the psychological study investigating the impact of signage on air quality recently finished. Two of the messages resulted in a **9% increase in vehicles** switching off their engines compared to before the signs went up. A third message proved ineffective and will be replaced with a brand-new Colchester specific message, developed in-line with the findings from our clean air public engagement back in 2020:
- ‘Exhaust fumes build-up in your car while you wait. Switch off your engine. Protect your health’.
- 5.6 Signage for study 2 is due to go up on 10 July, subject to planning permission being granted for an increase in the height of the signage, and will run until October 21. The three messages will be rotated every 3 weeks to understand if this has a greater impact on idling than if the message stays the same. The messages will then be reviewed ready for the third and final part of the study.

Other updates

- 5.7 The Council recently presented at the Colchester Association of Local Councils, to speak about the Council’s work in relation to the climate emergency, as well as highlighting opportunities for Towns and Parishes to take action to reduce their environmental impact. The session went down well, with lots of questions and thoughts from attendees. The offer of a monthly/bimonthly drop-in session for Town and Parish Councils to ask questions about the Council’s work or get support with taking their own action was proposed to attendees as a follow up activity.
- 5.8 The Council has also planned to do a presentation about the climate emergency work which will be available for residents to view. This is planned for 4th August at 10-11am and will be advertised through Community 360 and other communication channels.
- 5.9 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.