



## Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item

8

19<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer ☎ 508965
Title	Climate Emergency Action Plan Update		
Wards affected	All Wards		

### 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 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022.

1.2 Progress/Updates include:

- Council supported lots of action on **Clean Air Day** on 16<sup>th</sup> June, with social media posts on the day reaching over 40,000 people and a demonstration about no idling alongside St Thomas More's school. Currently there is also lots of advertising about the CAREless Pollution campaign at petrol pumps and billboards across the borough.
- Council supported the **Essex Schools Green Day**, visiting 10 schools throughout the week of the Green Day to drop off nature/gardening resources donated by Poplar Nurseries and to give talks at 3 of the schools about the Council's work on the climate emergency and give some ideas about what the schools and pupils can do to become greener.
- An application has been made to the **Low Carbon Skills Fund** to fund the creation of heat decarbonisation plans at six Council assets to identify opportunities for decarbonising heat at these assets that fit with wider improvements to the building's fabric too.
- **Presentation to town and parish councils** at Colchester Association of Local Councils Forum arranged for 14<sup>th</sup> July. The talk will explain the Council's work on the climate emergency, outline where there are opportunities for parish councils to get involved, and also what parishes can do to reduce their environmental impact within their communities. A presentation for all borough councillors on the climate emergency, Council actions on this and how councillors can support this action will be provided on 19<sup>th</sup> September.
- Usage of **Park Active** car parks have been low since its launch mid-pandemic despite promotion. However, support had been given to SPIN to create an escooter hub at Butt Road car park which has been well used, and the intention is to support TIER with similar facilities at other car parks.
- **Climate Action Challenge Fund** made available by Essex County Council for communities to apply to carry out projects that tackle climate related challenges. Community groups, parish councils, charities and schools can bid for funding of up to £20,000. More information about the fund is available at [www.essex.gov.uk/leisure-culture-local-heritage/culture-and-communities](http://www.essex.gov.uk/leisure-culture-local-heritage/culture-and-communities).
- The **Eco Festival** has been agreed to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022. The Sustainability, Transport and Climate Change Team are leading in ensuring our sustainable modes of travel work is showcased, along with resident input into existing

and future schemes. The festival had a great turn out with over 3500 people attending.

**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 progress made to date and has the chance to feedback on ongoing work.

**4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Not Applicable

## 5. Key updates

- 5.1 The Council's CAREless Pollution campaign has recently increased its campaign advertising. On Clean Air Day (16<sup>th</sup> June), the Council worked with St Thomas More's school to raise awareness of the problem of idling engines when stationary and how this impacts on air quality in Colchester. Many social media posts were shared on the day from lots of supporting organisations including Culver Square and Eco Colchester, along with events being run at GP surgeries and the NHS greener practices group.

Advertising of the campaign more widely is also taking place with petrol pump advertising at Tesco on Greenstead Road and Sainsbury's based at Tollgate. Radio adverts about the campaign are also going out, alongside billboard and digital advertisements. Find out more about the CAREless Pollution campaign [here](#).

- 5.2 The Essex Schools Green Day took place on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022, with the Council visiting 10 schools throughout the week to deliver nature and gardening resources donated by Poplar Nurseries and to observe activities that schools were doing/planning to do as part of the day. Talks on the Council's climate action and to give ideas to schools about ways to become greener were carried out at 3 schools. Other organisations in the borough also supported the day, including the Mercury Theatre who produced a [video](#) about how they have made their building environmentally friendly. Both the Mercury Theatre and the Co-op also visited schools to talk about how each of their organisations were taking steps to become greener and to engage with students.
- 5.3 The Council has made a bid to the Low Carbon Skills Fund to help fund a consultant to identify opportunities to decarbonise six Council buildings that will then be written up into implementable heat decarbonisation plans. The funding is being provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and administered by Salix Finance. The creation of heat decarbonisation plans will extend on the previous carbon management plan work planned for Council assets, by doing a more comprehensive assessment of decarbonisation opportunities and outlining how actions can join together to make a whole project. This will help with planning out how actions may follow on from one another, supporting the pathway to net zero. It will also put the Council in a better place to bid for grant funding to implement these projects
- 5.4 The Council will be speaking with Town and Parish Councils about the climate emergency action plan, and how these councils can take action to reduce their environmental impact. It is hoped the event will be informative and inspire town and parish councils with ideas for how to become greener, and to support community initiatives which also align with this. Borough councillors will also receive a presentation about the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and how councillors can be involved in the Council's climate action work. This presentation will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> September at 6pm.
- 5.5 Usage of Park Active car parks have been low since its launch mid-pandemic despite promotion. A full review of usage is to be carried out between over Summer and Autumn 2022, with the intention to relaunch the scheme in Spring 2023. However, support had been given to SPIN to create an scooter hub at Butt Road car park which has been well used, and the intention is to support TIER with similar facilities at other car parks. Although not strictly 'active travel', this measure does help to remove cars from the town centre, contributing to improving air quality and reducing congestion.
- 5.6 Essex County Council have launched a [Climate Action Challenge Fund](#) pot for communities to bid into to carry our projects that tackle a climate related challenge. Community groups, parish councils, charities and schools amongst others can bid for

funding of up to £20,000 and is open until March 31, 2023, or until funds last. Further information about the fund and its guidelines can be found [here](#). This information has been circulated with Community 360, Town and Parish Clerks and all councillors.

- 5.7 The date for the upcoming Eco Festival 2022 has been agreed for 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022. Last year, the event attracted over 3500 people, and we hope this number will increase this year. The Council will be supporting the event by providing sustainable transport options on the day using eCargo bikes, and will be having several stalls on the day to promote its projects involving sustainable travel, air quality, waste and biodiversity. The Council also awarded a Cultural and Creative event grant to support the festival.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 This report has no equality, diversity and human rights implications. The projects mentioned positively contribute, in differing ways, towards ensuring that equality, diversity and human rights are protected and enhanced.

## **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. Projects mentioned in the report have individual publicity considerations.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 There are no specific financial implications from this paper. The projects mentioned have agreed budgets and financial planning as applicable.

## **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. Generally projects in this workstream aim to improve health and wellbeing.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 There are no risk management implications from this update. Individual risk is managed within the projects identified.

## **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. They make a significant and lasting improvement to environmental sustainability.