

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 10 November 2022

Title: Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy- Annual update 2022

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Councillor Matthew Bird, Cabinet member for Sustainability

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To provide an update on the Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan and to set out proposals for climate change activities in 2023/24.

Decision type: Key

Officer recommendation(s): (1) To approve the Climate Change and Sustainability Annual Update (as attached in Appendix 1) for publication on the Council's website

(2) To note progress to date on the strategy action plan as contained within Appendix 1

(3) To support the proposed climate change activities for 2023/24

Reasons for recommendations: To progress the aims of the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) to make the Council Net Zero Carbon by 2030 and to assist the same aim to be achieved within the wider district.

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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper reports (through Appendix 1) on the progress of the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and action plan that was approved by Cabinet in February 2021, as a result of the Climate Emergency Declaration made at Full Council in July 2019. The strategy sets out the vision for a net zero carbon council and district by 2030.

- 1.2 Appendix 1 has been brought forward for approval by Cabinet. The Appendix will be placed as a standalone document on the council's climate change web page and will sit alongside the full strategy.
- 1.3 The carbon emission report within Appendix 1 shows that there has been a 9.5% reduction on the total baseline and a 12.6% reduction in fleet emissions.
- 1.4 The carbon footprint of the district has reduced by 15%, based on the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) data, since 2018.

No analysis is carried out on the district data and it is provided for monitoring purposes only this year. A more in-depth analysis of district and council emissions will be carried out in 2024/25. This should enable a review of the figures pre, during and post Covid-19 lockdowns due to the 2-year lag in the data.

- 1.5 Partnership working remains key to the success of any local authority's climate change and carbon reduction ambitions, and this is no different for Lewes District Council.

The Council has progressed many regional and local projects working with partners including:

- Decarbonising social housing with the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) and the University of Brighton
- Changing Chalk project led by the National Trust
- £2m Ouse Valley Climate Action project led by the South Downs National Park and a partnership of 10 local organisations including the council
- COP26 events and film showings at the Depot, Lewes, November 2021 with the Lewes Climate Hub
- Solar Together- group photovoltaic (PV) panel buying scheme
- 'Engines Off' anti-idling campaigns with Seaford Environmental Alliance

More details and case-studies are to be found in the Appendix 1 (from page 14).

2 Update to the national policy context

- 2.1 Ongoing monitoring of the national policy context continues – in light of the change of Prime Minister, recent policy changes and the High Court's ruling on the government's Net Zero Strategy – to understand the full implications on the Council's plans.

3 Evidence base update

- 3.1 The evidence base is updated on page 4 of Appendix 1. It highlights the main climate risks that face the UK, highlights the Climate Action Tracker as a tool for monitoring the government's progress on mitigation targets, policies and actions, and briefly summarises the findings of the new IPCC report on Climate Change 'Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability'.

Main points to note:

- UK adaptation action has failed to keep up with the worsening reality of climate risk
- Acting now is cheaper than dealing with the consequences later.
- The UK is not on track to meet its net zero by 2050 target due to a lack of practicable policy and real action.
- Climate change has already caused substantial damage and irreversible species and habitat losses.

4 Lewes District Council Carbon Emission Report

4.1 This report provides a summary of the carbon report for the financial year 2021/22 along with a comparison with the baseline 2018/19.

4.2 There has been a reduction in the Council's scope 1 & 2 emissions of 9.5% since 2018/19.

There full report is available in Appendix 1 (page 6).

4.3 Scope 3 emissions

The Council continues to expand upon its Scope 3 emissions reporting. This year's report is contained within Table 3 of Appendix 1 (page 11).

The Council acknowledges that its greatest source of emissions will be from purchasing and contracting, and continues to improve reporting methods. For 2021/22, emissions from grounds maintenance contracts (diesel fuel used in operational activities) have been included for the first time.

Certain emissions, for example from the cleaning contract will no longer be sought for Scope 3 reporting as these services have been brought in-house so the emissions will from 2022/23 fall under the Council's Scope 1 & 2.

5 Lewes District Carbon Emissions Summary

5.1 This information can be found on page 12 of Appendix 1 (table 4).

6 The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy -Strategic Action Areas Update

6.1 The strategy currently contains 86 actions across 7 action areas. A summary of work to date is below.

79% of all actions are currently reported as green or completed, 13% are amber and 3% (3 actions) are red.

Please see Appendix 1 (page 41) for the full updated action plan and set of indicators.

6.2 Some key actions have included:

- Grant application success as a partner with the Ouse Valley Climate Action project
- Expert input into Local Plan Evidence Base reports by specialist Officers across the Green Consultancy
- Increasing access to cycling studies
- Housing tenant engagement on climate change issues and food growing
- Installation of 161 solar PV arrays as a result of Solar Together scheme
- Allocation of 'Cost of Living Crisis' Fund money to green energy initiatives
- Procurement of supplier for electric vehicle (EV) charge points on the Council's estate
- Anti-idling campaigns at local schools
- Fleet decarbonisation pathway approved- use of renewable diesel to reduce fleet diesel emissions by up to 90%
- Wildflower planting success as a result of Bee Lines project grant
- Case-study partner in regional project to review opportunities for carbon-offsetting
- Natural Flood Management work through Sussex Flow, University of Brighton research student and work on Council land on the Cockshut-success in flood management as well as biodiversity improvements and carbon capture
- Vouchers to help purchase of reusable products as a result of partnership with local company Cheeky Wipes
- Continued work with GBEB and local universities on the Decarbonising Our Housing Stock project

7 Climate Change Project Proposals for 2023/24

7.1 It is proposed that the following climate change activities be approved for 2023/24, subject to full consideration within the annual business and budget planning process.

Proposal	Meets a defined action in the action plan?	Fund	Estimated Funding Requirement
Electric Vehicle Charge points and sundries	Yes- Action T21 & T23	Capital	£100,000
Car clubs- for Seaford & Newhaven	Yes- Action T11	Capital	£50,000
Energy Surveys- a) corporate buildings and b) Wave Leisure sites	Yes- Action E21 & E23	Revenue	a) £23,778 b) £23,778

Grant Applications- a) corporate buildings and b) Wave Leisure sites	Yes- Action E23	Revenue	a) £22,758 b) £22,758
Climate Resilience Fund- to be subject to a future Cabinet decision	Potentially all 'enabling' actions	Capital & Revenue	£100,000
		Total Approx Budget	£343,072

7.2 Electric Vehicle Charge Points

The Council is currently beginning works to deliver priority grant funded (On-street Residential Charge Points grant- ORCs) charge points across Lewes town, Newhaven and Seaford. Applications have also been submitted for Barcombe and Ditchling, although a number of questions remain about these sites' suitability.

In order to ensure charge points are installed across the district within Council car parks, there will be a need for a fund to pay for those sites where grants are not available, for example, Peacehaven, or where part-fund may be required, for example, Ditchling. It could also include our housing sites where communal parking exists.

At the moment, it is unknown how much additional sites will cost but these will be surveyed once priority site installations have begun. It is expected that additional (non-priority) installations could begin in 2023.

Having a specific fund set aside will enable the charge point roll-out to progress in a timely manner and will ensure that sundries, for example, low-level lighting can also be funded, as required. Charge points could also be provided to enable existing car club vehicles to transfer to electric, for example, Phoenix Causeway, Lewes.

Funding this work will directly help achieve Actions T21 & T23 in the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Action Plan.

7.3 Car Clubs

The Council has received requests from residents to set-up a car club in both Seaford and Newhaven. This could build on existing car club cars within Lewes town to which some users for example, #travel by train from Seaford to access.

A fund of £50,000 would enable a procurement exercise to be undertaken and help pay to set-up vehicles in these areas.

The £50,000 figure has been determined by a 'ballpark' quote from an existing car club provider and would pay for 2 sites to have EV vehicles for 3 years (if infrastructure is in place).

Communities that set up car clubs, particularly EV car clubs, have the opportunity and encouragement to:

- reduce motoring costs from personal car ownership- even more relevant now given the Cost of Living Crisis.
- reduce carbon emissions (if EV)
- improve local air quality (if EV)
- reduce local parking stress by removing personal vehicles from the area.

Funding this work will directly help achieve Action T23 in the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Action Plan.

7.4 **Energy Surveys and Grant Application budget**

There has been an unprecedented increase in energy costs over the last year that has had a significant impact on 22/23 budgets, and the current conflict in Ukraine has further impacted on costs which will have a 'knock on' effect going into the next financial year.

An initial audit has been completed and presented to CMT with regards to site spend and consumption data- this has been used to inform budget setting for the financial year 22/23.

Moving forward, the council is planning for large increases in utilities costs. It is essential for the long-term strategic management of assets that up-to date condition surveys are available, alongside an understanding of the energy use of each building and how it can be reduced.

Plans will be developed on a site-by-site basis that will provide the information needed to increase the life expectancy of the building, reduce operational ongoing utility costs and reduce carbon emissions as required by our Net Zero 2030 targets. They have been procured through the Clear Sustainable Futures Framework (CSF).

A report will provide the following:

- Existing fabric and services overview
- Occupancy data
- Energy analysis with comparison to industry benchmarks
- Central Plant review
- Building fabric Improvements (Loft, walls, windows, draught proofing, solar control)
- Existing mechanical, electrical and plumbing services and their improvements to save energy
- Renewable, low and zero carbon measures review (solar thermal, solar PV)
- Estimated costs of recommended measures, energy and cost savings associated with improvements, payback periods and annual carbon savings associated with each measure

The following sites should be assessed:

- Lewes House, Lewes
- Marine Workshop, Newhaven
- 2-4 Fisher Street, Lewes
- 187-188 High Street, Lewes

The following sites should be budgeted for but will depend on future agreed management/renovation arrangements:

- Southover House, Lewes
- Robinson Road depot, Lewes

For the majority of sites, the reports can be called upon as and when grants are available and/or as boiler plant reaches end of life to assist the replacement strategy.

- 7.5 The Council will require technical expertise to apply for grants based on recent experience of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The Council does not always get a lot of notice when grant pots become available, so decisions as to whether to attempt an application have to be made quickly and having the fund available will enable this to happen as required.

The support has been procured using the CSF framework at a fixed cost per site.

- 7.6 Wave Leisure sites (6 no.) should be included within the surveys as the council is responsible for building fabric and plant. Currently, these sites sit within scope 3 of emission reporting, but this is only because they maintain direct utility contracts and this may change in the future.

Funding this work will directly help achieve Action E21 and E23 to produce and deliver a carbon reduction plan for non-housing assets, in the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.

7.7 **Climate Resilience Fund**

In September 2019, a £100,000 Sustainability Fund was established to part-fund staffing (£15,000) and develop the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. The majority of funding (£85,000) has been used to fund carbon reduction initiatives and feasibility work including:

- Carbon base line and pathways report
- Land-use study and workshop
- Tree planting
- Climate Change Forum engagement work
- Shares in OVESCo Sunny Solar Schools
- Expert advice and support from Centre for Local Economic Strategies
- Increasing access to cycling reports (1 completed and 1 due to start)
- Community grants

This fund is now nearly exhausted, and it is deemed a new fund should be established.

The fund should be able to roll over financial years as previously and will be available for projects as they arise and deemed to fulfil requirements of the Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan.

Allocations for 23/24 and delegated authority will be the subject of a further Cabinet decision in due course.

This fund could help achieve various 'enabling' actions within the action plan.

8 Financial appraisal

- 8.1 The delivery of the activities within the Strategy will have financial implications for the Council. There will be both Capital and Revenue budget requirements in the region of £343k, within the 2023-24 budget to support/progress key Climate Change initiatives activities detailed within para 7.1 above, which include - Electric Vehicle ChargePoint's; Car clubs- for Seaford & Newhaven; Energy Surveys of the corporate buildings and Wave Leisure sites; Grant Applications and Climate Resilience Fund.
- 8.2 Business cases will be required for activities where additional expenditure or resources are required over and above existing budgets in order to ensure that costs, benefits and viability is properly assessed. Recommendations to proceed with projects will be brought to future Cabinet meetings for consideration.

9 Legal implications

- 9.1 The Climate Change Act of 2008 legally binds the government to carbon budgets that set limits on the UK's greenhouse gas emissions during five-year periods. They include a target to be over three quarters of the way to net zero in the next 13 years. 'Net zero' means that the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK is equal to or lower than the amount of greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere in the UK. The UK has also committed internationally to reduce its emissions by at least 68% by 2030 from 1990 levels, as part of its 'Nationally Determined Contribution' (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

In October 2021, BEIS issued The Net Zero Strategy, which sets out the government's policies and proposals to ensure the UK continues to meet its carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act 2008 and achieves its nationally determined contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. It also sets out the government's vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050

In 2022, ClientEarth joined with Friends of the Earth and Good Law Project in applying for a judicial review of the Net Zero Strategy, on grounds that the government had failed to show that its policies will reduce emissions sufficiently to meet its legally binding carbon budgets.

They also alleged that the Strategy failed to include enough information about the policies and their expected effects to allow Parliament and the public to

properly scrutinise its plans. In consequence they held these failings meant the Government had breached its legal duties under the 2008 Act.

In its July 2022 judgment, the court found that the Secretary of State had failed to comply with his obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008 s.13 and s.14 in relation to the government's Net Zero Strategy. He had made decisions on whether the proposals and policies in the strategy would enable carbon budgets to be met without being briefed upon crucial information about the contribution to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from individual policies. In reporting to Parliament under s.14, he had also failed to explain how his policies were intended to meet emissions targets.

The government must now update its climate strategy to include a quantified account of how its policies will actually achieve climate targets. These will have to be based on a realistic assessment of what it actually expects them to deliver. The updated strategy will have to be presented to Parliament for scrutiny by MPs.

As mentioned at paragraph 2.1 above, the Council should keep au fait with these developments to ascertain what implications there could be at district level.

Date of legal advice: 06.10.22
Legal ref: 011455-LDC-OD

10 Equality analysis

- 10.1 An Equality Analysis already exists for this topic: Cabinet paper February 2021: [Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2021](#)

Further analysis is done on a project by project basis.

11 Environmental sustainability implications

- 11.1 The strategy is key to delivering the net zero carbon goal of the council by 2030. It will seek to ensure that carbon implications are taking into account throughout the council and in all decisions.

Implementation of actions to achieve carbon neutrality is key to mitigate the predicted negative impacts of climate change on the environment, economy and communities.

12 Contribution to Community Wealth Building

- 12.1 Community Wealth Building is a key strand of the climate change action plan. Buying more locally, employing local staff, and encouraging local investment in our projects helps increase, and keep, wealth and jobs within our community whilst reducing carbon emissions.

13 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Lewes District Council Climate Change & Sustainability Update November 2022 – for publication on the website

14 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- Cabinet paper February 2021: [Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2021](#)