

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 July 2021

Subject: Update on Council's response to the climate emergency

Cabinet Member: Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change

Key Decision: Non Key

Executive Summary

At its meeting held on 26 February 2019 Full Council resolved to acknowledge that 'there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030'.

A commitment was made to provide six-monthly progress updates on actions the council is taking to reduce carbon generation in Wiltshire. This is the fourth progress report to Cabinet following updates in October 2019, July 2020 and February 2021.

The update is again structured against the following business plan priorities. The plan was updated by Full Council in July 2020 to include a Climate Emergency Addendum.

- Growing the economy
- Strong communities
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Working with our partners as an innovative and effective council.

A wide range of work, against all the above priorities, is being undertaken by all departments at the council in relation to the climate emergency. To date a total of £88.095m Capital and £3.871m Revenue has been approved as set out in the Financial implications below.

A climate strategy will be developed over the coming months. A key focus has been on engagement work in relation to the climate discussion document, agreed at the February Cabinet meeting, to find out the key priorities from a range of stakeholders.

Proposal(s)

1. That Cabinet notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in February 2021.

Reason for Proposal(s)

To provide Cabinet with an update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 July 2021

Subject: Update on Council's Response to the Climate Emergency

Cabinet Member: Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Strategic Planning and Climate Change

Key Decision: Non Key

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the fourth progress update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The programme of work to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 will contribute to all four business plan priorities of:
 - i. Growing the economy
 - ii. Strong communities
 - iii. Protecting the vulnerable
 - iv. Working with our partners as an innovative and effective council

The update on the actions taken in response to the climate emergency is contained in paragraphs 6-50 and structured against these headings.

Background

3. At its meeting held on 26 February 2019 council debated the following notices of motion:

12b) Acknowledging a Climate Emergency and Proposing the Way Forward;
12c) Environment and Global Warming.

The council resolved to acknowledge that there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030.

The [minutes](#) of the meeting are available online (see pages 21 to 24). Cabinet has also pledged to make Wiltshire Council carbon neutral by 2030.

4. As part of this motion, the council resolved that Cabinet should report to Full Council on a six-monthly basis regarding the actions the council is taking and

will take to address the climate emergency. The third report was presented to Cabinet in February 2021.

5. A Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group was established by Environment Select Committee to develop recommendations to seek to achieve the target of making the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. The task group developed two reports and recommendations covering energy, transport and air quality on [29 September 2020](#) and planning on [13 January 2021](#). Executive responses to the task group report were received by the select committee on 13th January 2021 and 3 March 2021.

The Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee agreed that the task group continue beyond May 2021. Subject to the new Environment Select Committee's approval, the task group will reconvene in summer 2021.

6. The council's [Organisational Recovery](#) programme provides oversight of activities related to council-wide internal transformation. It ensures that all improvement activity is reviewed against a set of principles to promote a joined up approach, aligned to Our Identity and the delivery of the council's business plan. The green agenda and carbon neutral promise have been included within this set of principles to ensure this is considered when making decisions related to internal transformation activity.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. The council has undertaken a significant round of engagement on the climate strategy discussion document brought to Cabinet on 2 February 2021:
 - A summary version of the discussion document has been developed and circulated to over 550 organisations and individuals for comment. The document is available as a [download](#).
 - Four thematic stakeholder events were held in May and attended by a total of 137 people
 - Discussions on the climate strategy were held at a range of external meetings
 - Key Wiltshire employers have been spoken to and informative discussion held on business aspirations and barriers in relation to the climate emergency.
 - A climate strategy session was held with all Wiltshire Council Heads of Service on 21 April 2021 and a follow up survey completed by over 40 Heads of Service.

Engagement results (see **Appendix 1**) will be reviewed to shape the draft Climate Strategy which will be published for consultation in September 2021

8. An induction session on the council's climate commitments was held for all Wiltshire councillors on 17 May with 44 attending and providing feedback on the climate strategy discussion document.

Growing the Economy: Highly Skilled Jobs (Employment)

9. The [Community Renewal Fund](#) aims to support people and communities that wish to bring forward new ideas to invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment. It is a competitive process with no pre-set eligibility. 100 priority places across the country have been identified, based on an index of economic resilience. Projects that target investment at communities in need, especially at the top 100 priority places, will be prioritised. Wiltshire is not a top 100 priority place

The role of the council (Lead Authority) is to invite bids from a range of Project Applicants, appraise and prioritise projects up to a maximum of £3m per place and submit a shortlist to UK Government, by 18th June 2021, who will select projects based on the published assessment criteria. Wiltshire Council has received 9 applications, from various sectors including Private and Business, Education, Community and from within the council itself. The table below shows how the applications align with the funds four investment priorities. Two thirds of projects will contribute to the Net Zero and environmental objectives.

	Investment in skills	Investment for local business	Investment in communities and place	Supporting people into employment
Application 1		✓		
Application 2	✓	✓		
Application 3			✓	
Application 4			✓	
Application 5	✓	✓	✓	✓
Application 6			✓	
Application 7	✓	✓	✓	✓
Application 8	✓	✓	✓	✓
Application 9	✓	✓	✓	✓

10. The Wiltshire Online programme has been working in partnership with BDUK (Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and Openreach since 2013 to bring superfast and ultrafast fibre broadband to areas of Wiltshire considered to be non-commercially viable; more recently we have also been working in partnership with Gigaclear to the north of our county to achieve the same aims. So far over 95% of Wiltshire premises have access to superfast broadband (>30Mbps) and 22% ultrafast (>100Mbps).

Growing the Economy: Housing and Environment

11. The council is significantly investing in zero carbon homes for its council house new build programme, as also being considered by Cabinet in this meeting. As the pilot programme is showing an increase in cost to develop homes to the higher standards, the agenda item sets out the cost increases and how this will be funded going forward. This investment will help the council respond to the climate emergency, as part of its ambition to seek to make Wiltshire carbon

neutral by 2030, and also ensure that council homes are cheaper to run, bringing these savings directly to residents. The new council house build programme will see around £195m invested into building new, energy efficient council homes up to 2032. The council is initially running a pilot scheme, and if successful, all new properties that are built by the council (not including those purchased from developers) will be constructed to 'zero carbon' standards, which features very high levels of insulation and generation of electricity, among other environmental benefits. These properties enjoy very low energy bills for residents, offset by the properties' energy generation.

12. The council was successful in a bid for £0.55m from Government's 'Green Homes Grant' Local Authority Delivery Scheme - Phase 1b, to target improvements to 100 homes with some of the lowest EPC ratings and families on low incomes by September 2021. This will focus on Fabric First, although there will be some properties that will require a Whole House Retrofit. A Whole House Retrofit takes each house in its own right. It considers the fabric, the heating and hot water requirements, ventilation and the people living in the property to establish the correct measures to implement for that individual property. To support this the council is training 3 staff members in the new role of Retrofit Coordinator, mandatory under PAS 2035.

Work will then follow on from the GHG delivery in October on the £50 million programme of work, taking place over the next 10 years, to raise council homes to energy performance B rating (as a minimum). The Housing Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP) will benefit from the Industry certified process and regulation formed from the delivery of the GHG scheme to deliver thermally comfortable homes, realise utility savings to tenants and aims to reduce carbon emissions of around 20,000 tons a year.

13. The council joined the UK Green Building Council March 2021 giving access to best practice materials and events in low carbon building.
14. The council is now in year two of the Amenity Wildflower meadow trial. This has seen 102,000 square metres of general grass across 12 sites in Wiltshire converted from a monthly cut to a bi-annual cut and collect. Due to the reduced cutting frequency of these sites we have significantly reduced the carbon footprint associated with the maintenance of these areas. In addition to this, the arisings are being composted at strategic locations onsite, not only eradicating the need for further transportation and disposal but also creating a haven for wildlife such as slow worms who thrive in this environment. On the whole the trial has been well supported by local councils, councillors and residents. We have tried to incorporate footways within the meadows to enable residents to benefit and enjoy the natural wildflowers as they begin to establish. We will soon incorporate one more site into the trial which we will then monitor over the coming two years to get a greater understanding of the impact and benefits for the local flora and fauna. The trial has provided invaluable information which will enable to shape the way in which we specify our future grounds maintenance provision post November 2022 when the current contract expires.
15. The Wiltshire Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy will support the council's emerging Climate Change Strategy in its focus on the natural

environment and how by creating a strong, well considered network of green and blue corridors and spaces we can support adaption and resilience to climate change, halt loss of and improve biodiversity and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities. The GBI Strategy and Climate Strategy are being produced during the same timeframe, and in May 2021 targeted engagement with key stakeholders has been undertaken to help develop the strategy. An outline of the GBI Strategy is available on our website [Green and blue infrastructure - Wiltshire Council](#) Further consultation on the draft GBI Strategy is planned for Autumn 2021.

16. A new Wiltshire [Community Environmental Toolkit](#) has been developed in partnership with Natural England to allow communities to take the lead in defining and restoring biodiversity and natural carbon sequestration in their community. Designed for use by community groups, local landowners, Parish and Town Councils, schools and youth groups it provides a structure for how local communities can better understand what they already have in terms of biodiverse habitats as well as how to plan for developing greater biodiversity and nature based carbon sequestration in the future. The Toolkit also signposts to many other organisations which can assist communities in delivering their aims and objectives. There are three basic steps we recommend in the toolkit:

- 1 – Survey the local area to see what communities already have and what would make suitable foundations for their environmental plan
- 2 – Plan what improvements are viable in their community (based on the six main habitat types described)
- 3 – Implement the environmental plan ensuring sustainability of action over the long term.

The toolkit provides local case studies that are designed to provide local communities with inspiration to set up their own groups and develop community based / community delivered solutions to climate change and habitat / species decline.

Our confirmed recycling rate for 20/21 was 42.46%. This rate is calculated from the tonnage of all the household waste managed by the council (213,262 tonnes in 20/21), and the amount that was collected for recycling (54,703 tonnes) or composting (33,817 tonnes). It includes waste collected at the kerbside, waste managed through the household recycling centres, as well as waste collected as litter, etc.

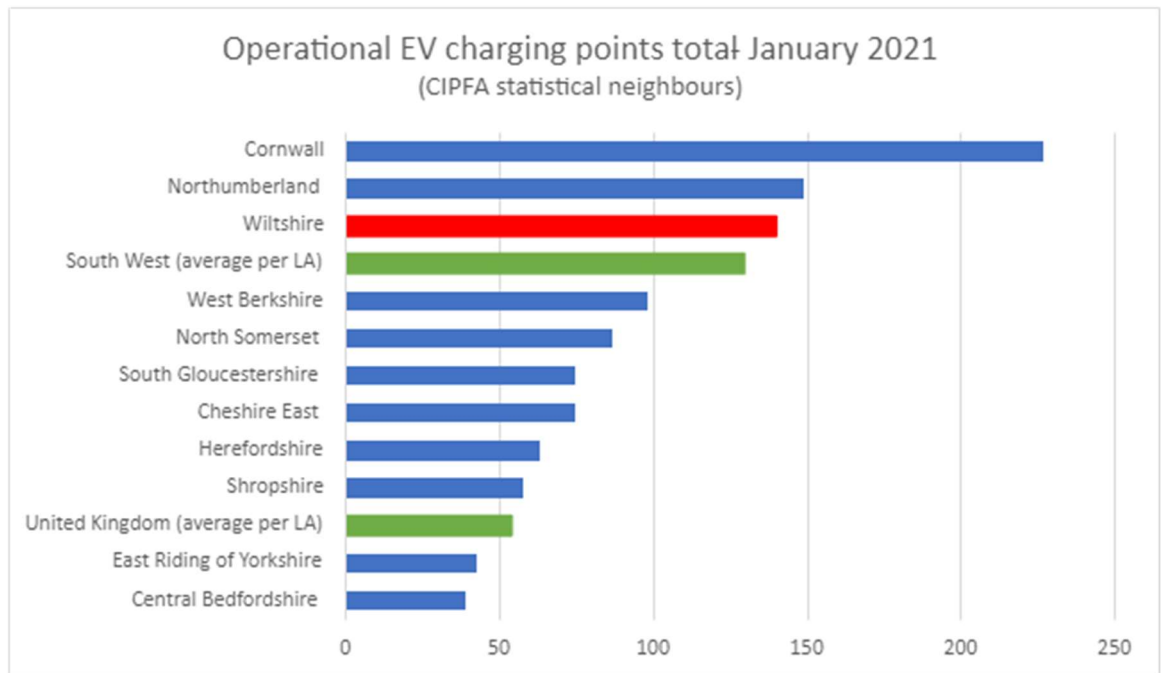
The council also implemented a new kerbside recycling service in March of last year, designed to make it easier for residents to recycle much of their household waste from home; plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, paper and cardboard, food and drinks cartons, tins, cans and textiles. Glass is collected from a separate container, normally by the same vehicle. The new service has allowed the council to reduce the waste collection fleet from 149 vehicles to 121, thereby reducing the carbon impact of the service, and 24% more material was collected for recycling at the kerbside compared with the previous year. However, the council also collected more non-recyclable household waste at the kerbside during this period. The national lockdowns in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has heavily influenced these increases in collected

tonnages. The council also had to close its network of household recycling centres between 24 March and 8 May as a consequence of Covid-19. These factors have both contributed to reducing our expected recycling rate. Notwithstanding this, the council still managed to divert 82.9% of the municipal waste it manages from landfill, through the use of waste treatment and energy from waste facilities, and very little of the non-recyclable waste collected at the kerbside goes to landfill.

17. The forthcoming Environment Bill seeks to ensure that future rates of recycling are significantly increased by obligating producers of packaging to fund the full costs of collection and recycling. Government will introduce a Plastic Packaging Tax from April 2022. Manufacturers will be incentivised to use more easily recyclable materials under an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme from 2023, which will also see funding released to local authorities to support additional recycling of packaging, and also fund litter collection activities. A national Deposit Return Scheme is proposed that could significantly reduce the impact of littering of bottles and cans etc from late 2024. The Environment Bill also proposes to mandate consistency in local authority recycling collections, to include weekly collections of food waste, and free of charge garden waste collections, with additional service costs being met by government through the “new burdens” scheme. These proposals are currently subject to a second round of stakeholder consultation..
18. As part of the Local Plan Review there was a consultation on the climate topic and initial results were summarised in a report to Cabinet on 29 June 2021.

Growing the Economy: Transport and Infrastructure

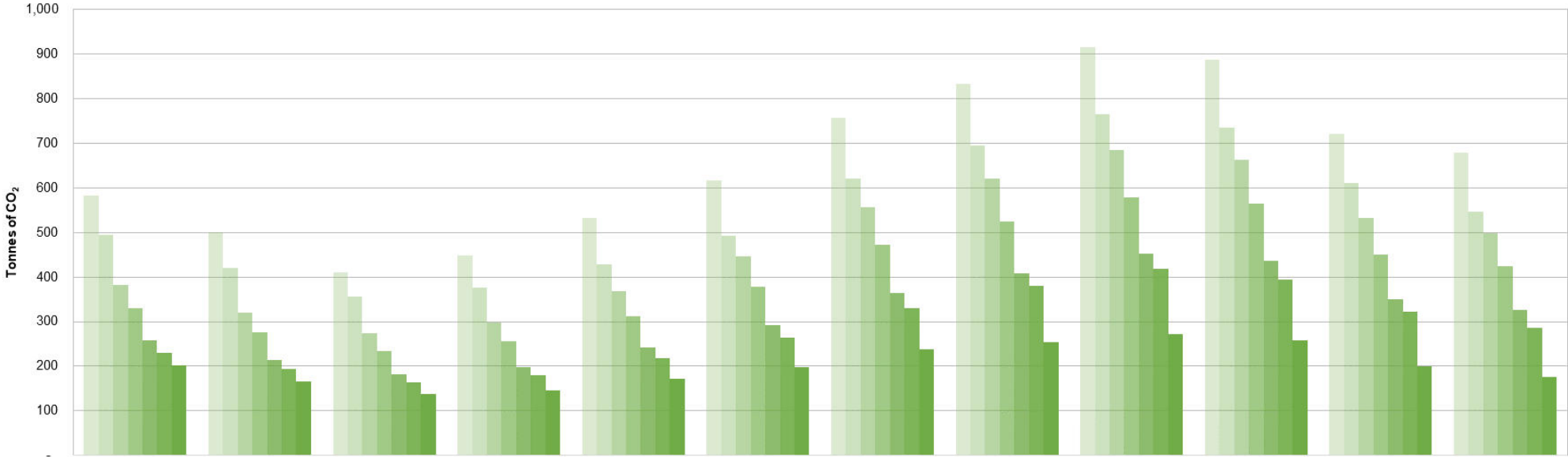
19. The council is preparing an outline Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Wiltshire, and an LCWIP for Salisbury. These have been developed with input from stakeholders including Sustrans, the Salisbury Cycle Liaison Panel, the Salisbury Walking & Disabled Access Forum and the Salisbury Neighbourhood Planning Group. These draft documents will shortly be put out to public consultation. The LCWIP sets out design standards for developers and identifies key active travel schemes to be delivered by the council in the short, medium and long term. The council has applied to the Capability Fund for £60,000 to develop LCWIPs for Chippenham and Trowbridge by March 2022.
20. The table below shows that Wiltshire is ahead of the South West average and the national average for the number of electric vehicle charging points in the area. It also compares favourably with local authority statistical neighbours.



21. The council has been working with Calne Town Council, Bradford on Avon Town Council, Pewsey Parish Council and Pitton village hall to facilitate the installation of electric vehicles charging points. A charging point in Tisbury has been installed. Furthermore, ten of the thirteen largest Wiltshire communities have a car park with a public electric vehicle charging point infrastructure in place.
22. Through its e-bulletin to local businesses, the council has also promoted government [grants](#) for workplace charging of electric vehicles.
23. The council is currently rolling out a £12m programme to convert streetlights across Wiltshire to LEDs and the graph overleaf shows the significant reduction in carbon emissions already being achieved by this programme for every month of the year.

Carbon Emissions from Wiltshire Streetlights

2014/15 2015/16 2016/17 2017/18 2018/19 2019/20 2020/21



24. Bus Back Better - The National Bus Strategy (NBS) is a huge opportunity for Wiltshire. The council has already accepted an initial £100,000 funding to be used to grow the staff resource to both meet the demands of, and maximise the benefit of, the NBS. Subject to Cabinet member approval, the Enhanced Partnership route is to be followed and much preparatory work is going on. Whilst zero emissions has to be the ultimate aim, much can be done with the existing fleet and encouraging modal shift. This will be the initial objective, making the bus more attractive, whilst the alternative fuel technologies mature to be able to meet the demands of long-distance cross-country and rural operations.
25. Furthermore, the council has been awarded £671k via Bus Back Better to enhance bus services in Wiltshire. After an initial round of consultation with Wiltshire councillors and town and parish councils in the summer of 2020, potential solutions are being worked on. However, COVID has had a big effect on travel patterns and whilst we are now close to returning to normal not everything will return to where it was, in terms of demand. Therefore, we are about to re-circulate to our councillors (many newly elected) and the local councils to confirm that their previous ideas and suggestions are still valid. We will then proceed, via the normal procurement channels, to establish these new journeys and service.
26. The council has been successful in its bid for £1.2 million from the Demand Responsive scheme run by the Department for Transport to modernise and enhance the existing scheme in the Pewsey Vale. A project manager is to be recruited and community engagement will be key going forward. In the meantime existing staff are considering the opportunities for timetables and options for integration with fixed bus services at the edges of the area, especially in light of the publication of the National Bus Strategy.
27. The council is working in partnership with the Environment Agency to deliver the first phase of the Salisbury River Park scheme. The scheme forms part of the Central Area Framework initiatives and will enable the delivery of the council's wider regeneration goals for the Maltings and Central Car Park site and future phases of the River Park. The approximately £20 million package of investment is predominantly funded through Grant in Aid from Defra and Local Growth Fund from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the council is contributing £6.5m. Phase 1 will improve resilience to climate change and reduce the risk of flooding for existing residents and businesses in Salisbury city centre. It also includes significant improvements for leisure, recreation, ecology, biodiversity and walking and cycling facilities. The latter will encourage active travel and facilitate a modal shift away from cars which will bring further health, air quality and carbon reduction benefits.

The planning application for phase 1 of the River Park has been submitted (PL/2021/03601) and a decision is expected in July. If approved, construction is planned to commence in summer 2022 and be completed by the end of 2023.

Viewpoint across Central Car Park showing 'before' and 'after'

Before



After



28. In the last 6 months, 14 out of 29 road resurfacing schemes have used warm asphalt. The use of warm asphalt leads to a 40% reduction in carbon emissions. This is one of a range of schemes that have led to a reduction in carbon emissions. Other examples include replacement of the gritter fleet by disposing of the old inefficient vehicles and replacing them with leased low emissions fleet in 2019; and the use of battery powered temporary signal sets, to replace diesel, since 2016 by contractor Ringway.

Strong Communities: Community Wellbeing

29. The construction of Melksham Community Campus is now underway. Since the last report, the design team for the project have developed a proposal for the installation of photovoltaics on the roof of the campus. The proposal locates panels on as much of the roof as is feasible. Initial models anticipate approximately 14% of the building's power could be provided by this scheme, with all the power generated being used to make the site more efficient. Costs are being developed so a decision on funding can be considered, as capital for this element is not currently budgeted for.
30. Since the last report, work has been undertaken to assess the electric vehicle charging points for the Melksham campus. The scheme will include three double charging points. In addition, ducting is being installed to a further fifty-seven bays (over a quarter of the available bays), to allow for the expansion of provision in the future. A scheme is also being developed for the neighbouring Melksham House. The design team are currently preparing a sustainability options report.

Protecting the Vulnerable: Early Intervention

31. [Warm and Safe Wiltshire](#) is an energy advice service provided by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council in partnership with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and managed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy. The service, which has seen a 20% increase in demand as a direct result of the pandemic, has bid for and received a significant Covid support grant. The grant is to address fuel poverty, exacerbated by Covid-19, which has a direct impact on health. As well as providing for additional casework advice, the £500,000 programme will deliver a range of direct measures including the provision of fuel vouchers; heating control replacement; emergency oil filled radiators; radiator panels; and the provisions of new or replacement boilers/night storage heaters (40% of which are to be electric and for households off the mains gas network).

The project will also train two advice trainees who will receive formal energy qualifications and workplace experience. After qualification and an initial period they will be able to undertake casework, including the provision of behavioural energy advice and advice around the installation of renewable technology. This will allow them to support clients to reduce their carbon impact.

Working with Partners as an Innovative and Effective Council: Community Involvement

32. The council is developing an awareness raising campaign of how the community can play its part in tackling the climate emergency and enabling Wiltshire to become net zero carbon. The campaign will use a range of with images, phrases and branding to enable people to understand how they can 'play their part' and tackle the climate emergency.
33. The council has run four thematic events in May 2021 as part of their climate discussion document engagement work. Sessions were run with a range of stakeholders, including a joint workshop to discuss the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. A meeting was held earlier in the year with young people to discuss their priorities. The events allowed discussion on the stakeholders' priorities and the ways in which their organisations could support the climate strategy. Attendees also discussed how they could work with and learn from each other.
34. The council is working in partnership with Bradford-on-Avon Town Council to submit a £100k bid to the [Local Authority Treescape fund](#). The aim is to increase tree coverage across the town to create wildlife corridors, increase biodiversity, reduce air pollution, store carbon and improve the health and wellbeing of residents. If successful it is hoped that this application will act as a template for our other market towns to apply for funding to improve tree coverage across the county.
35. The council has supported more than 100 community litter picking groups by supplying them with all the necessary equipment to undertake successful litter picking events. The appetite for volunteers has significantly increased throughout the pandemic.

Working with Partners as an Innovative and Effective Council: Performance

36. The council was successful in its bid for more than £4.4m from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to reduce carbon emissions by upgrading the heating systems in many of its buildings. The majority of the funding will be used to install air to water heat pump systems at Five Rivers Health and Wellbeing Centre in Salisbury, Warminster Leisure Centre, the Olympiad in Chippenham, and, subject to planning permission, Lime Kiln Leisure Centre in Royal Wootton Bassett. Solar panels will also be installed at a further 19 council buildings, including leisure centres, libraries and depots; while further heating and air handling upgrades will be made at 10 council properties. Once all the upgrades are completed in the autumn, they will save approximately 1,200 tonnes of carbon each year, and also bring the council financial savings (see **Appendix 2** for further details).
37. Funding provided by Nadder Community Energy from their Community Fund has been used to install PV solar panels on the roof of Tisbury swimming pool, providing energy for both the pool and the nearby cricket pavilion (owned by Tisbury Parish Council). The system is expected to generate around 6100 kWh of electricity per year leading to savings for both Wiltshire Council and Tisbury Parish Council.
38. The council has upgraded its green electricity tariff to 'Your Green', a product provided by our supplier Total Gas and Power (TGP) that ensures that all Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) are sourced from a generator or technology directly contracted with TGP. This product ensures that 100% of the REGOs are purchased along with the associated generation. The sources of the renewable electricity remain as solely wind, solar, and hydro. This product provides increased traceability, transparency and reduces the perception of 'greenwashing' sometimes associated with REGO backed electricity.
39. As reported in the February update the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee has been devoting significant time over the last year to climate change, to determine how we can best protect the Fund's investments, and position ourselves to take advantage of investment opportunities. As a result of the recent work, which includes climate change scenario modelling, the Committee has now set a target for the investment portfolios, of net zero by 2050. This will help to safeguard the investments and improve returns. The Committee has also approved spend to work with Mercer (the Fund's investment advisers) to develop a plan to ensure that the net zero target is achieved – this will include interim targets and monitoring.
40. During March 2021, the Fund launched a survey of the scheme membership, focussing on responsible investment issues, including climate change. 2,251 responses were received, from a diverse mix of scheme members. The results of the survey have been published in full on the [website](#). One relevant finding was that 86% of respondents answered Yes or Maybe to the question "is it important to you for Wiltshire Pension Fund to invest in sustainable and/or low carbon assets?"

41. A summary of the survey findings will be included in the Pension Fund annual report 2020/21. Also to be included this year is TCFD (Task force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures) reporting, for the first time. This will describe how the Fund manages climate risk, from a perspective of governance, strategy, risk management, and will also include carbon metrics.

Working with Partners as an Innovative and Effective Council: Commercialism

42. The council is currently working with the existing grounds maintenance provider to arrange a demonstration day for electric fleet which is currently on the market. This will include vans, ride-on mowers and hand tools such as hedge cutters and strimmers. It is likely that any significant changes to grounds maintenance fleet and tools will happen at the inception of the new provision post November 2022.

Working with Partners as an Innovative and Effective Council: Delivering Together

43. The council's area boards have been supporting groups on a variety of work programmes that relate to the environment. These range across many different topics, such as community electric vehicle charge points; energy saving schemes; waste reduction; knowledge sharing schemes; and many projects that support the natural environment and access to it. Further information is included in **Appendix 3**. All funding bids to Area Boards are now required to articulate their environmental impact.
44. The council has promoted the [Let's Go Zero](#) campaign to schools, with presentations to both Headteachers and Governors in March 2021. So far, 12 Wiltshire schools have signed up to the campaign. Environmental grants for schools have been promoted in the weekly e-bulletin and their feedback has been requested on the climate strategy.
45. Schools have also been provided with information on the [Queen's Green Canopy](#) initiative, a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Schools can access free saplings on a first come first served basis. The initiative is not just restricted to schools and is looking to encourage many organisations to 'plant a tree for the jubilee'.
46. The council is currently undertaking a highway verge litter picking programme on major routes. So far this year 2215 bags of litter and 22 vehicle tyres equivalent to 29 tonnes of rubbish have been collected. The programme has been extremely successful and has been extended by a further four weeks. Litter is not only unsightly but also has significant impact on the environment and wildlife. The work that we have undertaken this year has been recognised by many Wiltshire residents via social media and also by Highways England for the clearance works on the major trunk roads (A303 and A36).
47. The council has signed up to the Keep Britain Tidy exemplar membership. This is a platform to engage with other organisations working to improve local environmental quality. It gives us unlimited access to the "ask the network"

where we can put questions to other members relating to our services, best practice and share expertise and “ask the expert” which offers impartial support from network experts including legal and environmental solutions.

48. Farmers and land managers working together can deliver greater benefits, especially at a landscape scale. Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has six farmer groups run by advisors or ‘facilitators’. In total there are over 90 farmers working in these groups across an area of 130 square miles. Each group sets their own agenda but common to all groups is a commitment to make improvements to the soils on their farms. Increasing the amount of organic matter within the soil allows more carbon to be stored so farmers are increasing their use of organic fertilisers like sewage sludge and compost from kitchen waste, rather than chemical fertilisers which use considerable amounts of energy and create emissions to produce. Soil structure and earthworm populations can be damaged by ploughing which also releases carbon into the atmosphere as well as using a considerable amount of fuel. Increasingly farmers are switching from ploughing to ‘minimum tillage’ systems saving fuel, earthworms and reducing emissions.
49. Working together across farm boundaries to create wildlife habitat corridors can help minimise the damaging effects of climate change on vulnerable wildlife populations such as rare butterflies, birds, plants, mammals and reptiles by allowing them to move safely between sites. Martin Down National Nature Reserve is completely surrounded by a ‘supercluster’ comprising three different farmer groups: Chalke Valley, Martin Down and Allenford Farmer Clusters. Species such as Marsh Fritillary butterfly and Turtle Dove are now being found outside the nature reserve boundary on new habitats created on adjacent farmland.
50. The council is involved nationally with the following networks and groups which aim to shape national policy. For example, the council was involved in a workshop with National Audit Office on the relationship between government and local authorities and how this will help or hinder net zero.
 - [Countryside Climate Network](#), which the Leader of Wiltshire Council now chairs
 - [Local Government Association](#) (LGA) climate action group
 - Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport ([ADEPT](#)) Environment Board
 - [County Councils Network](#)
 - [Collaborative for Climate Action](#)
51. Working groups have been set up with public sector partners and housing associations to share knowledge and ways to work together to achieve our climate ambitions.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

52. As part of the governance supporting the development and delivery of the Climate Strategy, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management

Committee now sits on the Councillor Climate Working Group. The executive continues to work closely with the O&S task group supporting this area and the recently published second set of recommendations were considered by the Environment Select Committee on 13 January 2021. The Global Warming & Climate Emergency task group discussed the Climate Strategy discussion document on 28 January 2021.

Safeguarding Implications

53. There are no safeguarding implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications

54. There are no direct public health implications arising from the report itself. Most of the actions we are taking (for example travel) will, however, have the potential to have a positive impact on the health of the population.

Procurement Implications

55. Project leads will be engaging with Procurement directly and in line with the council's procurement policy.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

56. One of the key principles is for the Climate Strategy to be equitable, ensuring the transition to low carbon, climate resilient future is fair.

57. The consultation and engagement approach for the Climate discussion document has been planned so that it is inclusive.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

58. This report sets out the council's response to environmental and climate change considerations following the acknowledgement of a climate emergency and agreement by Full Council to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

59. The paper is for Cabinet to note and does not require a decision to be made.

Financial Implications

The table in Appendix 4 shows the Capital and Revenue funds that are allocated to programmes to reduce carbon generation in Wiltshire. To date a total of £88.095m Capital and £3.871m Revenue has been approved, these have different funding streams as shown in the table below.

The council has invested extensively in its carbon reduction programme, committing £50m towards retrofitting its housing stock as well as £12.295m funding to convert 40,000 street lights to LED and £10.4m to reduce emissions from its

corporate estate. The council has also successfully secured £0.68m of government funding to support active travel and has secured a bid of £4.438m to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), following a successful pilot bid of £0.2m to improve Warminster library.

It is recognised that further funding will be required to continue this progression at both an organisational and at a county level. The council is committed to working with government and private sector partners to explore all opportunities to access the funds to facilitate this work.

As part of the Climate Strategy development, the council will begin to quantify how much the pathway to a carbon neutral council will cost.

Legal Implications

60. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Workforce Implications

61. There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

Options Considered

62. The only option considered is to note the report.

Conclusions

63. Since Full Council resolved to acknowledge that there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030, a number of areas of work have been progressed.

Sam Fox, Corporate Director for Place and Environment

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Climate Strategy Stakeholder Engagement Report

Appendix 2: Carbon Reduction works completed and underway on council property

Appendix 3: Area Board supported environmental projects 2020/21

Appendix 4: Capital and Revenue funds that are allocated to programmes to reduce carbon generation in Wiltshire.

Background Papers

None.