

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

18 October 2022

Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency

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 tackle the climate emergency in Wiltshire. This is the sixth progress report to Cabinet following updates in October 2019, July 2020, February 2021, July 2021 and February 2022. Significant progress is reported against each of the seven Climate Strategy themes.

Proposal

That Council:

Notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in February 2022.

Reason for Proposal

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

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

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Update on the Council's Response to the Climate Emergency

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the sixth 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 (2022-32) of:
 - i. Empowered People
 - ii. Resilient Society
 - iii. Thriving Economy
 - iv. Sustainable Environment

Specifically, the mission to make Wiltshire a place where 'we are on the path to carbon neutral (net zero)'.

3. The update on the actions taken in response to the climate emergency is structured against the seven delivery themes of the draft climate strategy.

Background

4. 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.

5. 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 fifth report was presented to Cabinet in February 2022.

6. A Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group was established by Environment Select Committee in 2019 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 (see Environment Select Committee papers for [13 January 2021](#)) and planning (see Environment Select Committee papers for [3 March 2021](#)).
7. In November 2021 the Task Group updated its name to the Climate Emergency Task Group and agreed its revised objectives as:
 - To help shape and influence the development of Wiltshire Council's programme (in all relevant areas) for meeting its objective of making Wiltshire Council carbon neutral and seeking to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 (excluding the geographical area administered by Swindon Borough Council).
 - To scrutinise the delivery of this objective through the Climate Strategy (2022-2027) and its delivery plans, as well as key plans, policies and programmes, such as the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. Including the way in which the Council is measuring progress and how it is performing and reporting against baselines.
 - To provide recommendations on other aspects of decarbonising the county including partnership working and community-led approaches as well as acting as a national role model.
8. The Wiltshire [Climate Strategy](#) was approved by Council in February 2022. It sets out a framework for the council's climate programme under seven delivery themes. Page 18 of the strategy document commits us to developing delivery plans with more detail on actions and targets under the areas of focus in the strategy.
9. On 1 February 2022, Cabinet delegated permission to the Corporate Director for Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change to approve delivery plans for the climate strategy once developed (see item 21 [here](#)).
10. This report is to be considered by Cabinet on 11 October 2022.

Main Considerations for the council

11. The council has again made significant progress in responding to the climate emergency, as detailed below.
12. Following adoption of the [Climate Strategy](#) in February this year, delivery plans have been published which set out how Wiltshire Council will deliver its objectives. The first one, our [Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-2024](#), focuses on achieving our commitment to be carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030. The second delivery plan - [Climate Strategy Delivery Plan for Wiltshire 2022-2024](#) - is outward-facing and focuses on actions that Wiltshire Council can take either alone or in partnership with others to lead the transition to a carbon neutral county.

13. Prioritisation of actions takes into account the Climate Strategy 'areas of focus' where it was clear that work needed to be done. Some of these were marked with an exclamation mark to indicate that work needed to start immediately. The actions have been prioritised according to their impact on carbon emissions, but also their ability to kick start the necessary change or generate the understanding that we will need to help us move to a carbon neutral Wiltshire. The plans also take into account co-benefits, feasibility and cost. A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will help us to track delivery and these are listed at the end of both delivery plans.
14. Work was carried out by the council and consultants Anthesis, specialists in providing support and expertise to organisations looking to be as sustainable as possible, to understand the specific measures required for the county to achieve carbon neutrality. The resulting Pathways [reports](#), published in May 2022, have provided the council with a clear picture of the way forward, progress made so far and have informed the delivery plans.

Public engagement

15. All 18 Area Boards have confirmed Addressing Climate Change / Environmental Issues as a priority for 22/23 and appointed an Environment Lead. A meeting of the Area Board Environment Leads in March 2022 identified a need to hold a webinar on electric vehicle charging infrastructure for town and parish councils. The webinar was held in September (see paragraph 25).
16. An update on projects in each area will be provided at the next 6 monthly update which is scheduled for May 2023.
17. Thirty-three people from across Wiltshire have been recruited to take part in a Climate and Environment Forum to be held online 2-4 times a year. The Forum is a reference group for Wiltshire Council's Environment directorate to enable a regular two-way dialogue and ideas sharing with a representative group of Wiltshire residents. The first informal meeting was held in July 2022 and the first formal meeting in October 2022 to discuss this progress update.
18. The #WiltsCanDoThis social media campaign was refreshed for 2022 with a focus on the cost of living crisis, and what people can do to save money which is also good for the environment
19. Between 15 August 2021 and 15 August 2022, 123 posts have been shared across Facebook and Twitter reaching 179.5k individual accounts (please note that Twitter doesn't provide this data so Twitter reach is not included in this figure). Our content was viewed by these individual accounts 278.1k times. There have been 2.4k clicks on links within the social media posts. There were also 137 comments on posts, 605 likes and 313 shares or retweets.
20. Top posts included grants to improve home energy efficiency and cost of living advice like washing clothes at a lower temperature and using the microwave instead of a conventional oven where appropriate.

Adaptation and Resilience

21. Wiltshire Council is a member of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) along with organisations such as Environment Agency, NHS, emergency responders and Met Office. Recently the LRF Severe Weather Group has started to include climate change as a regular item on its meeting agenda, enabling the council's Climate Team to attend and play a more active part in this Forum focussing on resilience to the effects of climate change.
22. The council is aware of where flooding is taking place, and works in partnership with the Environment Agency, Natural England and other partners e.g. landowners to identify and reduce flood risk. This will include infrastructure spend of £400k on CCTV drainage repair work and then £400k completing land drainage schemes. Additional corporate capital funding of £500k per year has been made available for 3 years to mitigate flooding as a result of climate change and land use changes. New infrastructure is designed using Environment Agency flood risk data which has not informed existing pipe networks, and will take account of climate change.
23. In July Cabinet approved [proposals](#) which include £333,000 each year invested into emptying gullies. Currently the council spends £1.27m each year emptying gullies, with those on main roads or at most risk of flooding emptied once a year, and others cleared and emptied every three years. This new investment will pay for an extra combination jet vacuum unit to enable the highways teams to focus on problem areas throughout the county that are at most risk of flooding.

Delivery theme: Transport

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

24. Progress has been made on implementing the council's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan (approved October 2021). The feasibility study into the replacement of existing EV charging infrastructure has been completed and the location of these charge points has been identified in line with the 2022-24 plan (see Appendix 1)
25. The council has carried out a tender process for provision and replacement of EV charging points at towns with a population of 10,000 or more with the aim for these communities to have at least one council-sponsored public EV charge point. The contract has been awarded and arrangements are being made for start of the contract. Timings of implementation will be communicated shortly. All of the council's electric vehicle charge points use electricity from a green tariff.
26. In addition to the replacement programme above, Town and Parish Councils are able to access support to apply for grant funding for EV chargers, with council grants of up to £2,500 per site. A webinar for town and parish councils and village hall committees was held on 14 September to communicate the council's approach to EV charging infrastructure, including plans for a longer-term EV infrastructure strategy and sharing information on grants from the Office of Low Emissions Vehicles (OLEV). Over 80

participants registered to attend, representing more than 60 organisations across the county.

Public transport

27. Wiltshire Council has been awarded £1.2m by the government's Department for Transport (DfT) to launch an improved flexible, on-demand bus service in the Pewsey Vale area. A consultation survey ran from 25 May to 15 July and allowed people to have their say and let us know what they would like to see from the service.
28. Flexible, on-demand bus services do not run to a set timetable like usual buses. Instead, they enable people to phone or book a bus service via an app, to take them anywhere within the service area at a time to suit them. In the case of this new service, the area it will cover takes in much of Pewsey Vale; from the eastern edge of Devizes, north to Beckhampton and Marlborough, and east to Collingbourne Ducis, Shalbourne and Froxfield, including Pewsey, Burbage, Great Bedwyn and Everleigh. This rural service would provide links to Devizes, Ludgershall and Tidworth, so people can take bus services to other towns.
29. The DfT has confirmed that the Devizes Gateway station project is to be developed further. The study will be led by Network Rail, working in partnership with Wiltshire Council, Great Western Railway and other local partners. The £400,000 study is planned to be completed by March 2023 and will build on the work undertaken for the Devizes Gateway Strategic Outline Business Case, which was submitted to the DfT in November 2021. The study will be made up of two main elements. The first of these will focus on Devizes Gateway and look at station infrastructure requirements, train services and station transport connections, such as bus services and cycling routes. The second element will focus on Westbury station and look at a strategic vision and timetable planning. The proposals meet the council's business plan objective to have well-connected communities.

Active travel

30. People in Wiltshire were consulted during August and September for their views on two cycling and walking plans, one for the whole of the county and one for Salisbury. The two Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) set out proposals for cycling and walking networks in each area and highlight how these will be improved to create connected networks for pedestrians and cyclists.
31. The Wiltshire LCWIP is an infrastructure framework for the whole county, while the Salisbury document focuses on the cycling and walking opportunities in the city and the local area. LCWIPs for Chippenham, Devizes and Trowbridge are also in development, but at an earlier stage of the process, and in the future the council will also work on LCWIPs for Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Calne, Corsham, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Melksham, Royal Wootton Bassett, Tidworth, Warminster and Westbury. The council has engaged with the relevant Town Councils to produce the LCWIPs and encourages them to help deliver the infrastructure where possible.

32. The aim of the LCWIPs is to provide an environment that will enable and encourage more trips to be made on foot or by bike, and help to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and also cut carbon emissions. Where relevant, they will also be used to inform the planning process, and future funding from the Department for Transport for cycling and walking schemes will be linked to each final plan.
33. The council has recently completed a self-assessment for the newly formed Active Travel England. The results will be used to help inform the award of future development and capacity funding to enable the preparation of schemes for future bids. The council assessed itself as Level 1, which is the level that most councils are expected to be at this stage.
34. The council is working on a number of cycling and walking schemes around the county. Appendix 2 provides a summary of current progress. The latest project to be implemented is a substantial walking and cycling scheme between Winsley and Bradford on Avon which was completed during the school holidays. This scheme provides a safe route to the local secondary school from the village for pupils. Other active travel schemes are in the process of being prepared with a view to submitting bids when the opportunities arise.
35. An e-bike hire scheme is being set up in Salisbury, with docking stations at the hospital and at the railway station. The aim is to expand this to Amesbury and Stonehenge to promote green tourism once further funding is available.
36. The council is reviewing the demand for bike hangars using the data collected in Salisbury in a survey we ran with Co-Cars. We will use this to select preferred sites for a pilot and will discuss these potential pilot locations with the relevant ward councillors.
37. Bradford on Avon town council is talking to Co-Cars about running a demand survey for a car club and we will help publicise this once it is finalised. We are looking into funding such as Defra Air Quality funds which might be used to implement the pilot scheme.

Air Quality

38. The 2022 Annual Status Report (ASR) has been submitted to DEFRA which reports in detail on the progress made in addressing poor air quality in the 8 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Wiltshire. All Wiltshire's AQMA have been declared due to exceedances in NO₂ from road traffic. Once the ASR has been accepted by DEFRA it will be available on the council's website.
39. The Wiltshire Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is in the process of being updated and will be subject to public consultation later this year. We will be using Community Infrastructure Levy funding for replacement of our elderly real time monitoring stations and will be shortly commencing a procurement exercise to replace these and add a new station in Calne.

Delivery Theme: Housing and the Built Environment

40. The Council, as Local Planning Authority, is [legally obliged](#) to ensure the policies of the Local Plan Review, when taken as a whole, are designed to ensure that new development contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. As part of current work on the Local Plan, two policy themes are being developed that relate to the review of Core Policies 41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy) and 42 (Renewable Energy).
41. In terms of sustainable construction, the preferred policy direction is seeking to employ a fabric first approach to the design of new buildings that incorporates energy use and space heating standards. Such policies are considered to be achievable and sound with very little additional increase in build costs when compared to current building regulations. Evidence on this matter has been developed through an extensive peer review of policies in other Local Plans, including work that has recently been the subject of independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Further testing of our draft policy will be undertaken later this year through viability assessment and sustainability appraisal.
42. Whilst Core Policy 42 of the Core Strategy remains compliant with national planning policy, the evidence base that supports it is being updated to inform the development of the policy. A new Renewable Energy Study is being prepared by Land Use Consultants and the Centre for Sustainable Energy. The Study will assess the technical potential for renewable energy renewable and low carbon energy, as well as factors that may affect the extent to which technologies can be deployed e.g. grid connection capability, planning constraints and economic barriers. An important element of the Study involves undertaking landscape sensitivity testing for various scales of wind and ground mounted solar development which will include assessments of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts.

Housing retrofit

43. The [Housing Energy Efficiency Programme](#) (HEEP) which will retrofit all 5,000 council homes by 2030 has started and we have carried out retrofit assessments for the first 800 properties. The aim of the project is to reduce the amount of CO₂ produced by 15,000 tonnes across our housing stock.
44. 90 council homes have been retrofitted ahead of the main HEEP using Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme 1b funding. 211 measures have been installed, including: loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, ventilation, LED lights, smart hot water cylinders, air source heat pumps, Quantum storage heaters, PV panels, solar diverters (hot water from PV), heating controls. We have spent £480,000 of the grant and have had good feedback from BEIS with regards to the wider programme and communications.
45. The [Warm and Safe Wiltshire service](#) continues to be delivered by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, in partnership with Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE). Free advice is offered to households on energy efficiency and cutting energy

bills, in order to help residents live in safer, healthier homes. The service has been used by 654 households in the months April to July 2022.

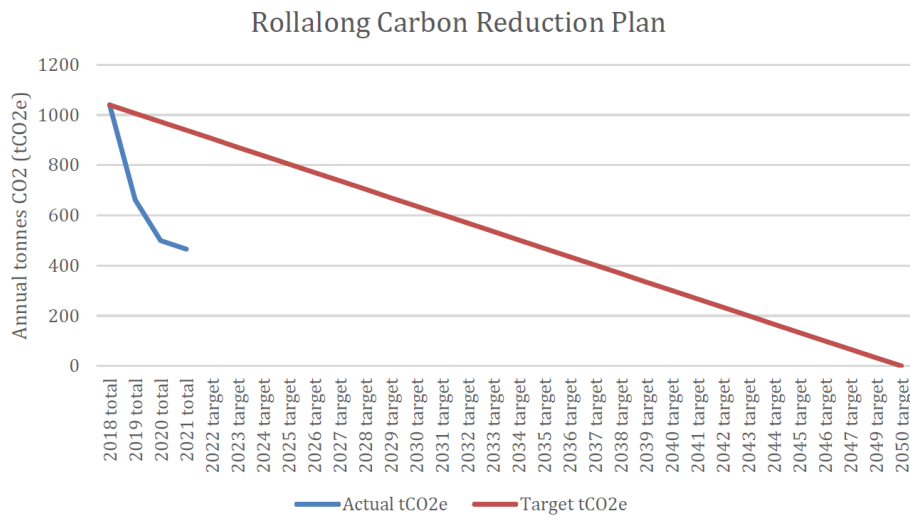
46. The Retrofit Project is another project being carried out in partnership with CSE, aimed at finding out more about the retrofit experience and understanding retrofit needs for different types of homes in Wiltshire. The study engages with a number of households that have contacted the Warm and Safe service, advises them on the measures needed to retrofit their home, such as insulation, installing heat pumps or solar panels, and also finds out about how the residents are impacted by the changes. The desktop element of this research has been completed and will provide information on different housing archetypes and identify real life experiences and challenges to retrofitting existing private sector housing stock.

Private Sector Housing

47. An initiative has been undertaken in South West Wiltshire to identify privately rented properties with poor Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) of F & G which by law should not be let out, and also those properties with no EPC at all. The council has identified 50 plus properties since November 2021 that did not have EPCs and has negotiated with the landlords for these to be completed, providing education about legal requirements at the same time. South West Wiltshire has a higher proportion of properties that have poor EPC ratings compared with other parts of the county.

New Build Social Housing

48. The council has tendered a 3 year contract to find a Modern Method of Construction (MMC) provider to deliver 1000 new affordable zero carbon homes. MMC is a process which focuses on off-site construction techniques, such as mass production and factory assembly, as alternatives to traditional building. The process has been described as a way to produce more, better quality homes in less time. By pooling our demand with other like-minded organisations we can enable these efficiencies by ordering homes from a set of standard house types.
49. This tender was undertaken in collaboration with Magna Housing Association and the contract has been awarded to Rollalong who are currently working on our pilot programme of 19 zero carbon council homes. The factory is based in Wimborne, Dorset and enables opportunities for local employment. During a time of huge price increases and price uncertainty, the tender price, albeit 12% higher than the pilot order based on 2019 prices, has been fixed until March 2023. Therefore all orders placed by March will come with cost certainty.
50. The tender process was the first to include a Cost, Quality and Social Value procurement split with Social Value making up 10% of the overall score. The Social Value to this contract offered over £8m of social value to Wiltshire Specifically.
51. In terms of the quality questions, a strong focus was placed on the commitment of the factory delivering zero carbon homes offering an efficient end product for our customer as well as evidencing their own roadmap to reducing embodied carbon (see chart below).



52. Planning determination has been achieved on our Rowde site, which will deliver 10 of the pilot homes. Planning is awaited for Corsley. It is anticipated that all 19 units will be completed on site by April 2023.

Non domestic retrofit

53. In February 2022, the council in association with Community First, held an online event for members of the Wiltshire Village Hall network with a focus on village hall buildings and their path to net zero. The event was attended by 28 people from a range of village halls. Information was shared on the ‘Fabric First’ approach and low carbon technologies, with a focus on providing further information for village halls to take away and consider. Two thirds of the halls had already had some improvement measures to their existing buildings. Village Halls that were already on their low carbon journey shared their experience of undertaking measures, and how they were funded.

Delivery theme: Natural Environment

Engagement

54. On 15 July 2022, Wiltshire Council hosted a [Natural Environment Summit](#) to bring key groups and organisations together to discuss opportunities to make meaningful long-term improvements to local biodiversity. A number of organisations and groups attended, including National Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Salisbury & Wilton Swifts and the River Marden Project. The purpose of the Natural Environment Summit was to better understand and explore the different collective expertise available and to share knowledge and ideas. It also looked at ways to work together to boost nature's recovery and mitigate climate change. A variety of topics were discussed, including a detailed look at the Environment Act and its opportunities, biodiversity net gain, and the important role of landowners in nature's recovery.

55. The council is at the very early stages of engaging with landowners and their agents to see what initiatives are being proposed to help with climate mitigation and nutrient offsetting and to find out how we can help to facilitate these plans when suitable.
56. As part of a pilot study to test community engagement techniques for the roll out of local-level plans (Settlement Frameworks) to support the [Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure \(GBI\) Strategy](#) and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the council undertook face to face community engagement with four communities across Wiltshire in March 2022. Devizes, Calne, Trowbridge and Bradford on Avon were chosen. The council secured £10,000 of funding from Natural England to undertake work with local consultants on ways to engage the public.. As well as reviewing existing local GBI' (e.g. green open spaces, woodlands, river corridors, canals)' and mapping the data, this engagement allowed us to find out what GBI projects local communities were currently engaged in and wished to see in the future. The engagement process also introduced the [Community Environmental Toolkit](#) and explained how it could be used to assist communities.
57. The council is starting to work with the Environmental Farmers' Group to look for opportunities for environmental offsetting. It is a farmer co-operative to improve our local environment and to facilitate access to the new environmental schemes and trading opportunities, supported by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. We also work with local farm cluster groups in the Hampshire Avon catchment. This initial work has focussed on the delivery of cover crops in the Hampshire Avon catchment for water quality reasons, but there will be wider benefits from these schemes.

Wildflower areas

58. Wiltshire Council implemented works to trial rewilding and wildflower areas across rural road verges and more urban grassy areas and parklands, to increase biodiversity and improve the natural environment. Sixteen areas chosen by towns and parish councils throughout Wiltshire have been left unmown to allow for rewilding to take place, as native flora and fauna are left to grow. Rewilding is aimed at restoring an area's natural process, creating natural ecosystems that require little or no management.
59. Wildflower areas will not only increase biodiversity, creating vital habitats for insects and other wildlife and attract natural pollinators such as bees, but also breathe new life and colour into the county's roads and grassy areas. Each designated area will receive a single cut in March and then be left uncut until September to allow the native fauna and wildflowers to thrive. More information including the list of areas can be found [here](#).

Woodland creation

60. The council submitted a joint bid with Swindon Borough Council's Great Western Community Forest team to the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund. The bid was for £300,000 to fund 3 full time woodland officer fixed term (2 year) posts and one part-time fixed term data mapping / funding officer (2 years) to support the facilitation of tree planting across the county in partnership with communities and landowners and

the third sector. The tree officers would act as coordinators for a relaunched Wiltshire and Swindon Tree Warden network in association with the Tree Council. As part of the bid we set targets for woodland planting delivery for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 planting seasons as well as committing to delivering tree planting in at least 3 lower super output areas in the 25% most deprived.

61. We should know soon whether we have received the funding, with the first tranche of funds being released to the successful bidders soon thereafter.

Salisbury River Park

62. The [Salisbury River Park](#) £27 million transformational scheme aims to reduce flood risk to over 350 homes and businesses in Salisbury. It will also create 2 hectares of enhanced riverside habitat for the benefit of wildlife, remove obstructions to allow fish migration to continue upstream and create 13 hectares of high quality public open space, including enhanced foot and cycle paths that benefits residents and visitors. The Salisbury River Park project is a collaboration between the Environment Agency, Wiltshire Council, Salisbury City Council and Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
63. A programme to plant over 600 trees throughout the Salisbury River Park project started in June 2022 with the first new trees planted along Coldharbour Lane, near Fisherton Recreation Ground. Nine Hornbeam trees have initially been planted to replace the Ash trees that were recently removed due to ash dieback disease. This will be followed over the next 18 months, as construction continues, by a variety of native tree species being planted throughout the scheme. Around 100 trees have had to be removed to enable the main scheme works to start next month. This is the earliest the main works could commence due to ecological restrictions on the timing of any works within the river channels.
64. In the first phase, the River Avon channel in the Central Car Park will be dewatered to enable work to start in the river channel. Excavation work will also start in Central Car Park and Fisherton Recreation Ground. A temporary play area will be built in Ashley Road Open Space. Foundation works will also commence at Ashley Road for the construction of a flood defence wall.

Delivery theme: Energy

65. The Solar Together Wiltshire collective buying project launched in May and attracted more than 10,000 registrations across Wiltshire and Swindon. Of these, more than 1000 Wiltshire residents and businesses have now paid a deposit to have solar photovoltaic panels and/or battery storage installed by Infinity Renewables or EE Renewables over the next 6 months. This project will add to the renewable generation capacity in Wiltshire and save money for bill payers. A final report of the project will be available for the next progress update.
66. The council has commenced senior-level discussions with Scottish and Southern Electricity Network, our local Distribution Network Operator, with the aim of easing grid constraints in the county. An increase in grid capacity is crucial to enable delivery

of low carbon technologies such as renewable energy, heat pumps and electric vehicle chargers.

Delivery theme: Green economy

67. Wiltshire Council has allocated £1 million a year between 2021-2025 to support activity on the high street, providing meaningful and transformational support to grow businesses, support employment and transform Wiltshire's high streets to meet the needs of the local community. Wiltshire Council's business plan enshrines our commitment to creating and supporting vibrant town centres. An improved offer and experience of town centres and high streets will support an increase of local people using their local centre. Additional environmental benefits are expected as proposals are developed.
68. In April 2022 Government published its UK Shared Prosperity Fund ("UKSPF") prospectus, requesting Local Authorities to prepare Investment Plans to set out how they will invest allocations for levelling up in their area. The government indicated its allocation of £5.7m UKSPF to Wiltshire Council. Investment made under this fund will be able to demonstrate the extent of contribution to net zero and nature recovery objectives, including the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, wider environmental considerations, such as resilience to natural hazards and the national 25 Year Environment Plan commitments. Projects will support green growth by considering how they can work with the natural environment and consider their impact on our natural assets and nature.

Skills development

69. The council worked with John of Gaunt School to bring climate science and green jobs to life through the Careers Hub's "Embedding Careers into the Maths Curriculum" project. The project was aimed at encouraging girls to study maths to a high level and to demonstrate to all students the ways that maths is used in a wide variety of jobs. The project involved two classroom sessions looking at how maths is used by the council's climate team, how statistics and graphs are used to present climate science, and the students used the results of the Climate Strategy survey in 2021 to present the results to Cllr Tamara Reay using pictograms, bar graphs and posters. The class then visited County Hall to see the sustainable aspects of the building, as well as seeing the council chamber and taking part in some climate related activities.
70. A draft Green Skills Action plan for Wiltshire and Swindon is being developed by the Green Skills Task and Finish group, a subgroup of Swindon and Wiltshire's Local Enterprise Partnership Skills and Talent Board. The plan aims to ensure demand for upskilling existing employees in sustainable practices is met with sufficient provision and that demand for new jobs to support net zero is met by the supply of appropriate provision. Reports will be produced on a six monthly basis for the duration of the planned actions (2022 – 2026) to set out progress on the aspiration for greater numbers of green jobs in the economy.

Engagement

71. [Birchall Tea](#) in Amesbury achieved the Carbon Neutral International Standard a few years ago and the council has been using this company as an exemplar of what can be achieved, to celebrate their success and share knowledge between businesses to enable them to learn from each other.
72. The council has held a consultation for a report on what our Inward Investment strategy should be and to highlight any barriers to companies looking to locate in Wiltshire. The report is now complete and one of the sectors that is highlighted as an area of opportunity is the green economy.

Delivery theme: Waste

Waste collection service

73. New countywide collection rounds for residual non-recyclable waste were implemented between 28 February and 11 March 2022. These more efficient rounds have allowed for the collection vehicle fleet to be further reduced by 4 vehicles to 117 (the waste collection contract began operating in 2018 with 149 vehicles. This reduced to 121 vehicles in 2020 following the implementation of more efficient collection rounds for mixed dry recycling).
74. A review of the efficiency of the collection rounds for garden waste are planned for later in 2022.
75. Proactive communications continue to be delivered via social media and other appropriate channels to encourage residents to continue to recycle as much of their waste as possible, and to provide information to help reduce levels of material contamination.
76. A review of communal waste and recycling facilities, typically provided for domestic multi-occupancy premises, has been completed to ensure that the containment provided is adequate and supported by the necessary signage to allow occupants to fully utilise the facilities provided. Activity is planned during the remainder of 2022 to upgrade facilities where such interventions have been identified as being needed. This is a crucial step towards increasing the quality of recyclables collected, and to reduce the levels of recycling contamination with “non-target” materials or general refuse.
77. The council’s waste contractor and client team have actively participated in demonstrations and trials of Electric Vehicles designed for waste collection activities, aimed at informing future service design opportunities. Representatives of the council and the waste contractor have also visited a key vehicle manufacturing facility to help understand the feasibility and opportunities of moving the substantially sized waste collection vehicle fleet to alternative fuel and so inform future service design and procurement options.

Household recycling centres

78. In January 2022, the waste service commissioned a detailed compositional analysis of the non-recyclable waste collected at the council's Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). The results of the analysis highlighted that 45% of the material typically received as residual waste across the HRC network was either recyclable or suitable for reuse. This indicates that much of this material had not been pre-sorted before being brought to site for disposal. The analysis also showed that 8.1% of this material, typically disposed of as "residual non-recyclable waste", was suitable for collection via the council's blue-lidded bin kerbside recycling service (i.e. plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, glass bottles and jars, aluminium and steel cans, and cardboard and paper).
79. The council has calculated the carbon impact of operating the HRC service. This analysis has shown that 85% of the carbon emitted by the HRC service results from the disposal of waste and recycling which is received at the sites, with only 10% of carbon resulting from residents visiting the sites in their vehicles and 4% of emissions arising from the haulage of collected waste and recycling. 1% of emissions arise from direct site operations, such as compacting waste. Whilst disposal of non-recyclable waste equates to under 30% of the overall waste collected at these sites, as this waste is all sent to landfill, it is responsible for emitting over 90% of the carbon produced. Diverting sorted black bag waste collected at the household recycling centres to an energy from waste facility is estimated to have the potential to save more than 10,500 tonnes of CO₂e per annum.
80. Based on this data, the council is actively developing proposals to introduce initiatives to reduce the amount of HRC waste which is sent to landfill.
81. A paint re-use trial has commenced at the Amesbury and Salisbury HRCs, and is being widely promoted to Wiltshire council tenants in the South of the county. This will also be promoted among other community groups to encourage them to access free paint available at these HRCs, and therefore help the council avoid the expensive treatment costs that disposing of this waste product can incur. Consideration will be given to extending this approach to other HRCs across the county once the results of the trial have been assessed later in 22/23.

Publication of the 2021/22 End Destination Register

82. The council monitors the destinations of material collected for recycling, composting and reuse as far as is practicable from data supplied by its contractors. It publishes an End Destination Register every year to summarise this information and provide residents with information as to where their waste has been sent to be managed. The 2021/22 register has been published on the council's website since the last update and shows that 94.8% of the material collected for recycling, reuse and composting was managed within the UK, thereby reducing the "waste miles" travelled. The remaining 5.2% was managed at facilities in Europe.

Recycling and Landfill Diversion

83. Wiltshire's household recycling rate outturn for 2021/22 was 42.5%. This is the proportion of household waste managed which is recycled, composted or sent for reuse.
84. Through a combination of this activity, together with the amount of residual non-recyclable waste sent to waste treatment facilities to either generate energy or produce a fuel, the council diverted 80.9% of the waste it managed from landfill (2021/22).
85. The council continues to subsidise the cost of purchasing food waste digesters and compost bins for Wiltshire residents, to support those that wish to compost their food and garden waste at home. Between August 2021 and June 2022, 749 Green Johanna's were purchased by Wiltshire residents. These composting units are estimated to have collectively diverted over 187 tonnes of food and garden waste from the residual household waste bins, which saves carbon emissions from collection and treatment. The ability to produce a good quality home compost that avoids the need for commercial peat-based compost and chemical fertilisers also brings significant carbon reduction benefits.

Delivery theme: Carbon Neutral Council

86. The council is working with the Carbon Literacy Project to deliver carbon literacy training and 13 staff completed a successful pilot course in July. Carbon Literacy is defined as: "An awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis". The aim of the one day course is to create a low carbon culture, where those attending understand the scale of the problem and feel empowered to take action on climate change as well as support and accept climate mitigation policies.
87. A council working group has been developing specific actions for Leisure, Libraries and the History Centre which include energy use reduction as well as opportunities to engage the community given their unique contact with the public. Leisure Centres are one of our highest energy users and Malmesbury Health and Wellbeing Manager has started pulling together ideas for energy savings in leisure centres and will work with centre managers and our Energy Team to roll it out.
88. Libraries have signed up to the Green Libraries Manifesto and submitted a bid to Green Libraries for books and resources on sustainability.
89. The History Centre uses the sustainable laboratory standard and is able to use its role as adviser to Wiltshire museums to share best practice particularly in relation to energy efficiency and collections conservation and storage practices.
90. The council [publishes](#) an annual report on the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions arising from its own estate and operations in line with the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#). Emissions included arise from council owned or controlled estate or buildings, council

operational fleet, streetlights and business travel. The figures exclude emissions from schools and academies, social housing and outsourced operations. In 2014-15 scope 1 & 2 emissions were 23,758 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent and in 2021/22 were 5275 tonnes of CO₂e. The council's GHG emissions fluctuate from year to year due to acquisition and divestment of buildings, change of use of buildings, seasonal weather conditions which affect the need for heating and cooling buildings, and improvements to energy efficiency made during the year. The council is engaged in a range of work to deliver savings in emissions and costs. Examples include rationalisation and improvement of the council's property portfolio, investment in energy efficiency measures within the remaining estate such as lighting and heating equipment upgrades, investment in appropriate renewable energy technologies and the replacement of street lighting units with LED lights which use considerably less energy. During accounting year 2020/21 occupancy and usage of buildings and staff travel were affected by COVID-19, which meant that carbon emissions went up in 2021/22 as normal operations resumed.

Procurement

91. Following a robust procurement process, the council has awarded its new Streetscene contract to Idverde, the current contractors. Streetscene covers a wide range of services, including grounds maintenance, grass cutting, street cleaning, delivering election materials to polling stations and keeping play areas safe and tidy.
92. The new contract will bring the council a £400,000 annual saving against the current spend and will also see year on year carbon reduction until the contract is carbon neutral by 2030. It also includes targets for environmentally managed land areas and a range of social value benefits, too - the contract will look to include community support, with Idverde to provide Streetscene activity days, equipment or training. The carbon benefits are being delivered by the electrification of the fleet and by moving to alternative fuels for machinery, such as the biofuel hydrotreated vegetable oil. The move to more sustainable land management is also built into the contract with a target to support fauna and flora through schemes such as wildflower areas.
93. Wiltshire libraries have recently been through a procurement for library stock provision. The Libraries are members of the Consortium for United Stock Purchase (CUSP) which is a group of 12 local authorities from the South West that collaborate during tendering and contracting library stock, the group consists predominately of public libraries with some Schools Library Services too.
94. During procurement specific questions were asked about: social value; environmental sustainability and carbon management policies; a description of how suppliers plan to reduce their carbon emissions; their engagement with publishers regarding sustainable book production and delivery; and adoption of more sustainable packaging and labelling materials. The latter covered what steps they are taking to reduce the use of single use plastic in the book jackets and sleeves.

Pensions and investments

95. Wiltshire Pension Fund (WPF) is an early adopter of the Task Force on Climate-related Disclosures (TCFD). WPF is a separate entity from the council with its own governance and board, which has agreed a goal to work towards net zero by 2050. WPF has published their second annual report including an indicator showing the carbon intensity of their investments (please see full [report](#)). As of March 2022, 4.5% of the fund was invested in renewable energy, a very significant increase on the previous year, while the proportion invested in fossil fuels reduced to 1.5%.
96. As set out in the annual Treasury Management [report](#) to Cabinet in July 2022: Wiltshire Council will not intentionally invest in any investment that is not ethical and would not be consistent with our environmental and social policy objectives. Where appropriate, the council will consider investments that deliver environmental and social benefits, whilst maintaining our Security, Liquidity and Yield criteria.
97. In March 2022, the Council made an investment with Standard Chartered Bank, which was classified as a 'sustainable deposit'. This investment was recently renewed for another three months at 1.24% which was in line with market interest rates. Standard Chartered Bank report that the deposit is linked to sustainability and the [sustainable development goals of the UN](#), which focus on addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and prosperity as well as climate change.
98. The council is investigating the possibility of setting up a new money market fund with Northern Trust Asset Management. Northern Trust reports that the fund incorporates their custom ESG strategy and metrics, as they take the first steps towards the integration of sustainability.

Fleet

99. The council's emerging Fleet Strategy includes key climate and greenhouse gas objectives to transition the council's fleet to electric and alternative fuels; decrease mileage and fuel consumption through telematics and feedback in vehicles; pool cars to be reduced in size and increasingly electric; explore offsetting until full carbon neutrality is achievable. The council has ordered 10 EV pool cars, 15 EV vans, and a further 17 EV vans are going through the procurement process.
100. The council's emerging Depot Strategy will incorporate EV charging of council fleet vehicles and funding for a feasibility study has been secured. A working group has been set up and the council is currently identifying the depot service requirements.

Static emissions

101. The Property Carbon Reduction Programme (PRCP) has so far delivered 50 completed projects with 17 more currently awarded and underway. These range from LED lighting upgrades to PV solar panel installations to the removal of oil fuelled heating and other carbon saving works. This represents a total capital commitment of £3.5m and is so far estimated to save 1500 tonnes of CO₂ per year from the council's

carbon footprint. Estimated carbon savings are being verified using the billing and meter data from each site. More information on this will be ready at the next report.

102. The programme has focused specifically on PV installations during 2022 in response to the energy market price rises, as they will help to mitigate the impact of those increased costs. The council now has over 1,600 kWp of electricity generation installed on corporate properties which it is estimated will have reduced energy bills by over £130,000.
103. Thanks to sustained investment in solar PV over time and the above recent programmes of work, in 2021/22 we generated over 550,000 kWh renewable electricity on the corporate estate.
104. We have also been looking at a programme of solar canopy installations in sites where there are suitable council owned car parks sited next to high energy using buildings. The first site for this programme to be rolled out will be Five Rivers Leisure Centre in Salisbury. Planning agreement has been obtained for the work which should be completed in Spring 2023.
105. As reported in the last update, in addition to the council's own funding through the PRCP, £4.5 million of government funding was secured from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to carry out work during 2021 to decarbonise 4 major sites and to improve energy efficiency at 12 others. All of the work on site has now completed, and the switch over from gas to electric at 4 Heat Pump sites is complete.
106. In 2022 we secured a further £961,753 of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant funding to decarbonise 3 sites by installing biomass boiler systems. These works have been tendered and have started at Lime Kiln Leisure Centre and Warminster Leisure Centre. The third site, Monkton Park, is waiting for planning permission to determine if it can go ahead.
107. A grant of £99,775 has been secured from the Low Carbon Skills Fund to develop detailed Heat Decarbonisation Plans for 17 high energy use buildings where fossil fuels are still used for heating. This work will be completed before March 2023.
108. The £12 million project to convert the council's streetlighting to energy efficient LED lighting is complete for all standard streetlights in Wiltshire. The remaining units being heritage and special units, of which 420 have been converted out of 2500. The project is predicted to be complete by the end of March 2023. The equivalent of around 1770 tonnes of CO₂ will be saved each year, which will also provide significant cost savings for the council in future years as well as reduced maintenance costs.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

109. The Pathways reports were presented to the Climate Emergency Task Group on 13 May ahead of a presentation by Anthesis consultants to all councillors on 26 May. The Climate Emergency Task Group commented on the Climate Strategy delivery

plans at its meeting on 5 August 2022. On 6 May 2022, the Task Group received a briefing from the Army on their response to the climate emergency.

Safeguarding Implications

110. The impacts of climate change are amplifying safeguarding issues and falling heavily on vulnerable people both globally and in the UK.
111. Evidence suggests that vulnerable demographic groups experience disproportionate effects on their health outcomes from climate related impacts.
112. This includes young children, babies and older people who are particularly affected by extremes in temperature and the disruption caused by severe weather such as flooding¹. People with physical or mental health problems have a lower ability to act due to physical constraints or a lower awareness of their circumstances. People with low personal mobility or living in areas with lower accessibility of services tend to have less ability to respond and recover because it may take them longer to help themselves or to seek and receive help from others.

Public Health Implications

113. Climate change and public health are inextricably linked. Adopting a climate strategy for Wiltshire, which looks to reduce carbon emissions in Wiltshire, will have a significant and positive impact on the health of the population. Actions from implementing the strategy will improve health outcomes for all residents and help reduce health inequalities. Better home insulation will not only reduce emissions but also provide healthier homes for some of our most vulnerable people. Active travel schemes will help increase levels of physical activity, connecting people to their local communities and potentially leading to improved air quality through reduced car use. Local food production will decrease food miles, benefiting the environment, whilst providing healthier choices.

Procurement Implications

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

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

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

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

116. 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.

¹ [Socially vulnerable groups sensitive to climate impacts | Climate Just](#)

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

117. This paper is for Cabinet and Council to note and does not require a decision to be made.

Financial Implications

118. In response to the acknowledgement that there is a climate emergency and the resolution made by Council to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030, a Sustainable Environment is a key principle of the Council's Business Plan.
119. As part of the Budget Setting process, Revenue and Capital budgets have been updated to deliver against this objective, this includes continued investment, new investment and savings and covers the programmes listed in the report above.
120. The emerging Fleet Strategy which is due to be consulted on and agreed in 2022 will require further capital investment in vehicles and infrastructure and seeks to deliver a carbon neutral provision for 2030 for all council vehicles.
121. The Pathways [reports](#) by Anthesis consultants published in May 2022 set out anticipated costs and benefits to the council and to the Wiltshire economy of delivering carbon neutrality.

Legal Implications

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

Workforce Implications

123. Replacement of our fleet with electric vehicles where possible and encouraging staff to use the new bikes being provided for short journeys will require changes to ways of working. The Climate Strategy also commits us to rolling out carbon literacy training to staff.

Options Considered

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

Conclusions

125. 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 and continue to progress as set out in this report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of EV charge points planned

Appendix 2: Active Travel update