

Update on 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'. Cabinet subsequently committed to make the council 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 seventh progress report that has been prepared.

In this latest report the council updates on a range of projects including:

- the key funding it has secured to retrofit homes and drive tree planting
- innovations for waste services to help recycle as much as possible
- educating young people on what they can do to make a difference
- making its own buildings as green as possible
- supporting residents across the county to install solar panels
- continuing to develop active travel schemes and investing in electric vehicle charging technology
- being confirmed as a Bronze Carbon Literate organisation by the Carbon Literacy Project

In a recent independent Corporate Peer Challenge, it was said in the final report that Wiltshire Council is excelling in work to address climate change – further demonstrating the council's commitment to the climate cause. The report stated: "The council's work to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change is impressive, with many activities that would be considered exceptional in other organisations being seen very much as the 'day job'."

Here are some highlights of how the council is supporting the county to become carbon neutral:

- Funding of more than £3.6m successfully secured from Government which will increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon footprint of up to 210 Wiltshire homes
- 90 council homes have been retrofitted to be more energy efficient
- £294,800 of funding successfully secured from Government to support tree planting and woodland creation targets – delivering 111Ha of trees in 2023/24 and 222Ha in 2024/2

- The council is on track to deliver more than 700 installations in Wiltshire as part of the Solar Together scheme – totalling more than 5,000 solar panels. A second scheme will be launching in early summer
- Between August 2022 and January 2023, more than 58 tonnes of reusable items were collected at household recycling sites, saving 23 tonnes of CO_{2e} compared with sending this waste to landfill
- A pop-up reuse shop in Devizes prevented 2.1 tonnes of waste from going to landfill by selling items collected from recycling centres such as bikes, tools and toys
- More than 15 tonnes of batteries collected so far through new kerbside collection scheme
- Leisure items recycling scheme launched at four centres which allows usually discarded items to be eventually recycled and used again
- 74 cycle parking spaces and an e-bike docking station has been installed at Salisbury Train Station
- 1,200 pupils have attended Bikeability training since the start of the 2022/23 school year
- £878k allocated for further Active Travel schemes in the county
- Applications have been received through a council scheme for 35 sites to have electric vehicle charging point feasibility studies – with funding support from the council
- The council is investing an extra £1m between 2022/23 and 2024/25 to empty gullies and help prevent flooding
- The Warm and Safe advice service has been extended for a further three years
- Libraries service secured funding to produce a series of talks and book collections on climate change and sustainable living
- The Salisbury River Park project continues to make progress – the council's flagship project to improve resilience to climate impacts

Here are some highlights of Wiltshire Council's progress in becoming a carbon neutral organisation:

- Almost 60 members of staff complete carbon literacy training to help them become more energy efficient in their work and home lives, and the council has been awarded a Carbon Literate Organisation Bronze award
- The council's case studies featured at the UN Climate Change conference COP27 in Egypt
- Air source heat pumps have been installed at three leisure sites reducing gas usage by around 6,200 MWh per annum
- 54 installations of solar photovoltaics at leisure sites generated 1,746 MWh of electricity in 2022/23
- Renewable energy on council property increased by more than five times between 2019/20 and 2022/23 – from 324 MWh to 1,746 MWh
- The council's 2021/22 greenhouse gas emissions are 5,275 tCO_{2e} which is a reduction of 75% on its 2014/15 footprint – 2022/23 data available later this year
- The council adopted a socially responsible procurement policy which played a part in awarding its recent £80m highways contract

- Telematics have now been installed in all 200 of the council's own vehicles – providing vital data on fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions related to driver behaviour
- The council has upgraded its gritters and replaced them with a new modern fleet with Euro 6 compliant diesel engines – much better for emissions
- 91% of staff training was carried out online rather than face-to-face
- The number of council printers reduced by 50% and ageing printers have been replaced with ones that use 60% less energy

Proposal

That Council notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in October 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

16 May 2023

Update on Council's response to the climate emergency

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the seventh 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:
 - (1) Empowered People
 - (2) Resilient Society
 - (3) Thriving Economy
 - (4) 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.
5. The council resolved to acknowledge that there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 – recognizing that the council only has direct control over 0.5% of carbon emissions in Wiltshire but can use its democratic mandate and other levers of influence to have an impact on wider emissions. Cabinet has also pledged to make Wiltshire Council carbon neutral by 2030.
6. The [minutes](#) of the meeting are available online (see pages 21 to 24). 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 sixth report was presented to Cabinet in October 2022.

7. 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](#)).
8. 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.
9. 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. These were [published](#) in September 2022.

Main Considerations for the council

10. In 2021 Wiltshire Council received an excellent rating of 81% in Climate Emergency UK's Council Climate Plan Scorecards, ranking it as the fifth best unitary authority in the UK for its response to climate change. The council has also recently been awarded the Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation award.
11. On our target for the organisation to be carbon neutral by 2030, an independent [report](#) from Anthesis found that the council is in a very strong position to meet this carbon neutral commitment. At present, our 2021/22 greenhouse gas emissions are 5,275 tCO₂e which is a reduction of 75% on the council's 2014/15 footprint. Data for 2022/23 is not yet available and will be reported in the next update to October Cabinet and Council.
12. In November 2022 the council was assessed by local authority officers and councillors from other councils as part of a Local Government Association Peer Review. The [final report](#) stated that we are excelling in work to address climate change: "The council's work to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change is impressive, with many

activities that would be considered exceptional in other organisations being seen very much as the 'day job' "The Climate Strategy, which was informed by a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, has good levels of corporate ownership amongst officers and members, to the extent that climate change work is seen very much as 'business as usual' and is integrated in the day-to-day operations of the council, and is aligned to the delivery of the Business Plan".

13. Following [publication](#) of the Climate Strategy delivery plans in September 2022, an initial set of key performance indicators has been developed to track progress against our objectives (see **Appendix 1**). These will be further developed over time. Data is not yet available for most of the indicators for 2022/23 but will be published with the next update where available. There is a significant reporting lag for any government data on the county's carbon emissions or renewable energy.

Public engagement

14. All 18 Area Boards have confirmed Addressing Climate Change / Environmental Issues as a priority for 2022/23 and appointed an Environment Lead. An update on projects in each area is included at **Appendix 2**.
15. A facilitated action planning day was offered to all Wiltshire town and parish councils on 27 March 2023 with a follow up session planned for 17 May 2023. 40 staff and councillors attended, representing more than 32 local councils. The day covered the science of climate change, its current and future impacts locally, and their effects on nature, livelihoods and people. Action planning included the levers of influence available to local councils, and the areas of action such as energy generation, transport and waste. The local councils then considered how to engage and communicate with their residents and businesses within their communities. Finally, they decided on actions that they could do immediately.
16. The Wiltshire Climate and Environment Forum (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) held its second formal meeting in January 2023 to discuss the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). Discussions were held on how to best engage with the public and interest groups through the consultation process, comments about the overall objectives contained in the AQAP and any areas or issues currently missing that should be included in the plan. The third formal meeting in April focused on waste and recycling.
17. Wiltshire Council featured at the UN Climate Change conference COP27 in Egypt in November 2022 as part of a campaign that showcases the activities and projects that councils are delivering to tackle this global issue. The Local Government Association's (LGA) [Pass the Planet campaign](#) focuses on the action councils across the country are taking to limit global warming.
18. Wiltshire Council submitted three case studies to the LGA to showcase at the event with all being used in its 'mitigation', 'finance', and 'collaboration' strands of the campaign. The case studies include:

- the [work the council carried out with stakeholders](#) to put together its Wiltshire Climate Strategy;
 - an [innovative project to help Year 7 students learn maths](#) by using real data from the council's climate strategy consultation;
 - and the [Salisbury River Park](#) - a partnership project with the Environment Agency which addresses a number of climate change issues, reducing flood risk for over 350 properties in the city, improving the environment for wildlife and residents with tree planting and habitat creation as well as encouraging greener forms of transport like walking and cycling.
19. The council also featured in one of 40 new [case studies](#) launched by Friends of the Earth and Ashden celebrating local authority action on climate. They demonstrate how councils have implemented successful initiatives and solutions in response to pressing local challenges, as well as the need to fulfil their own green targets and counter the climate emergency. Wiltshire Council was praised for its fuel poverty support service and its retrofitting council housing.
20. A new [webpage](#) has been published on the council's website setting out the different ways that the council works in partnership to meet its climate objectives.
21. The Wiltshire Youth Council came up with an event for all schools across Wiltshire to participate in to help promote positive changes regarding climate change - named Eco Week. Eco Week took place from 6 to 10 March 2023. During Eco Week 17 schools ran a range of different activities that contribute to the promotion of those positive changes that we need to make to combat climate change and some actions were posted on social media using the hashtag #wycecoweek.
22. All schools received an information pack with full details of how to participate and a certificate for participating in the event, with a prize for both first place (a tree sapling) and second place (an engraved wall plaque). Some of the activities included: switching off the lights to save energy, a display of eco-themed books in the school library, tracking how many journeys to and from school were made on foot and by bike, a wax food wrap demonstration, rewilding an area of the school, new compost bins, and the distribution of free sustainable period products.
23. In August 2022 the council's libraries team secured £0.002m from The Green Libraries Partnership. This funded a new collection of books covering climate change and sustainable living, and enabled a partnership with Sustainable Devizes, which aims to provide resources, host activities and author talks on the theme of climate change. A [video](#) summarising the project is available online.
24. The council's libraries became [warm spaces](#) during the colder weather and residents have been welcomed to sit, stay, chat, and connect with staff and volunteers. They have distributed warm packs to anyone who might need them (1,000 packs so far). They have supported customers asking for energy advice and made more than 80 referrals to [Warm and Safe Wiltshire](#) and the Rural Communities Energy Support Network.

Adaptation and Resilience

25. Work is progressing on the [Salisbury River Park](#), the council's flagship climate adaptation project. The latest newsletter is available [here](#).
26. Wiltshire Council is investing an extra £1m between 2022/23 and 2024/25 to empty gullies and help prevent flooding in the county. The investment is in addition to the £1.27m the council spends annually on emptying gullies and is being spent on an extra combination jet vacuum unit that allows the council's highways teams to focus on problem areas throughout the county that are at most risk of flooding. The council is already putting this new kit to good use, with more than 1,000 extra gullies emptied and 120 tonnes of debris removed since October 2022.
27. The council has started the process of reviewing its Climate Adaptation strategy however due to capacity issues this is unlikely to be completed until 2024.

Delivery theme: Transport

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

28. The council's current commercial provider, BP Pulse, reports many of the council's existing EV charging units are offline, out of action, and un-repairable due to their parts no longer being available from the supplier. The council has tendered the replacement of all charging units and a new provider Joju Solar has been selected for the contract. Sites have now been surveyed and works have started. So far Joju have installed 16 charging units, each having 2 charging points. 10 of these are replacements and 6 are brand new. Most of the fast-charging units will be replaced by mid-2023, with the rapid charging units being replaced last due to their availability (see full list of sites in **Appendix 3**).
29. Following a successful webinar in September 2022 to communicate the council's approach to EV charging infrastructure, Town and Parish Councils are able to apply for grant funding to install public EV charging infrastructure in their communities, with Wiltshire Council funded grants of up to £0.003m per site. The response was excellent with the maximum number of applications reached, covering 35 sites. These grants can supplement other funding sources such as the government's On-Street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS). **Appendix 3** details the grant applications that have been received.
30. Wiltshire Council has been allocated up to £0.086m under the UK Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability Fund. This is resource funding to ensure local authorities have dedicated staff to undertake the planning and delivery of local EV charge points in their areas, especially for residents without off-street parking. Information on future years' funding is expected to follow in due course.

Public transport

31. Wiltshire Council published its first Bus Service Improvement Plan in October 2021 which is aimed at improving and increasing bus usage by:

- a. Supporting the local economy through improved access to shops and areas of employment to help build back and improve the economy post covid.
- b. Improved services to support vulnerable and elderly residents to access essential services such as shopping and medical appointments.
- c. A reduction in carbon output and improvement in air quality by reducing the number of car journeys across Wiltshire.
- d. Supporting leisure travel and local tourism through improved weekend, rail link services and more extended bus services.

November 2022 saw the [first annual review](#) with many achievements since 2021.

32. New Real Time Passenger Information signs have been installed at bus stops throughout Wiltshire. The new signs, which cost around £0.6m, were installed during October and November 2022, and will replace the current outdated signage, which had been in place for many years and had reached the end of its life. This investment into Wiltshire's public transport system will improve the experience for bus users throughout the county.
33. Plans for a new station in Corsham have taken another step forward after Wiltshire Council, in partnership with Corsham Town Council, Michelle Donelan MP and other local stakeholders, submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport (DfT) in November 2022.
34. Preliminary assessments indicate that the site of the original Corsham Station site is likely to be the best location for the new station, and four train service options have been considered: an hourly service between Bristol and Oxford; an hourly service between Bristol and London Paddington; a combination of the first two options; and two services per hour between Bristol and Oxford.
35. The SOBC includes an economic assessment for each of the four service options that shows that all of the options generate significant levels of demand, benefits and revenue. If the project passes the SOBC stage, it will move to the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage, which looks in more detail at the design, planning, access, operational feasibility and demand forecasting. Future timescales for the next stages of this project will depend on the availability of funding from DfT.
36. The results of a feasibility study for the Department for Transport (DfT) into a new railway station for Devizes have now been released by Network Rail. Wiltshire Council, Devizes Development Partnership and GWR worked closely with Network Rail to undertake the study, which concluded that the strongest case for a new rail station at Devizes would be as part of a wider rail improvement programme for Wiltshire.
37. The results of the study have now been submitted to the DfT who will make a decision as to whether the project will progress to the next stage of development. Further joint work between the rail industry, Wiltshire Council and its local partners is already under way to look at what potential new services could be introduced across Wiltshire, and the infrastructure and trains that would be needed to make this viable.

Active travel

38. Representatives of South Western Railway (SWR), Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire College and University Centre and Co Bikes were at Salisbury station in November 2022 for the launch of the station's new cycle hub. This is the first phase of forecourt improvements which SWR will be part-funding through their Customer and Communities Improvement Fund.
39. The hub is a joint project between SWR, the national Department for Transport, Wiltshire Council and Co Bikes with 74 cycle parking spaces and an e-bike docking station. SWR is working to increase the sustainable onward travel options at its stations. This new £0.360m addition to the station is an example of the growing number of convenient green options for transport across the SWR network, especially in the West of England, as it joins the e-bike facilities available at Cranbrook, Honiton, Pinhoe, Exeter Central and Exeter St David's stations.
40. Wiltshire College and University Centre has installed a Co Bikes docking station at its Salisbury Campus to improve the green travel offer for students and staff arriving at the station. This is hopefully the first of many across Salisbury and the surrounding area to link up with the railway station.
41. Wiltshire Council partnered with Sustrans to deliver a behaviour change project to secondary school pupils to raise awareness of climate change, air quality, and the impact of transport. An action plan was co-developed with the pupils and their schools to overcome barriers to active travel and kick start school led active travel campaigns and initiatives.
42. The 5 schools involved in the project developed action plans, providing a tool to make meaningful and lasting change for the schools. The development of self-led resources means other schools across the county can follow a similar process to increase active travel and reduce their carbon footprint.
43. Funding for Bikeability in 2023-24 has now been confirmed by Active Travel England, although currently only on a one-year basis, rather than the multi-year allocation previously suggested. Over 1,200 pupils have attended Bikeability training since the start of the school year in September 2022, with another 2,000 booked for courses in the spring and summer.
44. Five new self-employed Bikeability instructors have been engaged in recent months to expand the existing team. 2,500 primary pupils have attended WalkSafe pedestrian training since September and 74 have attended Scootability, with around 600 further places booked. Recruitment of two additional instructors is in progress.
45. The council put in a bid for Government air quality funding for a cycle hire scheme, Electric Co Car hubs & Cycle Hangars in Salisbury and a county-wide bus information/marketing project. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful, however we will be bidding for future grant funding opportunities.
46. Wiltshire Council has submitted a bid to Active Travel England (ATE) for funds to support walking and wheeling routes in the county. ATE looks to fund active travel

infrastructure that promotes walking, wheeling and cycling as an alternative to taking the car.

47. ATE indicated a funding allocation of £0.878m for Wiltshire, and the bid's proposed schemes had to meet a minimum assessment threshold to ensure they promote and encourage walking and wheeling. In addition, ATE encouraged bids for the construction of schemes during 2023/24, although the design and development of new facilities will be considered.
48. Local authorities with high quality schemes that are ready for construction were also encouraged to bid for more than their allocation, with the potential to secure funding for schemes above the indicative funding allocation. Wiltshire Council has done this, recognising that it will be in competition with all other local authorities and these schemes will be subjected to a more stringent assessment. The outcome of this bid is expected to be announced in May 2023.
49. A successful pilot equestrian 'Close Pass' event was held in April 2022 with the wider Road Safety Partnership and the British Horse Society. The event saw 19 drivers stopped and given advice. Operation Close Pass is a Police-led initiative aimed at improving driver behaviour when overtaking cyclists or horse riders. The basis of the operation is a rider/cyclist riding along a suitable stretch of road. The bike or horse rider are fitted with cameras and the riders carry a Police radio. If they are overtaken in a dangerous manner (a 'close pass') they will call it in and a member of the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) will pull in the driver to a safe point where they are 'given words of advice' by a Police Officer.
50. Drivers are then asked to listen to an education piece by members of the Partnership explaining the impact of close passes and how they affect actual and perceived safety on the road and how better driver behaviour can encourage more active travel. Dangerous behaviour by drivers, particularly when overtaking or following riders has a huge impact on safety and wellbeing and fear of such behaviour can deter less experienced riders from using the roads. We have previously run cycling Close Pass events in Swindon, Trowbridge, Melksham and Devizes, with another planned for April 2023.

Car clubs

51. Wiltshire Council has asked people, businesses and community organisations in Devizes for their views on proposals for an electric car hire scheme. The council is working with electric car provider Co-Cars to establish local demand with a view to bringing affordable access to electric cars to people in Devizes.
52. If survey respondents indicate that there is enough demand for electric hire cars, Co-Cars would locate the cars, which are bookable for periods of time from half an hour, around the town. People who join the scheme as members would have access to electric cars without having to own one, helping them to save money and improving air quality.

Delivery Theme: Housing and the Built Environment

Planning

53. The council is at an advanced stage of reviewing its Local Plan. A draft will be considered by Cabinet in the summer 2023. The revised Local Plan will promote sustainable growth as a central theme, recognising the council's corporate aspirations to tackle climate change. The Local Plan will deal with the following matters:
- a) Site allocations that are located in the most sustainable locations, recognising the role that Wiltshire's diverse settlement pattern plays in supporting the local economy
 - b) Policies that promote sustainable forms of construction
 - c) Policies that take the opportunity for supporting renewable energy proposals in appropriate locations
54. Working collaboratively between the climate team and the development management service, the majority of planning decision notices, including all householder applications and listed building consents are now including an informative note about climate change. This sets out that Wiltshire Council has acknowledged the climate emergency and is seeking to make the county carbon neutral.
55. Encouragement for energy efficiency, the use of renewable and low-carbon technologies, as well as electric charging points is set out and people are invited to contact the climate team to discuss this further. The reach of planning decision notices is wide with between approximately 100 and 200 decision notices issued each week. This means that through the informatives, the development management service is helping to support and encourage the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Private Sector Housing

56. Wiltshire Council has worked with developers, Newland Homes to build six zero-carbon affordable rent and shared ownership homes in Semington. The development, built under a Section 106 agreement, provides four affordable rent and two shared ownership homes. They use the latest zero carbon technology, in a rural location with no access to mains gas. These zero carbon homes have solar panels and air source heat pumps with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating in excess of 100 and an A category for energy efficiency. This is part of Wiltshire Council's programme to provide 1,000 affordable homes over the next decade.

Fuel poverty and housing retrofit

57. The council has been successful in securing more than £3.623m of Government funding, which will increase the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of up to 210 homes in the county. The funding is part of the Government's Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2. It will be spent on retrofitting up to 210 Wiltshire homes by March 2025, supporting the council's ambition for the county to be carbon neutral by 2030.
58. In 2021, the council was successful in securing almost £0.550m, which was used to improve 90 of its least energy efficient council homes. This additional funding will allow the council to support retrofit for owner occupied and privately rented homes that are

not connected to mains gas and are EPC band D-G subject to household income levels.

59. A whole house retrofit takes each house in its own right and 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. Some of the measures deployed to retrofit a property include:
- Energy efficiency measures such as wall, loft and underfloor insulation
 - Low-carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps
 - Smart measures such as smart heating controls.
60. The council has also ear-marked some of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation to ramp up its fuel poverty work over the next two years. A new Retrofit Development Manager position has been created within the climate team to drive this forward.
61. Progress on our council [housing energy efficiency programme](#) (HEEP) works has been limited in the last 6 months. The Housing Service is currently in the middle of the procurement exercise to secure new term maintenance contractors for the next 5-10 years. The current contractors are limited in their ability to take on the additional HEEP work as while their future is uncertain they are reluctant to undertake significant expansion of their capacity. The Housing Service itself is also carrying a significant number of vacancies resulting in the service having to concentrate on priority works in recent months. Recruitment is underway to fill these vacancies.
62. Larger PV installation projects on communal block roofs have been delivered along with HEEP-related works at individual properties with replacement heating and hot water systems. The HEEP work programme will accelerate through the summer and autumn 2023 as the capacity of the Housing Service improves and the new term maintenance contractors are appointed.
63. The Warm and Safe advice service for Wiltshire and Swindon has been extended for a further 3 years (with the option to extend for a further 2 years) and will underpin all of the above initiatives, through helping to identify eligible households needing assistance.
64. Local housing associations Aster and Selwood were successful in a consortium bid for Social Housing Decarbonisation funding together with 10 other social housing providers and the SW Net Zero Hub. The £24.8m consortium bid aims to deliver a retrofit programme to 989 homes across the south-west. Aster applied for funding for 103 properties across their portfolio of which 56 are in Wiltshire. The Aster project is for a total of £1m with more than £0.5m in grant funding. Selwood was awarded £1.4m alongside £4.3m co-funding from Selwood Housing, to deliver 'fabric first' improvements to more than 150 homes in Wiltshire.

Schools

65. There are currently [25 schools in Wiltshire](#) signed up to the national [Let's Go Zero](#) campaign, which calls for government action for zero carbon schools. The campaign unites and supports teachers, pupils, parents and students as they work

towards net zero by 2030. Actions to cut carbon involve procurement, energy use, travel, waste and food.

66. [Energy Sparks](#) is a charity that provides an online, school-specific energy analysis tool and energy education programme. In November 2022 schools, subject to some specific criteria (council maintained school, have AMR meters and on the council's West Mercia energy contract), were invited to apply for a Wiltshire Council grant to pay for a year's worth of energy data from their energy provider. A requirement of the grant was that the school signed up to work with Energy Sparks who can then use that data to help reduce their bills and environmental impact.
67. Wiltshire Council gave grants to 25 schools to access their energy data who enrolled with Energy Sparks. As part of this promotional effort a number of other schools, who did not meet the grant eligibility criteria, also enrolled with Energy Sparks. Consequently, the data grant project has significantly boosted the number of schools across Wiltshire that are taking positive, proactive measures to help reduce their energy bills and carbon footprints through the Energy Sparks programme. This programme is also an educational tool and so will have positive impacts beyond the schools as students (and staff!) apply their learning to their lives at home.
68. In the 40% of schools which are maintained by the council, we are committed to reducing carbon emissions through innovation and new greener technologies available on the market. With the maintenance projects at schools this is being achieved through the installation of LED lighting, energy saving heating solutions and the application of warm roofs when replacing old flat roofs to increase the thermal values of each. New schools, and new blocks at existing schools, are also being designed to be net carbon zero in operation.
69. In December 2022, the DfE announced some additional capital allocations for schools to improve energy efficiency, at a rate of £0.010m per school plus £20.06 per pupil, which resulted in schools directly receiving between £0.011m and £0.067m per school, totalling £4.2million across the County. Guidance was also provided on sensible steps for reducing energy use and works to improve energy efficiency of your buildings.

Delivery theme: Natural Environment

Engagement

70. Wiltshire Council is one of the main organisers of the South West AgriTech event for farmers and landowners which is being held at Devon and Exeter Racecourse on 20th April 2023. AgriTech provides Precision Farming, Precision Irrigation, & Precision Climate Monitoring Solutions & Advice. The main themes of the event are the implementation of AgriTech into farming systems and soil health/carbon sequestration/biofuels and how farmers and landowners can benefit from these opportunities. We are anticipating up to 40 companies/agencies/Universities to attend and up to 250 farmers/landowners from across the South West.

Woodland creation

71. Wiltshire Council, in partnership with Swindon Borough Council, has successfully bid for £0.295m grant from the Government's Forestry Commission and DEFRA Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund. The aim of the fund is to provide local authorities with financial support to bring on board the additional professional expertise they need to drive tree planting and woodland creation commitments.

72. The grant covers two years and will fund new dedicated Woodland Officers to work across Wiltshire and Swindon. The role of the officers will be to:

- assist communities and landowners with developing bids for grant funding for planting schemes including assisting with writing management plans
- bring communities, partners, and landowners together to deliver tree planting on the ground
- produce a woodland and tree strategy to guide further delivery of planting for communities and landowners, ensuring the right trees are planted in the right place
- work with Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) communities of multiple deprivation in Swindon and Wiltshire to deliver tree based environmental improvements. LSOAs are small areas designed to be of a similar population size.
- coordinate a revitalised 'Tree Warden scheme' to engage communities with tree planting and conservation.
- Monitor, record, and map the delivery of tree planting across Wiltshire to help ensure national Government targets are met

73. The project will help to meet national and local aims related to increasing biodiversity, improving air quality and using nature to help reach carbon net zero targets. It will help deliver tree planting targets to deliver 111Ha of trees in 2023/24 and 222Ha of trees in 2024/25. It is anticipated that the majority of these will be delivered through community and private landowner initiatives, working with partners such as the Woodland Trust, and Forestry Commission to develop bids for funding.

74. The Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy contains a means to mitigate for the effects of development around Trowbridge which causes poor quality habitat and loss of connectivity through increasing levels of urbanisation (noise, cars, people, buildings etc). New development in the area must make a contribution to deliver strategic habitat mitigation. With this funding the council is delivering a target of at least c.6 hectares of woodland and c.11km of new hedgerow and these habitats are to be created close to important areas for bats. Working with local landowners we are planting 500m of new hedgerows this winter. We have another 4.5km of hedgerow planting and 6 hectares of woodland planting planned in winter 2023/24. These are all part of the overall targets in paragraph

Delivery theme: Energy

75. Wiltshire Council is working in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and independent experts iChoosr to give residents the opportunity to invest in renewables through the Solar Together group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. We are on track to deliver more than 700 installations in Wiltshire totalling more than

6000 solar panels by May 2023. More than 80 private EV charge points have been installed across Swindon and Wiltshire alongside the solar installations.

76. The latest monthly report from iChoosr states that up to end of March, Wiltshire residents had invested a total of £6m on their installations, with a total of 2,148 KW installed from solar PV and a total CO2 reduction of 10,800 tonnes over 25 years (equivalent to 432 tonnes per year; for context, an average household, including driving, emits 8.5 tonnes per year). Wiltshire and Swindon Borough Council will be running a second joint scheme from June 2023.
77. Wiltshire Council is working in partnership with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SEN), as we are keen to explore ways to produce a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). Representatives from both met on the 1st of March 2023 to discuss changes to the price control framework for Distribution Network Operators, the current SEN approach, and the LAEP+ tool.
78. Previously upgrades to supply were purely reactive and cost was attributed to whoever applied first, the new changes mean proactive planning for grid upgrades can happen as well as sharing the cost with beneficiaries. Essentially it is becoming more feasible to get the grid upgraded and aligning grid capacity with where demand e.g., new developments are going. Therefore, focus should be on investing and connecting. The LAEP+ tool was also discussed, as this could allow LAs to map investment decisions onto SEN's network and see their capabilities (e.g., new EV charging points). There is also a possibility for Wiltshire Council to be part of 10 councils trialling the LAEP+ tool within the next year.

Delivery theme: Green economy

79. Wiltshire Council is preparing a draft Economic Strategy which we are engaging with stakeholders on. The document advances commitments made in the Climate Strategy:
- *We will pursue investment in low carbon and green skills and create opportunities for our skilled population to use their talents within the county, reducing out-commuting and brain-drain.*
 - *The future economy will include more jobs in sectors such as renewable energy, electric vehicles and installing low carbon heating in buildings. This is a huge opportunity for Wiltshire in supporting our economic resilience, and in encouraging industry and businesses that enable other sectors to decarbonise.*
80. We will have a specific workstream on the **Transition to Net Zero** and will include the sentiments (if not the exact words as below):
- Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy establishes that our economic activity must avoid environmental degradation and be efficient, resilient, and fair. Wiltshire must embrace the circular economy which preserves and recycles resources. We should support investment in sectors that can support a transition to net zero as well as reducing the environmental impact of businesses and services.

- The future economy will include more jobs in sectors such as renewable energy, electric vehicles and installing low carbon heating in buildings. This is a huge opportunity for Wiltshire in supporting our economic resilience, and in encouraging industry and businesses that enable other sectors to decarbonise.
- Supporting local employers to make the transition to producing net zero and sustainable goods and services is essential for local growth. We will work to support the transition and increase the supply of skilled employees by responding to the demands of local firms to reskill workforces, particularly in construction, healthcare and auto-trade sectors.

81. To grow the green economy in Wiltshire, increasing capacity and skills in key sectors to meet demand and delivery targets. We will support the following projects:

- Support the growth of businesses focused on sustainability and zero carbon innovation and attract new ones to invest in the county through our Inward Investment and Wiltshire 100 measures.
- Through our business networks we will provide examples of practical measures to transition to net zero and showcase what leading businesses are doing on this agenda in Wiltshire
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Business Fit for Future aims to support for business transition to net zero, including support from intermediary and support on growth projects linked to decarbonisation.
- From 2024 the UKSPF Green Skills for Net Zero Economy will invest to improve workforce skills that link to net zero and transition to decarbonisation, focused on learning infrastructure for high-value qualifications and direct support to businesses for green skills targeted and reskilling high carbon sector workforces.

Delivery theme: Waste

Waste and recycling collection services

82. Wiltshire Council has launched a new public awareness campaign to provide residents with more information about what can and can't be recycled through its kerbside collection service and how to correctly dispose of potentially hazardous items. The campaign, called 'Recycling - let's sort it!' aims to improve recycling rates by reducing the levels contamination. Monitoring of materials received at the recycling sorting facility has shown an increase in items that can't be recycled through the council's kerbside scheme being put in blue-lidded bins.

83. Contamination can include non-recyclable waste such as nappies and bags of general refuse, items that may be physically recyclable but not through the council's kerbside scheme (such as bread bags and carrier bags) or recyclable items that are heavily contaminated with food and grease, etc (e.g. plastic packaging still containing meal remnants).

84. Importantly, the campaign looks to raise awareness of how to dispose of potentially hazardous items safely following a recent explosion at a waste facility in Wiltshire. This was believed to be caused by a partially full aerosol can that had been placed in the recycling bin.
85. A proactive communications campaign was put in place throughout February 2023 and from March, waste collection crews have stepped up their visual checks of recycling bins and advising residents where bins cannot be emptied due to the incorrect items being placed in the recycling bin. In such cases, a red hanger is attached to the bin to advise the residents why their bin has not been emptied. Targeted communications will be deployed throughout the year in support of this project and the levels of overall recycling contamination will continue to be closely monitored.
86. From 5 December 2022, the Council expanded its kerbside recycling collection service to include household batteries from residents' homes. Residents can now place their spent household lead acid/cadmium batteries out for collection in sealable sandwich bags on top of their recycling bin. The batteries collected include AAA, AA, C and D cell batteries, as well as button-style batteries. Rechargeable batteries cannot be collected through this scheme.
87. During the period 5 December to 31 January, almost 15 tonnes of batteries were collected through this new scheme. This is the equivalent (by weight) of over 650,000 AA batteries. Batteries collected in the waste stream have been found to cause fires and are environmentally damaging if disposed of incorrectly.
88. The Leisure Loop Recycling Scheme is now in place at four swimming pools across Wiltshire (Five Rivers Health & Wellbeing Centre in Salisbury, the Olympiad Leisure Centre in Chippenham, Trowbridge Sports Centre and The Vale Community Campus in Pewsey), meaning that customers can recycle used pool related objects such as flip flops, goggles, floats, armbands, kickboards, pull buoys and swim caps. Once collected, the items are sorted and separated into material type (foam or plastic) and then into colour. The material is then shredded into tiny pieces and washed to create a new raw material. This raw material is then used to create new products for the industry such as flip flops – thus closing the 'leisure loop'. It is estimated that the average pool will generate roughly 15kg of waste every two to three months.

Household Recycling Centres

89. The council is continuing to work with its contractors to increase residents' opportunities to donate unwanted items for reuse at the household recycling centres. Between August 2022 and January 2023, over 58 tonnes of reusable items were collected at the household recycling sites, saving 23 tonnes of CO₂e compared with sending this waste to landfill.

90. Currently the council's waste contractor FCC works with [KFR](#), a Devizes based reuse charity, to reuse white goods and furniture collected from all 10 sites. This partnership will ensure that reuse opportunities are increased, landfill is reduced and good quality items can be made available to residents in Wiltshire.
91. The council is working with its contractors to improve the visibility and information on sites to maximise reuse donations and promote what happens to donated items.
92. Wiltshire Council and FCC's Environment teamed up with the Sustainable Devizes group to bring the reuse revolution to Wiltshire by hosting the first ever pop-up reuse shop at Devizes Market Place in October 2022. Items for sale on the day were donated at the eight FCC run recycling centres. There was an array of items for sale including tools, garden items, crockery, toys, sports equipment and bikes. Volunteers from Sustainable Devizes supported the pop-up event by showcasing repair demonstrations including free clothes mending, tool sharpening and bike maintenance checks. As a result:
- Nearly 300 items were sold
 - Approximately 2.1 tonnes of waste were prevented from going to landfill.
93. The council is now working with FCC to develop a business case for expanding the sale of reusable items across Wiltshire, using best practice from other local authority areas.
94. Paint can be expensive to buy and often is not fully used when decorating at home. It can also be highly polluting if not disposed of appropriately. In June 2022 Wiltshire Council began a trial at two of its eight household recycling centres (HRCs) in Amesbury and Salisbury, to explore the Wiltshire public's appetite for a paint reuse scheme. The pilot allowed residents to drop off their reusable paint which is safely stored at the HRC and other residents can take away paint for free for use on their own DIY projects.
95. During the first eight months of the scheme:
- Over 465 litres of paint have been diverted from expensive waste disposal treatment;
 - 35 people/families opted to use this paint as a sustainable alternative to buying new paint;
 - Over 600kg of CO₂ has been saved from release to the atmosphere as haulage and treatment was avoided.
 - In addition to this, an estimated 1,423kg CO₂e has been saved through residents choosing alternatives to buying new paint.
96. The trial was deemed a success and the scheme has now been extended to all eight Wiltshire HRCs operated under contract by FCC. Since expanding this service in January 2023, the council and FCC will now focus on actively promoting the scheme and maximising uptake. The council is also working with Hills Waste to put paint reuse facilities in place at the Lower Compton and Purton HRCs during 23/24.

Landfill Diversion

97. Councils were notified by the Environment Agency in August 2022 that all Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating had to be collected, stored and transported separately from other waste from 1 January 2023, and must also be disposed of by incineration from that date. Final guidance on achieving compliance was received on 19 December 2022.
98. In Wiltshire, these items are typically collected at household recycling centres or through the council's large item collection service. Some are also collected as fly tipping. Arrangements have been put in place to allow these to be appropriately managed and have been sent to create energy from waste from 1 January. The new rules have been put in place because some upholstered seating may contain Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) which are harmful to the environment if these escape into water courses. POPs can be found in the fire-retardant chemicals used in the padding, linings, and coverings of upholstered domestic seating.
99. This change in disposal practice will result in an estimated 1,500 tonnes of waste being diverted from landfill, resulting in a carbon saving of approximately 651 tonnes per annum.
100. In February 2023, the council awarded a new supply contract to Great Green Systems to provide Wiltshire residents with the continued opportunity to purchase subsidised food waste digesters. This capital-funded scheme supports those households that wish to compost their food and garden waste at home. Between August 2022 and January 2023, a further 204 Green Johannas were purchased by Wiltshire residents. These composting units are estimated to have collectively diverted over 51 tonnes of food and garden waste from the residual household waste bins per year of use, which is calculated as saving 10.2 tonnes of CO₂e per annum. 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

101. The council only has direct control over 0.5% of carbon emissions in Wiltshire but can use its democratic mandate and other levers of influence to have an impact on wider emissions, including influencing strategic partners on infrastructure projects. We routinely work with partners, and will continue to meet with, and contribute to, working groups as a springboard for collaboration, showcasing, providing leadership, and to be a catalyst for action on climate change. A summary of activity from partners is included at **Appendix 4** following a recent presentation to the Wiltshire Public Service Board.
102. The council also responds to government consultations, where relevant, and inputs to government funding programmes to make sure they are appropriate for Wiltshire residents and business, and that they are available at the scale required to meet our targets. We join other local authorities and representative organisations such as the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) to lobby the government. More information on the council's partnership activity is now available through a new [webpage](#).

103. Our carbon literacy training programme is gathering pace, with 58 managers having now received carbon literacy training. In order to receive certification by the Carbon Literacy Project, each member of staff trained is required to make two pledges setting out actions they will take in the workplace to reduce the council's carbon footprint. Wiltshire has recently received the bronze Carbon Literate Organisation award and is aiming for a silver award by end of 2024.

Procurement

104. Wiltshire Council has adopted a [socially responsible procurement policy](#), which has a focus on green economy and sustainable environment, and this was a factor in awarding recent highways and street maintenance contracts. Milestone Infrastructure began its £80m, five-year contract to help make the county's highways more resilient on 1 April 2023.
105. The Milestone Infrastructure team will help to keep Wiltshire moving by maintaining streetlights, cleaning and emptying gullies and drains, repairing potholes, gritting in winter, undertaking emergency maintenance and maintaining carriageways, footways, bridges and verges.
106. The five-year contract has a focus on reducing carbon emissions, as part of council's Business Plan commitment to become carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030.

Pensions and investments

107. Wiltshire Pension Fund (WPF) has a well-developed Responsible Investment Policy and has made significant progress in its decarbonisation process and transition pathway. A recent [video](#) sets out the fund's approach. In addition, the Pension Fund Committee have made several climate-related commitments which include a whole Fund carbon reduction target of 50% by 2030 and a listed equities carbon reduction target of 43% by 2025, and 69% by 2030.

108. At its meeting on 23 March 2023, the pension fund committee approved the following statement:

“As a long term investor, WPF’s goal is to protect the investments from climate change risk, and safeguard the financial future of the Fund. We support a global warming scenario of well below 2°C, and have an ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions across all investment portfolios by 2050. We do not see a long-term place for fossil fuel investments in our portfolios, and will work towards being fully divested from these companies by 2030. In the short term we will continue to monitor our holdings in these companies, to ensure that any such investments are helping to finance real-World change. Alongside this, we will continue to invest in renewable infrastructure and climate solutions, to help create replacements for traditional fuel sources, and contribute towards building a sustainable energy economy. This approach aims to ensure that the Fund’s risk of exposure to stranded assets is well managed, and that the Fund can benefit from the investment opportunities presented by the transition to a low carbon economy.”

109. This will be accompanied by some explanations around an exact definition of fossil fuel companies, and practicalities for implementation, in the next revision of the Fund's responsible investment policy in September 2023.
110. Additionally, the Fund has strategic allocations to Paris-aligned equities (12%), sustainable equities (5%) and renewable infrastructure and climate solutions (7%). We have also [assessed](#) the net zero alignment of all our investment portfolios. These portfolios will all contribute to reducing fossil fuel exposure and investing in sustainable alternatives.
111. Brunel Pension Partnership have published an updated [Climate Change Policy](#) following consultation with partnership funds. In the section setting out stewardship and engagement, divestment is included in its approach to escalation.

Fleet

112. Telematics have now been installed in all 200 of our directly controlled vehicles. The data generated links fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions to driver behaviour and will maximise the effectiveness of daily service and minimise running and abnormal repair costs, such as accident damage. The data will enable annual reporting to managers on vehicle performance, helping to avoid unnecessary travel, and will inform size of vehicles and reduction in fleet size.
113. Children's Services are piloting using the council's pool cars to reduce the amount of work travel.
114. In a service where spreading salt on the highway can be seen as un-environmentally friendly from the outset, then cleaner green emissions are what we are striving for in other ways. By upgrading our ageing gritters and replacing them with a new modern fleet with euro 6 compliant diesel engines, our emissions have now reduced dramatically.
115. We are proud that we have continued on our journey to improve our climate objectives with our replacement fleet, as well as making fuel savings they also have a greener regeneration exhaust system to help remove the particulate matter.
116. Each vehicle also has a touch screen control system enabling the flow rate and spread of de-icers to be controlled and the Econ Low Throw mechanism has been designed to reach under vehicles for urban settings or busy roads to optimise de-icing application keeping the salt on the road and reducing the amount overspread and wasted on verges.

Avoidance of travel

117. In the last year the council's training team has carried out 91% of all training online rather than face to face. For example, the council's Children and Families team have increased online training for foster carers to reduce the need to travel.

Static emissions

118. Leisure centres generate the largest proportion of the council's emissions. New air source heat pumps running on green electricity have therefore been installed at Salisbury Five Rivers Health & Wellbeing Centre, Corsham Springfield Campus and Chippenham Olympiad. The pump at Fiver Rivers is one of the biggest in the country, meaning the facilities are now carbon neutral for all their energy use. The work has been delivered by the council's Strategic Asset Maintenance & Facilities Management (SAM&FM) Energy Team and funded through the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).
119. This scheme from the Government's Department of Energy Security and Net Zero provides grants for public sector bodies to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures. An air source heat pump works much like a fridge operating in reverse, by transferring heat from outside air into water, which can then heat rooms via radiators or underfloor heating. It can also heat water being stored in a hot water cylinder for hot taps, showers and baths. The pump will use zero carbon electricity to run but uses less electrical energy than the heat it produces, making it more energy efficient.
120. Since 2021 the following work has been delivered through the council-funded Property Carbon Reduction Programme and the Government-funded Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme:
- Air source heat pumps – installed at 3 sites reducing gas usage by c. 6,200 MWh per annum with a carbon saving of 1,142 tonnes pa
 - Biomass heating – installed at 2 sites reducing gas usage by 1,274 MWh pa with a carbon saving of 234 tonnes pa
 - Solar photovoltaics – across 54 installations in 2022/23 we generated 1,746 MWh of electricity saving the council £0.630m pa (at current rates). This is more than five times what we generated just four years ago (324MWh in 2019/20).
 - Air handling units – replaced 5 systems with new energy efficient systems saving 93 MWh pa electric and 911 MWh of gas saving a further £0.042m from gas and £0.021m from electric
 - Inverters – installation of pump inverters is saving 54 MWh pa
 - Building Management Systems – energy efficiency upgrades and re programming saving 57 MWh pa of electric and 810 MWh pa of gas saving us £37,000 from gas and £173,000 from electric
 - LED Lighting – installed at 2 sites saving a further 82 MWh pa
121. All 16 swimming pools within the leisure estate have reduced the pool water temperature from 29 to 28.5 – 28.7 degrees. The targeted outcome is to reduce utility consumption and costs. As the pool water temperature has been reduced the air handling can also be adjusted to a degree above the water temperature and this will significantly reduce the utility consumption as the system runs all the time to maintain pool water temperature.

122. The Gym Air Conditioning units have been raised to 20 degrees rather than running at 18 degrees to reduce the usage which is not only a big cost but also generates a significant carbon footprint.
123. In addition the Leisure Service is in the process of introducing a Good House Keeping representative for each of its 20 facilities; on a monthly basis the representative will self-audit the building and report issues which will affect the wastage of utilities within the site and promote energy savings to all staff. It will also give staff an opportunity to have their say on what they think might be good energy saving ideas for the site. Simplified energy graphs advertising year on year utility consumption are now displayed in staff areas to raise awareness of the need to reduce energy usage and the demonstrable results of certain projects and actions.
124. With the Printer Replacement Programme, the council's ICT directorate has contributed to the council's goal of carbon-reduction. Thorough planning, leveraging advances in technology and encouraging changes in behaviour have resulted in reductions in energy and toner consumption, printing and ultimately costs so contributing to increased operational efficiencies. Phase 1 of the programme replaced the aging and unreliable printers within the hubs with printers that use 60% less energy and can print 36% more pages per toner cartridge. Additionally, the number of printers was reduced by 50%. The reduction in printer use during Covid is being encouraged to continue despite staff being back in the office, with aims to reduce printer use by 77% which would save 2.4 tonnes of paper per year. Phase 2 is currently underway and focuses on satellite sites, again with a goal of reducing the printers significantly whilst maintaining operational efficiencies.
125. The council has also achieved two sustainability milestones within its two data centres. In the years between 2018/19 and 2021/22 we have been able to significantly reduce the energy consumption used in the Primary Data Centre in County Hall by 46% and the Secondary Data Centre in Monkton Park by 51% through replacing outdated equipment with more energy-efficient models.

Carbon offsetting study

126. Last year Wiltshire Council worked with sustainability consultants Anthesis to help us define Pathways to carbon neutrality in line with our climate goals. We have now engaged Anthesis again, to work with us to develop the council's approach to offsetting. Our goal for the council is to be carbon neutral by 2030. Beyond 2030 we are likely to have some residual emissions that will need to be offset to achieve our commitment. These offsetting solutions will need to be put in place well before 2030 and therefore we need a clear action plan now.
127. In addition to looking into how to offset the council's own emissions, we will be looking at how to enable the whole county's emissions to be offset, with some of the options including bringing in money to fund projects such as retrofitting homes within the community and delivering renewables as well as tree planting. Therefore, this is a critical piece of work that could help to deliver carbon reduction within the county that might not otherwise happen.

128. During January and February 2023, we engaged with council officers, councillors, and external stakeholders in six workshops. In these workshops Anthesis introduced technical information about offsetting, and discussions took place to help inform the Anthesis team about key local contexts, relevant policies, actions taken so far (successes and challenges), and future plans and opportunities. The discussion brought about in these workshops will aid in the report Anthesis are producing for the council, to be published in Spring 2023.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

129. The Climate Emergency Task Group have been involved in the development of the Climate Strategy and delivery plans as well as scrutinising key pieces of work. The Task Group will be meeting to discuss this report on 28 April 2023.

Safeguarding Implications

130. The impacts of climate change are amplifying safeguarding issues and falling heavily on vulnerable people both globally and in the UK.

131. Evidence suggests that vulnerable demographic groups experience disproportionate effects on their health outcomes from climate related impacts.

132. 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

133. Climate change and public health are inextricably linked. Having a climate strategy 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

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

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

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

135. 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

136. 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

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

Financial Implications

138. In response to the climate and ecological emergency and the resolution made by Council to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral, a Sustainable Environment is a key principle of the Council's Business Plan.
139. 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.
140. To date spend that contributes to delivering against the carbon reduction programme totals £25.031m Capital and £0.587m Revenue. Investment has been committed for 2022/23 and future years totalling £71.058m Capital and £9.553m Revenue. In additional grant bids have been successful for a further £3.918m and will be added to the relevant programmes in due course and we are awaiting the outcome for Active Travel bid for £0.978m. The tables below provide detail at programme level.

Table 1 – Capital Programmes

CAPITAL	Previous Years Spend £'m	2022/23 Budget £'m	Future Years Budget £'m	Total £'m
HRA - Housing Energy Efficiency Programme	0.378	2.000	50.247	52.625
LED Programme	11.533	0.762	-	12.295
Salisbury River Park Scheme	6.155	-	-	6.155
Fleet - Carbon Neutral Fleet / Electric Vehicles	0.006	0.987	1.480	2.473
Local Authority Treescape Fund - BOA	-	0.071	0.026	0.097
Property Carbon Reduction Programme	1.424	2.846	6.130	10.400
Park & Ride Solar Panel Canopies	-	0.300	3.200	3.500
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Projects	4.566	0.639	-	5.205
Passenger Transport RTP1	0.003	0.692	-	0.695
Active Travel Fund	0.966	1.678	-	2.644
Total Capital	25.031	9.975	61.083	96.089
Grant	11.687	1.984	0.026	13.697
S106/CIL		0.758		0.758
Borrowing	12.966	5.233	10.810	29.009
HRA	0.378	2.000	50.247	52.625
Total Financing	25.031	9.975	61.083	96.089

Table 2 – Revenue Programmes

REVENUE	2022/23			Total £'m
	Previous Years £'m	Budget £'m	Future Years £'m	
National Bus Strategy	0.076	0.051	0.179	0.306
Better Bus Fund - Bus Service Enhancements	0.053	-	0.619	0.672
Rural Mobility Grant	-	0.123	1.082	1.205
COMF - Warm & Safe Wiltshire	-	0.500	-	0.500
Public Health - Warm & Safe Advice Service	-	-	0.255	0.255
Additional Investment in Gully Emptying	-	0.333	0.667	1.000
Climate Change and Sustainable Living Book Collection	-	0.002	-	0.002
Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy	-	0.392	1.958	2.350
Salisbury Plain SAC (Stone Curlew)	-	0.045	0.175	0.220
New Forest Recreation Management Project	-	0.094	0.656	0.750
River Avon Special Area Conservation	-	0.283	0.567	0.850
Dedicated Climate team	0.458	0.333	1.058	1.849
Solar Together Grant	-	0.031	0.150	0.181
Total Revenue	0.587	2.187	7.366	10.140
Grant	0.129	0.707	2.285	3.121
S106/CIL	-	0.813	3.356	4.170
Revenue Budget	0.458	0.666	1.725	2.849
Total Financing	0.587	2.186	7.366	10.140

Table 3 – Successful Grant Bids

Bids	Total £'m
Home Upgrade Grant 2 (Capital)	3.623
Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (Revenue)	0.295
Total Bids	3.918
Grant	3.918
Total Financing	3.918

Table 4 – Awaiting Outcome Grant Bids

Bids	Total £'m
Active Travel (Capital)	0.978
Total Bids	0.978
Grant	0.978
Total Financing	0.978

141. 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. As detailed, this will require additional investment over and above the current commitments shown above. The emerging Fleet Strategy which seeks to deliver a carbon neutral position for 2030 for all council vehicles will require further capital investment in vehicles and infrastructure to achieve its objective.

Legal Implications

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

Workforce Implications

143. 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. We have also started rolling out carbon literacy training to staff.

Options Considered

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

Conclusions

145. 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: Key performance indicators

Appendix 2: Environment projects by community area

Appendix 3: EV charging infrastructure

Appendix 4: Climate action by Wiltshire partners