

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

15 February 2022

Subject: Climate Strategy and update on council's response to the climate emergency

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

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

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

A commitment was made to provide six-monthly progress updates on actions the council is taking to tackle the climate emergency in Wiltshire. This is the fifth progress report to Council following updates in October 2019, July 2020, February 2021 and July 2021. Significant progress is reported against each of the seven Climate Strategy themes.

To ensure Wiltshire has in place a strategy for its 2030 climate ambitions, appended to this report is the final Wiltshire Climate Strategy 2022-27. The final strategy incorporates changes made in response to the consultation, which took place in September and October 2021. A consultation report, outlining the consultation process and the main findings from this is also appended. An independent assessment of climate plans and strategies across the country has ranked the council's Climate Strategy as the best for any rural unitary authority and fifth of all unitary councils.

Proposals

That Council:

1. Notes the consultation feedback on the draft climate strategy;
2. Adopts the final Wiltshire Climate Strategy (2022-2027) as part of the council's policy framework;
3. Notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in July 2021.

Reason for Proposals

1. To ensure Wiltshire has in place a strategy for its 2030 climate ambitions
2. To provide Council with an update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. To ask Council to consider the consultation responses and adopt the Wiltshire Climate Strategy; and to provide the fifth 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
3. The update on the actions taken in response to the climate emergency is contained in paragraphs 8-80 and 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 fourth report was presented to Cabinet in July 2021.
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.

Main Considerations for the council

8. Since the last report in July 2021, the draft Wiltshire Climate strategy has undergone significant consultation. Appendix 1 summarises the response to the consultation. This was carried out from 1 September to 17 October 2021 jointly with Our Natural Environment Plan - Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy. The results of the GBI Strategy consultation are being reported elsewhere on the agenda. The purpose of the consultation was to update residents of Wiltshire and other stakeholders of current plans and to gain their views to inform the development of the strategy.
9. The consultation made the draft strategies public and explained them through three webinars and four face to face library events. There were also targeted events with schools and disability groups as well as extensive communications through social media, parish/town/city councils and via other stakeholders such as the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, social media channels and printed media. We received more than 1000 completed Climate Strategy surveys and 35 stakeholder letters.

10. The amended Climate Strategy is attached as Appendix 2. It is 30% longer than the draft following consultation feedback. Updates have also been made to reflect the changes in national policy since the draft strategy was written, given that several key national strategies were published during the consultation period, in the run up to the COP26 UN Climate Summit.
11. The draft strategy was assessed by Climate Emergency UK as part of their independent assessment of climate plans around the country, with each council being rated against nine different categories, including governance; engagement and communications; setting targets and more. Wiltshire was [ranked as the fifth best unitary authority](#) in the UK and was the top scoring rural unitary. The council's strategy and plans scored maximum points for the community, engagement and communications; ecological emergency; and co-benefits criteria, and also scored highly across the other categories to receive an overall rating of 81%. The average rating for unitary authorities was 50%.
12. This report also contains the council's fifth six-monthly update on tackling the climate emergency. With the new climate strategy proposed to be adopted at this meeting, this update is structured against the seven delivery themes as set out in the strategy.

General

13. The council's new business plan puts the council's climate objectives at its heart. Our mission states that 'we take responsibility for the environment' and 'we are on the path to carbon neutral'.
14. In order to progress the Sustainable Environment priority of the council's business plan and to embed the Environment Act 2021 in service delivery, the council has created a new Environment directorate. The directorate includes two new high profile roles currently being recruited to: Assistant Director for Environment and Head of Natural and Historic Environment. The new directorate brings together the existing Waste Management, Climate and Public Protection services with a new service for Natural and Historic Environment.
15. A facilitated action planning day was offered to all Wiltshire town and parish councils on 16 November 2021, and 41 staff and councillors attended, representing more than 30 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, as well as what they needed from Wiltshire Council and what they could do to support Wiltshire Council.
16. We published answers to over 100 frequently asked questions as part of the climate strategy consultation. These are grouped into themes and can be found on the climate section of our website - [Climate strategy consultation questions and answers](#).

17. The #WiltsCanDoThis social media campaign was launched on 20 September, to help inform and encourage people to take action in their own lives to support climate change, with weekly posts on the council's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). The campaign focuses on the seven delivery themes of the draft climate strategy.
18. Between 20 September and 5 December 2021, a total of 76 posts were issued across Facebook and Twitter, reaching a total of 1.1 million individual accounts. There have been 842 clicks on links within the social media posts. There were 101 comments received across the posts, 239 likes and 104 shares or retweets.
19. The posts that received the highest level of engagement included the waste focused posts outlining recyclable items people may not be aware of, the carbon footprint calculator for people to calculate their own footprint, and posts sharing what the council has done towards becoming carbon neutral. We also took the opportunity of using the #COP26, #OneStepGreener and #TogetherForOurPlanet hashtags during the conference to reach a wider audience. The COP26 posts that received the highest engagement were the ones sharing that the council's Community Environment Toolkit and Salisbury River Park project would be featured at the conference.
20. Many great community projects are being undertaken within Wiltshire and updates from the community engagement managers are included in Appendix 3.

Delivery theme: Energy

21. The council is looking to set up a bulk buying scheme for solar panels within the county in 2022. The programme, Solar Together, is run by the company iChoosr to enable residents of Wiltshire to get high quality solar panels at a lower cost. Solar Together has run in many other areas, including 5 rounds in London. The council will promote the Solar Together scheme to residents, who sign up with iChoosr if they are interested. iChoosr then runs a reverse auction to find the lowest cost supplier who meets their quality requirements. To achieve the scale necessary for the bulk buy, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council will run the scheme at the same time and through the same reverse auction, though it will be separately branded for each council. Promotion will take place from May 2022 with installation in Autumn 2022.
22. The council has procured a new energy contract which has enabled it to offer green electricity to all schools in Wiltshire at a very competitive rate. As a result, 128 schools will be supplied with green electricity from 1 April 2022. 23 of these schools are academies and 105 are maintained schools. It is projected that approximately 2000 tCO₂ per annum will be saved by the 128 schools making this switch. The council has also promoted the free [Energy Sparks](#) programme to schools to encourage them to take control of their energy bills and educate their pupils about energy and carbon.

Delivery Theme: Housing and the Built Environment

Housing retrofit

23. Since autumn 2021, Wiltshire residents have been able to access a brand-new scheme that gives eligible households with an income of £30,000 or less, and living in a property that is rated D, E, F or G for its energy efficiency, the chance to access up to £10,000 for measures such as insulation, solar panels, double glazing and new front doors. Further information can be found at <https://swindonwiltshire-lad-applications.com/>.
24. As of November 2021, over the Wiltshire and Swindon area, the scheme had 34 installations with 320 further applications being processed, 47 of which had agreed to installations. The target number for Swindon & Wiltshire is 391 homes receiving measures. So far installed measures include solar photovoltaics, loft insulation, heating controls and ventilation.
25. The council was successful in its bid for a grant of £25,000 from the South West Energy Hub's capacity building small grants programme. The grant will allow the council to undertake a housing condition survey to identify and assess the suitability of targeted housing stock across Wiltshire for retrofit energy efficiency measures. This will place the council in a stronger position to bid for future government retrofit funding, such as further rounds of the Local authority delivery scheme (LADS) and the Home Upgrade Grants (HUGS).
26. To date 57 council homes have been retrofitted using the LADS 1b funding reported on at the last update, installing measures such as intelligent high heat retention hot water cylinders, solar panels and Quantum high heat retaining storage heaters. These works have also included fitting low energy light bulbs and topping up loft insulation. Further works will include air source heat pumps, more solar panels and wall and floor insulation. The feedback we have received so far has been positive with tenants already claiming savings on their electricity consumption. A [video](#) has been made to explain the scheme and reassure future tenants.
27. We have two members of staff coming to the end of their Retrofit Coordinator training through the Retrofit Academy Centre of Excellence and we are in the process of getting staff from across the Housing teams onto a Level 3 Award in Energy Awareness.

New Build Social Housing

28. The Council's zero carbon modern methods of construction (MMC) pilot project, which will deliver 19 new affordable homes, is progressing but currently waiting on planning determinations for 2 of the 3 sites. We are all acutely aware of ongoing delays in the construction industry with key materials, this concern appears to be impacting much less on the manufacturing industry, where the factory orders stock and materials based on a pipeline of work. We are working closely with a housing association in Dorset to combine our development needs over a 3 year duration and seek an MMC Manufacturer to deliver 1000 homes

across the two organisations. By aggregating our demand we are able to give the factory assurances of upcoming work, which enables productivity and efficiency gains. This also enables the factory to work with suppliers with the pipeline, to fix prices for the duration of the contract, enabling the council to have a clear price for delivery of modules that will be set over a 3 year period. The procurement of a 3 year supplier is due to be in place by March 2022 further committing to the zero carbon standard that the pilot homes will achieve.

29. Furthermore, we are also seeking to push developers to achieve higher environmental standards when building their affordable housing contribution. When bidding on s106 opportunities the council's offer is encouraging higher environmental standards and bidding to reflect the increased specification. This has enabled a successful bid on a site in Semington which will deliver 6 units at [Standard Assessment Procedure \(SAP\)](#) rating A+.
30. Through the Community Led Housing hub "Homes of Our Own" we have been working closely with Seend Community Land Trust (CLT) to bring forward 10 units of affordable housing. Seend CLT have partnered with White Horse Housing to bring forward 10 Passivhaus units, which are due to start on site by the end of this year. Wiltshire Council have helped fund this development with Right to Buy Receipts and Commuted Sums, keen to support low carbon, energy efficient homes and will be working closely with White Horse Housing to understand the principles of Passivhaus development.
31. Wiltshire Housing Development Partnership is a partnership between Wiltshire Council and affordable housing providers. The current Partnership was renewed in April 2021 and will run until 2026. There are currently 11 Provider Members that all play a key role in delivering the Council's target of 650 homes per year.
32. One of the key aims of the Partnership is to ensure that Wiltshire Council and the Provider Members work together to improve the environmental standards of Affordable Housing stock and to assist the council in responding to the climate emergency and mitigating climate change. In selecting members for the partnership, Provider Members are required to provide details of the EPC rating for their existing housing stock, and how they are seeking to achieve zero carbon affordable homes, both existing and new build.
33. The January 2022 partnership meeting is focusing on addressing the climate emergency. Provider Members will be sharing examples of best practice in terms of new technologies and construction methods that they are implementing to respond to the climate emergency in their own delivery programmes throughout the UK.
34. The partnership annually reviews the performance of Provider Members to ensure there is full commitment in addressing the climate emergency

New build market led housing

35. Our Stone Circle Development Company is creating market led housing that has a very low carbon impact. Three schemes have been submitted for planning consent to deliver homes with air source heat pumps instead of gas boilers, delivering a total of 72 units.

Non domestic retrofit

36. A scheme to refurbish Melksham House which includes two double electric vehicle charging points (four parking bays) has received planning consent. Melksham House is a listed building which places some constraints on what can be achieved to improve the sustainable attributes of the building fabric (such as full insulation and triple glazing). Following the approval of additional funding by Cabinet in December (see item 95 [here](#)) Melksham House scheme will be all electric and include photovoltaics at ground level, air source heat pumps and LED lighting throughout. There will be no gas supply.
37. Warm and Safe Wiltshire (WSW) is the Council's energy advice service and works in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and the Centre for Sustainable Energy. The current service has been extended by an extra year to run through to the end of March 2023. This extra one year extension allows the Public Health Team to run a commissioning exercise to evaluate the current service and explore opportunities to widen its scope across both internal and external partners. The commissioning exercise aims to be completed over the coming twelve months allowing continuity of service commencing in April 2023.
38. Over the last three years WSW has been match funded by the Warm Home Fund (WHF) contribution, which was due to come to an end in April 2022. However, due to the success of the service reaching its performance targets before the end of the contract, an additional funding bid was made for a top up payment towards the scheme. This bid was successful and the WHF awarded an additional £19,000 to allow WSW to continue with its in depth case work through to August 2022. The in depth case work allows community case workers to visit fuel poor households, providing bespoke energy debt and energy efficiency advice to help reduce household energy bills.

Delivery theme: Carbon Neutral Council

Pensions and investments

39. As reported in the last two updates, the Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee has been devoting significant time to considering climate change, to determine how best to protect the Fund's investments and position the fund to take advantage of investment opportunities. The committee has now approved its first [responsible investment policy](#) for the Fund, which includes a section on climate risk as well as many targets and plans around decarbonisation. A range of publicity and engagement activities on the

responsible investment policy were held with scheme members and also externally in late October and early November 2021.

40. There has also been a redesign of the investment's webpages, including the [climate change page](#), which now includes a range of useful information:

- Our position and relevant investment beliefs
- Climate scenario modelling findings, and what actions we've taken
- Our current emissions data, pledges, and road map
- Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) reporting, which shows how the Fund is managing climate change risk against the four pillars of governance, strategy, risk management, and climate metrics
- Information on our portfolios, and investment opportunities we can access as part of a transition to a low carbon economy
- Investment case studies

41. A colourful and informative climate change one-page [factsheet](#), published online, was developed to engage scheme members in the run up to COP26, to show how the fund was taking action. Furthermore the fund has collaborated with other funds, and the Brunel pool, to develop a Paris-aligned passive benchmark, and has invested £600m in this portfolio at its launch.

Fleet

42. The council's first Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan [approved](#) in October 2021 (and highlighted also in the transport section) contained a requirement for a feasibility study to look into the council's workplace infrastructure. The feasibility study has now been funded and awarded. The study will also look further at what vehicles may be suitable for the move to net zero emissions, as vehicles can only be purchased with the infrastructure to support that move. Funding has been identified and approved for a number of electric vehicle charging points and these will be allocated to where the feasibility study finds the grid infrastructure can support them.

43. The council has funding for 2021/22 for a number of vehicle replacements. There looks to be the opportunity for a large number of these to be electric, as they will be standard vehicles and allocated to where the workplace infrastructure can support their operation. However, we have a number of service critical vehicles that have to be replaced, which regrettably do not have viable zero emission solutions at present.

44. The emerging Fleet Strategy (which will need to be consulted on and agreed) seeks to deliver a carbon neutral provision for 2030 for all council vehicles. The agreed staged targets will be designed to meet that outcome and approved in the strategy document. The move to zero emissions will also be dependent on the findings of the workplace infrastructure study, highlighted above, as vehicles can only be purchased with the infrastructure to support that move. Furthermore, the vehicle market must have viable solutions, which is currently not the case with larger or more specialised vehicles.

45. An order for new electric and non-electric bikes for council staff has been placed with a local bike provision charity. The aim is for the bikes to be used to help reduce some of the scope 1 emissions of the council. They can be utilised to completely replace vehicle journeys, or alongside vehicles to reduce emissions, for example allowing staff who have driven to a site to then utilise the bikes for local journeys. Guidance for the bikes' use including training and bike maintenance have all been arranged and there is a target date of 31/3/22 for full implementation.

Static emissions

46. We are currently investing in a large-scale programme of works on many of our high energy using operational buildings, including leisure centres, offices, libraries, and others. This work will assist the council to reduce the demand for energy at source through energy efficiency and self-generation.

47. The Property Carbon Reduction Programme has so far delivered 15 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 £1.3m and is so far estimated to save 593 tonnes of CO₂ per year from the council's carbon footprint.

48. A further 17 PV installations have been accelerated in response to the current energy market price rises, as they will help to mitigate the impact of those increased costs. These are currently being procured and will be completed before March 2022.

49. The council is also 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. This project is in the early stages of identification and feasibility.

50. As reported in the last update the council secured government funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to carry out work during 2021 to decarbonise 4 major sites and to improve energy efficiency at 13 others. Much of the work has now been undertaken including all 17 of the PV system installations and the upgrade of the 4 air handling units at 3 leisure centres. When the three heat pump installations are finalised, the programme of works, costing £4,452,281 is estimated to save the council 994 tCO₂ per year.

51. Thanks to sustained investment in solar PV over time and the above recent programmes of work, in 2020/21 we generated 450,135 kWh renewable electricity on our own estate, which was a 39% increase on the previous financial year. The total amount of electricity generated by council-owned solar panels in 2020/21 was 727,097 kWh.

52. The £12 million project to convert the council's streetlighting to energy efficient LED lighting is approaching completion. Approximately 95% of the streetlights have been converted so far, with the remaining units being heritage and special units which should be converted in the next few months. Energy consumption per

year is reducing by about 64% from 12,771,626 kWh to 4,597,785kWh, which will provide significant cost savings for the council in future years as well as reduced maintenance costs.

53. The Leisure, Culture and Communities department is the largest carbon emitter in the council and has been looking at more ways to mitigate its carbon impact. Libraries and Leisure teams now receive monthly reports of energy data at a site level including usage, carbon and cost data as well as quarterly performance comparisons covering pre and post-covid closures. This data is cascaded to teams at individual sites so any issues can be raised back to the energy team to investigate as necessary.
54. The Library Service has introduced a 100% degradable membership card and now use biodegradable tapes and packaging for processing and delivering stock. Changes in processes also mean library cards are no longer replaced when they expire to reduce waste.
55. Leisure and Library staff awareness of the energy usage in their buildings has also been increased by the introduction of Energy and Climate Change Champions. They monitor monthly utility reports for their building, feeding back any issues they identify, helping to reduce consumption by suggesting ways the services can improve energy efficiency and carbon credentials.
56. Ten leisure centres have created six month recovery plans until the end of the financial year; one of the actions has been to appoint the Energy Champion, outlined above. Whilst the champion role is in its early stage its inclusion in the leisure recovery plans indicates the importance the team put on this area.

Delivery theme: Natural Environment

57. Two Wiltshire Council projects were featured as good practice on the Local Government Association (LGA) stand at COP26. The first was the council's [Community Environmental Toolkit](#), produced in conjunction with Natural England, which gives local groups the tools they need to improve habitats and the natural environment in their area. The other council project was the [Salisbury River Park](#), a collaboration between the council and the Environment Agency, with support from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP) and Salisbury City Council. The project will create a green link through the centre of the city, bringing major environmental improvements and mitigating against flooding.
58. Wiltshire Council and Bradford on Avon Town Council have worked together to secure a £96,000 grant from the Forestry Commission's Local Authorities Treescape Fund to plant around 3,000 trees and hedgerow trees in the town. The grant, which will be matched with an additional contribution of £41,349 from Bradford on Avon Town Council, will fund this pilot tree planting programme in the town that, if successful, could be rolled out to other towns in Wiltshire. The town council has already identified suitable sites, both on its own land and on Wiltshire Council land, which it will take on from the unitary authority as part of an asset transfer programme. Preparatory work as part of the funding application

has already been completed, and so planting will start this winter, followed by a programme of maintenance.

59. Two grant applications to Natural England to support the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is a new requirement of the Environment Act, were successful and total £10,000. The first grant will support some early data and evidence mapping for habitats across Wiltshire and Swindon which will be essential to start to understand what already exists ahead of considering opportunities for further improvements. The second grant will be used to engage consultants to support the council with further community engagement and the roll-out of the Community Environmental Toolkit.
60. The council also submitted an expression of interest for £495,000 to the [Trees Call to Action Fund](#). The aim of the money was to allow for two new ecologists, some consultancy costs and some capital works to improve riparian buffers and woodland connectivity in the Hampshire Avon River catchment for people, biodiversity and water quality. The fund was heavily over-subscribed and the council's bid did not make it through to the next round.
61. The council's Natural Environment Plan - Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (GBI), which was consulted on at the same time as the Climate strategy, is also being considered at this meeting.

Delivery theme: Waste

62. The council and its main provider of household recycling centre services, FCC Environment, have expanded the reuse opportunities available to Wiltshire residents at these sites. All eight household recycling centres operated by FCC now provide separate labelled "walk-in" containers where residents and site staff can store good-quality items suitable for reuse or refurbishment, such as furniture and 'bric a brac.' Many of these items are made available to charity partners able to refurbish and re-sell them or donate to families in need. Between January 2021 and December 2021, a total of 317 tonnes of reusable items have been collected.

Item	How it is reused	Tonnes collected April - Sept 2021
Furniture, bric a brac and white goods	Items collected by charity partner <i>Kennet Furniture Refurbiz (KFR)</i> where they are refurbished if required, and then made available to households on a limited income.	20.8
White goods	White goods collected by charity partner <i>Pauls Repair Academy</i> where they are refurbished if required, and then made available to households on a limited income.	12.6
Bicycles	Bicycles are collected by charity partner <i>Sue Ryder</i> , who run repair workshops with	4.1

	inmates from HMP Erlestoke, teaching them new skills in maintenance.	
Bric a Brac, Household and Electricals	Items sent to auction by <i>FCC Environment</i> , proceeds from the sale of reusable items at auction also contributes to the income share due to the council from the Lot 2 Household Recycling Centre contract.	47.9
Mobile phones, spectacles, sewing machines and vacuum cleaners	Items sent for refurbishment by various organisations or components of the items are reused.	4.6
Total		90.0

63. As well as the significant environmental and carbon reduction benefits of reuse, there is also considerable social value derived from this activity. Charities such as KFR are run by volunteers and are helping equip individuals with useful skills that can be vital for their personal development, as well as providing good-quality household items at a reduced cost to Wiltshire residents in need, and therefore supporting Wiltshire communities.
64. The council is currently working with FCC Environment to further expand the range and quantity of reusable items collected at the recycling centres, as well as working with Hills Waste Solutions to start collecting reusable items at the two sites operated by them on behalf of the council.
65. Building on the implementation of a new recycling collection service in March 2020 which allowed the waste collection vehicle fleet to be reduced by 19%, whilst also collecting record quantities of material for recycling, the council is continuing to work with its contractors (Hills Municipal Collections Ltd) to assess the feasibility of implementing new residual waste collection rounds. This would improve service efficiency and enable further reductions in the fleet of collection vehicles, thereby helping reduce the carbon impact of this essential frontline service.
66. The council provides a chargeable “opt-in” service for the kerbside collection of garden waste, giving Wiltshire residents some choice whether to participate in the scheme, recognising some households do not generate much by way of garden waste, and that some households prefer to manage their garden waste at home through composting. Whilst the service has always had a large take-up by residents, the number of subscribers opting to receive this service has increased by almost 10% since 2020 and has continued to rise in 2021 with 90,700 residents forecast to sign up for garden waste collections by the end of the financial year.
67. There has also been a corresponding increase in the amount of garden waste collected, with 34,536 tonnes forecast to be collected by the end of 2021/22. As the collected garden waste is composted locally at sites in Purton and

Rockbourne, this equates to an estimated carbon equivalent saving of over 17,000 tonnes of CO₂e per annum, compared to this waste being sent to landfill. A key priority both nationally and for the council, is to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill as it produces methane when it breaks down when disposed in this way. Methane is recognised as a harmful “greenhouse gas” and can be 25 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide.

68. The council has also experienced an increase in Wiltshire residents purchasing subsidised food waste digesters since the pandemic, with 2,508 green Johanna’s sold between January 2020 and August 2021. These sales are estimated to divert 63 tonnes of food and garden waste from landfill, saving 11.4 tonnes of carbon each year. The home composting of food and garden waste is an effective method of reducing the waste collected and carbon generated by collecting and treating it.
69. During June and July 2021, the waste service proactively engaged in stakeholder consultations run by Defra in respect of wide-ranging proposals under the government’s Environment Bill (now passed into UK Law as the Environment Act 2021). The proposals include the future implementation of a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, a new Extended Producer Responsibility in respect of packaging, and potential future requirements in relation to Consistency in Recycling Collections of household and business waste, expected to include weekly collections of food waste. The government response to these consultations, and information on possible implementation dates, is expected early in 2022.

Delivery theme: Green economy

70. Target 2030 is a business energy efficiency project that aims to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire to achieve a change in their energy consumption, putting them on a more sustainable footing for the future. The council has been promoting this project which is funded through the European Regional Development Fund and delivered by Severn Wye Energy Agency, a sustainability charity with 20 years of experience supporting local businesses. The programme aims to support 100 SMEs in Swindon and Wiltshire, offering free energy efficiency survey and report from one of Severn Wye’s expert Business Energy Advisors, alongside 30% grant funding towards recommended energy efficiency and carbon saving measures. The programme is planned to run until 2023.

Figures for Wiltshire:

- 44 SMEs have had a survey
- 29 have had 12 hours support and/or at least £1000 of grant funding
- 11 have had a grant paid out
- 9 on top of that have approved grant and we are waiting for the installation of works to be confirmed

- £164k in total grant funding has been paid out

- 390 tonnes of carbon have been saved annually by installed measures
- £547k is the value of the total installed works

Additionally:

- £86k further grant funding has been approved
- 231 tonnes annual savings associated with the approved grant funding
- £289k value of approved works yet to be completed

[Case studies](#) are available on the Target 2030 website for the following Wiltshire businesses that have benefitted from the programme: Alvan Blanch in Malmesbury, Red FM in Royal Wootton Bassett, Hartley Farm Shop in Bradford on Avon, FDC UK in Dinton and APT interiors in Mere.

Delivery Theme: Transport

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

71. The council's first Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan was approved in October 2021 (see [Cabinet papers](#), item 72). The plan will help to reduce carbon emissions in the county and improve facilities for EV drivers by both upgrading what's already in place and increasing the number of available chargers.
72. The council will support city, town and parish councils to secure On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) grant funding for residential chargepoints on Wiltshire Council land through council grants of up to £2,500 per site. It is looking for partners to consider the installation of charging hubs, at central and out of town locations, and also adding more chargepoints to its own buildings so the council fleet can be converted to electric vehicles.
73. The plan will also encourage businesses to install workplace chargepoints and will ensure all chargepoints on council-owned land will be supplied with energy from 100% renewable sources.

Public transport

74. Wiltshire Council's Cabinet agreed its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which was submitted to government on 29 October 2021 (see [Cabinet papers](#), item 73). This ambitious strategy for public transport in Wiltshire will be assessed by government. In total, £306k has been granted to Wiltshire to help build capacity within the organisation to deliver the ambitions set out in the BSIP, as well as fund work done by transport consultancy Atkins. Two new posts are proposed to manage the BSIP and the ensuing Enhanced Partnerships that will need to be in place with bus operators by 1st April 2022.
75. The Wiltshire Council bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) for funding to develop a feasibility study for a new station in Corsham, as part of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund, has been approved and is on track to progress to the next stage of the process. The proposed new two-platform station would be situated on the Great Western Main Line, with potential train service links to London Paddington, Bristol, Swindon and Reading. It would help to reduce traffic

volumes in Corsham and along the A4, and provide easy access to and from MOD Corsham, the largest employer in the town.

76. A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) will now be produced, the first stage of the DfT's business case process. The SOC will set out more details on the proposed project and the case for building a new station, and how the plans would fit strategically into local priorities and wider government transport ambitions.
77. Work on the Devizes Gateway continues (this was submitted in an earlier round and as such is further along the process). The SOC was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) at the beginning of November. Its development has involved close working with local partners including Danny Kruger MP, Devizes Development Partnership (DDP), Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP), Great Western Railway and Network Rail to develop a strong and robust case.
78. Overall, the SOC puts forward a strong strategic case for a Devizes Gateway station; it will help to improve transport connectivity, reduce car usage, and assist with the Government's ambitions to reach net-zero and level up communities (the SWLEP's Rail Strategy estimates that the station would have a £6.56m annual Gross Value Added impact). The proposal has widespread support across not just the local area but the wider region. The SOC also shows that the station is viable from an operational (train service) perspective.
79. If the SOC is approved, the DfT will provide up to 100% of the Outline Business Case (OBC) costs - the next stage in the business case process. The OBC identifies the preferred scheme option and includes a detailed business case where further consideration will be given to design, planning, access and consultation matters.

Active travel

80. As mentioned in the last update Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) are being developed. New funding (of up to £30,000) has enabled a LCWIP to begin development for Devizes. Work on setting the brief for this, in conjunction with [Sustainable Devizes and Cycle Friendly Devizes](#), has begun. Work continues on the Wiltshire wide plan and the plan for Salisbury. The government has allocated the council funding to prepare LCWIPs for Chippenham and Trowbridge, and work will begin once the funding allocation is received.
81. Appendix 4 contains an update on the active travel schemes being undertaken by the council.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

82. As part of the governance supporting the development and delivery of the Climate Strategy, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee sits on the Councillor Climate Working Group. The Climate Emergency Task Group has seen and commented on draft versions of the

climate strategy in July and December 2022. The task group has recently updated its terms of reference as set out in paragraph 7.

Safeguarding Implications

83. The impacts of climate change are amplifying safeguarding issues and falling heavily on vulnerable people both globally and in the UK.
84. Evidence suggests that vulnerable demographic groups experience disproportionate effects on their health outcomes from climate related impacts.
85. 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

86. 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

87. Measures within the climate strategy may have a cost and the strategy itself references procurement, however this is not quantified at present.
88. Project leads will be engaging with Procurement directly and in line with the council's procurement policy.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

89. One of the key principles is for the Climate Strategy to be equitable, ensuring the transition to low carbon, climate resilient future is fair.
90. The consultation and engagement approach for the Climate strategy has been undertaken so that it is inclusive with specific efforts to reach groups of society

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

traditionally seen as harder to reach (please see Appendix 1). The final strategy also looks to be inclusive and provide a fair and just transition.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

91. This report sets out the council's response to the climate emergency, including the proposed adoption of a climate strategy for Wiltshire, and as such should have a positive impact on the environment and climate of Wiltshire.

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

92. Without the adoption of the Climate Strategy the council's policy framework will not sufficiently reflect this corporate priority, and there would be significant reputational risks associated.

93. Work to tackle the climate emergency will improve health, save money and drive the transition to a green economy so all of these elements would be negatively impacted if this work programme did not go ahead.

Financial Implications

94. 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.

95. 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.

96. 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.

97. The council has commissioned a study to quantify how much the pathway to a carbon neutral council will cost.

Legal Implications

98. The climate strategy is not a statutory document and as such there were no statutory requirements for the consultation. However, consultation was undertaken in respect of this strategy and the consultation that was undertaken is considered sound as it was undertaken when proposals were still at a formative stage and provided sufficient information and time for consultees to provide appropriate comment.

99. The formal consultation stage, as reviewed in Appendix 1 to this report, sets out the reasoning and timings for the consultation and it has led to changes to the final strategy and provides an appropriate summary for the decision maker to have due regard.

100. It is noted that in addition an earlier discussion document was also published with the Cabinet papers for 2 February 2021.
101. This Policy once adopted by full Council will form part of the Budget and Policy framework as set out in Part 3 section B of the Council's constitution. All decisions made by Cabinet, Committees and Officers have to be made in accordance with the Budget and Policy framework including this policy.

Workforce Implications

102. 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

103. The proposed adoption of the climate strategy is the reason this item has been highlighted as a key decision. The other main options are to not adopt the Wiltshire Climate Strategy, or to not adopt this version and send back for further drafting. These options would have a direct impact on the ability of the council to meet its objectives to be carbon neutral by 2030, by delaying its ability to make delivery plans and continue work to combat the climate emergency.

Conclusions

104. 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.
105. This report is also significant as it proposes the adoption of the Wiltshire Climate Strategy (2022-2027).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Climate Strategy consultation report

Appendix 2: Wiltshire Climate Strategy 2022-2027

Appendix 3: Update on community projects from the Community Engagement Managers

Appendix 4: Active Travel update