

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 September 2024

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

Cabinet Member: Cllr Dominic Muns, Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment

Key Decision: Non Key

Executive Summary

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

At the Cabinet meeting held in October 2023 it was agreed that future climate updates are received annually rather than at six monthly intervals. This is the ninth progress report to Cabinet.

Significant progress is reported against each of the seven Climate Strategy delivery themes and **Appendix 1** provides an overview of performance and examples of delivery and is intended to be more accessible to a wider audience, while **Appendix 2** sets out performance against the climate-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

In addition, the council's Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-24 and the Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24 are being reviewed. The updated plan, which will be completed this year, will provide the direction of travel for 2025, setting out priorities that the council will focus on in its next phase of delivery.

The council remains broadly on track to deliver on its goal to be carbon neutral as an organisation in Scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2030, and there are plans in place to continue to keep the council's emissions on track to meet future targets.

The latest available data for Wiltshire County emissions shows that these are reducing, in line with the national trajectory, but this is currently not at the pace that would deliver more ambitious aspiration to become carbon neutral by 2030, or currently by 2050. However, there is a renewed focus by the council on activities to help support communities and businesses to reach net zero emissions. These will be included in the Delivery Plan review.

Proposals

That Cabinet notes the actions taken in response to the climate emergency following the last update in October 2023, including the council's annual Greenhouse Gas Report, the KPI scorecard, and the direction of travel for 2025.

Reason for Proposals

To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress made over the past year in response to the climate emergency and progress towards carbon neutrality. To highlight further activities that are being progressed and to outline the areas of focus going forward which will be set out in more detail in the new Climate Delivery Plan due for completion by the end of 2024.

Parvis Khansari
Corporate Director - Place

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. To provide the ninth update on actions taken in response to the climate emergency giving an update on the progress made over the past year and progress towards carbon neutrality.
2. To highlight further activities that are being progressed and to outline the areas of focus going forward which will be set out in more detail in the new Climate Delivery Plan due for completion by the end of 2024.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

3. 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:
 - Empowered People
 - Resilient Society
 - Thriving Economy
 - Sustainable Environment
4. Specifically, the mission to make Wiltshire a place where 'we are on the path to carbon neutral (net zero).'

Background

5. The update on actions and on some projects taken in response to the climate emergency (**Appendix 1**) is structured against the seven delivery themes of the climate strategy. It reports on some key areas of progress towards the council's carbon neutral ambitions and is presented in a format intended to be more engaging. It is intended that this will become available under the Climate section of the website. In addition, **Appendix 2** provides an overview of the Key Performance Indicators that track the outcomes relating to the current climate strategy delivery plans.

6. 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.

7. The council resolved to acknowledge that there is a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030 – recognising that the council only has direct control over 0.2% 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.

8. 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. At the Cabinet meeting, held in October 2023, it was agreed that future climate updates are received annually rather than at six monthly intervals. The last report was therefore presented to Cabinet in [October 2023](#).

9. 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](#)).

10. 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.

11. 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. Cabinet delegated permission to the Corporate Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet

Member with responsibility for climate change, to approve delivery plans for the climate strategy once developed.

12. These delivery plans were [published](#) in September 2022 and are currently being reviewed.

Main Considerations for the Council

13. This report provides an update on the progress being made by the council on its response to the climate emergency. It sets out what has been done since the last report in October 2023. The focus of activity has been shaped by the council's [Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-24](#) and the [Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24](#).
14. The following sections are structured according to the delivery themes of the Climate Strategy and delivery plans, and represents work carried out by many service areas from across the council.
15. The "Climate Update 2024" (**Appendix 1**) provides more detail on some of the examples in this report and presents an overview of progress in each delivery theme. The Climate Update document aims to present the council's progress in an engaging format, highlighting impacts and co-benefits where possible. This publication can be used within Area Board meetings and will be published on the council website so that residents and organisations in Wiltshire can gain a clearer understanding of the council's response to the climate emergency and progress towards our commitments. It is also a basis for inspiring action and building partnerships to help Wiltshire become carbon neutral.
16. **Appendix 2** collates performance against the climate-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Carbon Neutral Council

17. The council continues to work on reducing direct emissions from the council's own operations (Scope 1 and 2) which are in its control. In addition, the council is working to reduce its indirect emissions (Scope 3) such as from outsourced contracts that are not within the council's direct control, but over which the council has significant influence.
18. Since the council acknowledged the climate emergency in 2019 the council has reduced its Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 9,554 tCO₂e and by 20,991 tCO₂e since 2014 when we first started to measure and report our greenhouse gas emissions. The council's emissions are now down to 2,767 tCO₂e, which means that we have surpassed the target for 2023/24 (3,000 tonnes CO₂e). Much of this is due to a significant reduction in emissions from Buildings and Fleet. There are planned projects to continue decarbonising buildings, which is the council's largest source of emissions. To continue to keep the council on the pathway to be carbon neutral by 2030, it will be important to ensure resources are allocated in forthcoming annual budgets to align with the priority areas identified in the emerging Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan review will help to identify actions by priority to keep on track and indicate where resources are identified and agreed, or where further consideration may be needed.

19. The following list highlights examples of activity that has helped the council to achieve these emission reductions. The numbers in brackets refer to the [Carbon Neutral Council Plan 2022-24](#) actions.
20. The council's annual **Greenhouse Gas Report** is [available online](#), showing that the council has met the target for emissions reduction this year, while the longer-term trend shows that we are following the pathway to carbon neutral and should remain on track next year due to property decarbonisation, fleet and streetlights work. (C6.2)
21. The council's direct operational greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1 & 2) reduced by 22% over the last year. This is largely due to the **property carbon reduction programme**, decreasing fossil fuels being used for heating buildings and powering **fleet** vehicles, and switching to electricity instead, which can either be supplied via renewables on site (PV solar panels) or renewables within the grid, using the green tariff from our supplier. (C4; C4.1; C4.2) For example, **heat decarbonisation** of 3 operational sites reduced the council's carbon emissions by 200 tonnes in 2022/23. Three more sites have been completed and have saved 60 tonnes in 2023/24 (See Appendix 1 for further detail). (C4)
22. The **green tariff** for electricity has been secured to 2027. This reduced the council's carbon emissions from properties by 2,440 tonnes CO₂ during 2023/24. (C3.3)
23. **Fleet** has the goal to be carbon neutral by 2030 and has focussed on switching all lighter vehicles to electric, as well as reducing vehicles and mileage where business allows. Emissions from fleet decreased from 557 tonnes in 2022/23 to 431 tonnes in 2023/24, as 87 fossil fuel vehicles have now been replaced by ultra low emissions across the council's fleet. This means that we are progressing well towards the Fleet Strategy target of electrifying the core fleet. On council property there are presently 117 workplace charge points, and an additional 60 public charge points, an increase of 87 from 2022/23.
24. **Completion of the rooftop solar programme.** The total installed solar panel capacity by the end of 2023/24 was 3,313 kWp (peak output) and the total electricity generated was 2,639,271 kWh, which is a 50% increase from the previous year. The avoided costs for the council of using this self-generated electricity in 2023/24 was nearly £650K despite electricity usage increasing. (C3.2; C4; E1)
25. **Scope 3 emissions:** The council continues to work with key suppliers towards measuring and reducing its indirect (Scope 3) emissions and building climate considerations into procurement processes and contracts. Highways maintenance contractor Milestone is innovating on carbon reduction in project delivery, use of materials (see **Appendix 1** for a case study). Based on these achievements and collaboration, Milestone and Wiltshire Council have been shortlisted for the Edie Net Zero Awards in the category 'Supply Chain Decarbonisation'. The council has also started to work with smaller organisations such as our care providers to understand where their biggest potential for carbon reduction is and to support them to decarbonise (C7)

The top ten suppliers by carbon emissions are estimated to be the council's highest emitting contracts, based on expenditure and procurement category code:

- Waste Management and Disposal

- Highways Maintenance
- Residential Care Homes.
- Waste Collection
- Facilities management and maintenance
- Community care services
- Highways - asphalt

26. **Climate adaptation and resilience** to climate impacts: We are working with internal service areas from across the council, to understand how climate change will impact service delivery, so that the council can have a better understanding on how service delivery may need to change to support vulnerable residents, communities, infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment to be more resilient. (X5)

27. **Climate risks** associated with carbon reduction and climate resilience are a consideration within the corporate risk register, meaning that they continue to be an area of strategic focus with mitigating actions being reviewed and managed on a quarterly basis. (C1.1)

28. **Embedding climate considerations within council process, and carbon literacy and awareness of staff.** Over 200 staff have now participated in the Carbon Literacy Project course, with almost all Directors and Corporate Directors completing the training and pledging impactful ways to reduce emissions in their directorate and help to bring climate into council processes and culture. As the Corporate Director for People Lucy Townsend (now Chief Executive) pledged to start work to understand carbon emissions from care contracts, building on the estimates that are based on spend. This will help to inform the potential for emissions reduction and provide an evidence base to inform how we can support providers to put measures in place, and how this can be a consideration through the tendering and contract process. Director of Commissioning, Alison Elliot has pledged to make sure that commissioned contracts incorporate climate considerations. Directors David Redfern and James Barrah are working towards more accessible and visual data showing energy and carbon emissions in property and leisure centres. This will complement the existing action to decarbonise property, by encouraging energy demand reduction and providing a helpful way to make sure that climate data is central to decision making and performance management.

29. **Wiltshire Pension Fund's** new [Climate and Nature Report](#) illustrates the work to manage climate risk and monitor the fund's decarbonisation progress, including progress against their pathway to net zero by 2050. The fund is slightly behind target for 2024 but the overall carbon footprint is moving in the right direction since last year and closer to its overall net zero target. To maintain momentum, the fund will look at individual holdings which have a high carbon footprint, to be assured they can be a valid part of the fund's journey to net zero. The fund's listed equities carbon footprint has reduced by 31% from 2019 to 2024 measured by emissions impact of a portfolio per \$1m invested (tCO₂e/\$m). The fund current carbon footprint is 27.6 tCO₂e/\$m

Wiltshire county-wide climate action

30. Wiltshire-wide emissions are largely not within the control of the council but it is estimated that 30% of emissions reductions require intervention from local authorities and it may be possible for local authorities to influence up to 82% of emissions in their

area. The latest local authority emissions data were published by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero in June 2024 and show that UK emissions have decreased 5% from the previous year. Wiltshire's emissions have also decreased by the same amount and follow national trends in reduction of emissions from domestic homes. Transport emissions, which is Wiltshire's biggest single source of emissions, bucked the national trend and decreased by 2%, while nationally this sector increased. However, despite these reductions, overall Wiltshire's emissions are currently off the steeper pathway to carbon neutral set out in the study by consultants Anthesis for Wiltshire Council (2022) (see **Appendix 1 and 2** for more information on this data). The Climate Delivery Plan review is considering how the council can further influence the county's emissions, clarify the priority areas for focus, the timeframe for delivery and to consider the resources needed to support delivery.

31. The following list provides highlights of the council's activity to influence emissions in Wiltshire. The numbers in brackets at the end of each paragraph refer to the [Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-24](#) action.

Transport

32. Overall, the greenhouse gas emissions from Wiltshire's transport are reducing slightly (by 2% since last year), despite a slight increase nationally. The council focusses on supporting the roll out of electric vehicles, and charging infrastructure, as well as encouraging active travel and modal shift. The Local Transport Plan 4 will help to define the specific measures needed to achieve the carbon neutral ambition for the county.
33. **Local Plan Review (LPR)** and **Local Transport Plan (LTP4)** are progressing, and incorporating climate objectives and analysis of how policies and interventions might contribute to the county's pathways to net zero. The draft Local Plan includes policies on net zero carbon development, embodied carbon and supports renewable energy development. (B3; T2; T3.4; T4.1; T20.1; T21.1; T22.1)
34. Twenty three new **Electric buses** will be coming to Salisbury following a successful bid to the DfT ZEBRA scheme for £3.4million, matched by £1m from Wiltshire Council's Salisbury Transport Strategy budget and £7million investment from Go South Coast buses. (T6.4) The [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) was submitted to government in June 2024, and sets out the priorities for 2024/25, including increasing bus use, which supports climate and air quality objectives by increasing the use of sustainable forms of transport and reducing the number of car journeys. (T6)
35. **Active travel:** The focus has been on developing [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans](#), and [implementation](#) of walking and cycling infrastructure. This is supported through work with Bikeability, Scootability and school travel planning. (T3; T14)
36. August 2024 marked the one-year anniversary of the **Wiltshire Connect on-demand bus service** in the Pewsey Vale. More than 4,500 people have used the service so far, with 55,000 passenger journeys completed in the past year. Carbon emissions will be reduced where those journeys have replaced individual car journeys, and the service does much more for accessibility, social inclusion and mental health.

Energy

37. The last year has seen an increase in interest in relation to community energy and Local Area Energy Plans. Grid capacity remains a constraint on housing development as well as renewable energy projects.
38. Work has started on developing a **Local Area Energy Plan** which will help to clarify Wiltshire's energy system needs, including current and future energy demand. We are working with energy providers and distribution networks to make sure the grid capacity can meet the transition to a carbon neutral energy system, at the pace and in the locations where it will be needed. The council has continued to strengthen engagement with electricity and gas network organisations, including setting up a monthly surgery to discuss connection issues and planning for council projects. This meeting will be extended to external stakeholders in future, with a session held with Community Energy Groups in September. It enables early discussion of projects, so that Scottish and Southern Electricity Network (SSEN) can advise on grid capacity and build the projects into their forward planning for upgrades. (E5; E6; E7)
39. Supporting **Community Energy**: Wiltshire Council hosted the [Wessex Community Energy Network](#) meeting at County Hall in May 2024 which brought together over 50 people from community energy groups, Wiltshire Council, Town and Parish councils and others managing community buildings. The event was chaired and supported by Wessex Community Energy Network and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), with a welcome by Cllr Richard Clewer, and presentations and discussions led by Wiltshire Council Climate Team, CSE, South West Net Zero Hub, Wiltshire Climate Alliance, and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks and National Grid.
40. The council has participated in the South West Net Zero Hub and Community Energy South research looking at how to support community energy in the South West. The research identified that there is 7.54MW of installed community energy capacity with a pipeline of 16.88MW, with seven groups operating in Wiltshire. Community energy groups were assessed according to their capabilities and will need different levels of support due to how they operate and how established they are. The research confirmed that local authorities have an important supporting role and the council has started this by convening a **quarterly roundtable of community energy groups**. (E7)
41. **Encouraging and enabling renewable energy installations on existing buildings:** **Solar Together** scheme 2 concluded successfully in March 2024 in Wiltshire and Swindon, with a total of 29,500 tonnes of CO₂ estimated to be saved across both schemes 1 and 2, over the 25 year lifespan of the installed solar panels. Scheme 3 is now underway, with over 3,000 households in Wiltshire (as of 26th August) signing up for a free, no-obligation quote by the September deadline. Installations for projects agreed under the scheme will start to be delivered in the Autumn. (E8.1; G1.2)

Natural Environment, Food and Farming

42. The council's **nature recovery** and **tree planting** projects contribute to capturing carbon and ensuring that habitats, species and natural systems (including floodwater retention) are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and benefit health and wellbeing.

43. The Climate Team has a new Head of Service, Lynn Trigwell and the Climate Team is now part of a new 'Climate and Environment' service which reflects the emphasis on **joining up climate and nature objectives**. Climate change can only be successfully addressed in conjunction with reversing biodiversity loss and ensuring natural systems are strengthened. Nature based solutions are an important part of addressing climate change. Work to improve ecosystems through regenerative land management and tree planting help to sequester carbon dioxide and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change such as extreme rainfall.
44. Following the successful bid, in partnership with Swindon Borough Council's Great Western Community Forest for almost £300,000 from a government fund, the council has started to facilitate tree planting, set up a Tree Warden Scheme and progressed the **Woodland, Tree and Hedgerow Strategy** for Wiltshire. (NE1.1; NE3.2; NE4; NE8)
45. The **Grant Application and Planting Support (GAPS)** team have facilitated planting of 36.9Ha of Woodland, 755 individual trees and 1322m of hedgerow during the 2023-24 planting season. In total across Wiltshire we have recorded that 267Ha of Woodland, 1471 individual trees and 7062m of hedgerow has been planted in the 2023-24 planting season. Performance is being measured against national tree planting targets (30,000Ha/annum). Whilst that equates to approx 444Ha/annum for Wiltshire the county has other nationally important habitat types such as chalk grassland that would reduce this level. The council's aim to enable approximately 50% for 2024-25 (222Ha) ensuring planting is in the right place. As well as carbon sequestration, other benefits include natural flood mitigation, improved air & water quality, natural cooling, enhancing biodiversity and climate adaptation. (NE1.1; NE3.2; NE4; NE8)
46. The **Tree Warden scheme** has been set up to support tree planting and maintenance in communities. To date Wiltshire Council has recruited 56 volunteer tree wardens and has provided training and guidance. (NE3.2)
47. **Working with farmers** on regenerative land management, as part of our nutrient neutrality projects, biodiversity net gain and tree planting projects. See **Appendix 1** for a case study of ongoing nature recovery work on one of the County Farms. The three National Landscapes (formerly AONB) that fall within Wiltshire and the New Forest National Park all have tackling climate change as a priority area. They work closely with farmer groups and fund projects through grant initiatives such as Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL). Some examples of projects completed on farms in Wiltshire in the past year through the FiPL scheme include wetland habitat creation, grassland surveys, hedging, supporting soil health, and making better use of nutrients on organic land.
48. The NFU has also carried out an energy efficiency audit and high-level renewables feasibility assessment across 8 farms in the Pewsey Downs farm cluster. In partnership with all 4 protected landscapes that fall within Wiltshire and with support from colleagues from across the council working with farmers, we can develop a clearer understanding of what farmers are already doing to tackle climate change and be more resilient, and the impact of farming in Wiltshire. (NE7.1; NE7.2)

Homes and the Built Environment

49. The council is engaged in significant activity in relation to both sustainable new builds, and home energy retrofit, as domestic buildings represent the biggest source of Wiltshire's emissions after transport. Greenhouse gas emissions from domestic buildings decreased slightly in comparison to the previous year, partly due to a warmer winter and cost of living meaning that less heating was used.
50. **Home Upgrade Grant Scheme** has commenced, offering grants for energy efficiency improvements to owner-occupied and privately rented low-income households that are off the gas grid. Wiltshire Council is working with specialist contractor, EDF Energy to retrofit up to 86 homes in the county having been successful in securing more than £1.7M grant funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero. The council is now seeking households who meet the grant criteria. Households can check if they are eligible and register their interest at <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/hug>. Following on from the launch of the marketing campaign we have been building a pipeline of eligible homes. Surveys on those properties started in August. (B6; B7.1)
51. **Retrofit advice and showcasing** – The Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) project is one of 36 government-funded pilot schemes to provide in-person energy advice. The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) is leading the project in the West of England Area and across Wiltshire and Swindon in partnership with the council and Wiltshire Climate Alliance. The project provides support directly to hard-to-reach households and hard-to-treat properties that may otherwise be excluded from the retrofit conversations by providing in-person tailored advice. As part of this project CSE has created a [Retrofit Directory](#) as a searchable online tool to help link residents to installers in their area. (B5)
52. **Green Open Homes:** the council and CSE supported Wiltshire Climate Alliance in promoting their week-long event that enabled other residents to see home retrofit projects in real situations, inspire the community in their retrofit journeys and help them access ongoing retrofit support and home assessments. A total of 47 energy efficient homes in Wiltshire and Swindon were opened between 9 and 17 March 2024 to provide an opportunity to learn about the pros and cons of different technologies, without the sales pitch, resulting in over 200 visitors attending. All visitors who attended and who live in Wiltshire or Swindon, were offered a free retrofit survey provided by the Centre for Sustainable Energy as part of their LEAD project. (B5)
53. **Planning consultation response and pre-planning advice** is provided by the Climate Team to encourage developers to make the most of opportunities to include climate measures within developments. In the year from August 2023 to July 2024 the council has provided over 230 consultation responses. Through engagement with a developer, on an application for 120 homes the Climate team helped bring about amended proposals that included more exemplary measures, such as maximising solar orientation, meeting Future Homes Standard requirements ahead of its time, with air source heat pumps and a modest solar panel array for every home. It is estimated that 90,000 kgCO₂/year will be saved, and these homes will not need to be retrofitted. Residents will have low energy bills and thermal comfort. (B9.2)
54. **Net zero new council homes:** The council is building or acquiring 1,000 additional council owned and managed homes over the next decade. Those being built by the council are designed to be net zero in operation. The first Modern Methods of

Construction (MMC) home was completed in April 2024 in Durrington. The bungalow was custom built off site then lowered into location by a crane. These modular homes are zero carbon in use thanks to air source heat pumps, smart controls, and solar panels - complete with an EV charging point. Further sites are underway in Rowde and Corsley Heath. New zero carbon homes are also being purchased by the council. (B2)

55. **Net zero new schools:** The council's new schools are aiming to be net zero in operation. These include the new Melksham Primary School (planning stage), The Grove Primary School new classroom block (starting soon) and a building project at Silverwood School in Rowde. Silverwood's net zero goal is being achieved through a large PV array on the roof of the new classroom block along with a smaller array on the new Energy Centre and one on an existing building. The solar PV installation is being delivered in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Community Energy via Willmott Dixon's Community PV Scheme, supported by Communities for Renewables. The school and council do not pay for the initial installation, and the school will benefit from clean energy at a discounted rate. Exporting surplus power to the grid, will bring in an estimated £5,000 per year to support biodiversity and environmental education initiatives in partnership with the school. (B2)

56. **Council homes retrofit:** £2.2M has been spent on retrofit installations which have been delivered to over 200 Council owned homes in the last year through the Housing Energy Efficiency Programme ([HEEP](#)). The 700 measures included loft, cavity and underfloor insulation, Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP), high heat retention storage heaters, smart hot water cylinders, solar diverters, solar PV arrays and new double-glazed windows. Success will be measured through the reduction of carbon emissions, as well as the improvement in property EPC scores. So far the work is projected to save 163 tCO₂e annually. (B1)

57. As a result of these carbon savings from HEEP measures, verified **carbon credits** are being sold via [HACT](#). The credits are based on the carbon savings from energy efficiency measures (not the electricity generated by solar panels) and social value generated. It is a UK based scheme, with buyers ranging from housing developers to Banks. The sale of credits means that income generated can be put back into the council home energy efficiency retrofits.

Green Economy

58. The focus of this theme is to build up skills for the green transition, especially through the council's activity in retrofit. In addition, the council offers information and support to businesses.

59. **Energy advice and grants for businesses:** The "Fit for Net Zero" scheme launched in August 2024 and has received 65 expressions of interest, with 36 businesses going on to participate in the project, which is ahead of the September target of 25 Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) onboarded. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivered in partnership with Severn and Wye Energy Agency it provides energy efficiency advice, and grants for the measures identified. (G6.1; G6.3; G8; R5; R6?) Additionally, the council's Wiltshire Towns Fund provides similar advice and access to grants for town centre businesses to help cut emissions and costs, also delivered through Severn and Wye Energy Agency.

60. **Retrofit skills** – Wiltshire Council supported Wiltshire College to successfully bid for grant funding to retrofit a solid wall domestic property owned by the college and located within its campus at Lackham. The house will act as a training platform for students to learn skills associated with retrofitting existing houses to improve energy efficiency. The house will display examples of building fabric upgrades that improve thermal efficiency and a range of green technologies are also proposed with opportunity for students to practice installing them. The works are anticipated to be completed during 2025, and Wiltshire Council will support the College by promoting this resource to local installers. The building will be designed so that the installations can be undertaken multiple times to support a continual through put of students. The students will not just learn one skill in isolation but crucially how different green measures need to work together to make the house energy efficient and healthy. (G5)

Resources and Waste

61. The focus on reuse, recycling and diversion away from landfill follows the established waste hierarchy, which in turn supports carbon reduction through avoidance of emissions from manufacture, transportation, waste processing and decomposition.

62. **Diversion from landfill at Household Recycling Centres (HRC):** In 2023 an 8-week trial shredded bulky residual waste to divert it from landfill to energy-from-waste. The successful trial saved 641 tonnes of carbon, prompting the purchase of a permanent shredder. This is projected to save 5,965 tonnes of CO_{2e} annually. (R1; R2.2)

63. **Reuse at HRCs** has increased, now covering furniture, white goods, electronics, bikes, bric-a-brac, books, and paint. In 2023/24, waste reuse increased by 43% (69 tonnes), saving 34 tonnes of CO_{2e}. (R4)

64. **HRC sorting stations** encourage users to recycle more of their black bin bag contents, diverting more waste from residual waste skips that have historically predominantly ended up in landfill (also see point 28.1 above). (R1)

65. The council is working with Kennet Furniture Refurbiz (KFR) and The Salvation Army Trading Company (SATCoL) on a [scheme to acquire repurposed carpet tiles for social housing tenants](#), in addition to supplying white goods and furniture suitable for reuse. By promoting reuse, this reduces carbon emissions from waste processing and from the manufacturer of new items. The scheme was funded by the UK government Household Support Fund and saw 114 referrals and delivered 219 items between October 2023 and March 2024. (R4)

66. The council's "[Recycling: Let's Sort It](#)" campaign, launched in February 2023, boosted kerbside recycling rates by 3%. This was achieved through a reduction in non-recyclable materials being placed by residents in their blue-lidded recycling bins which would have otherwise been rejected. The resulting reduction in reject rate of 3,366 tonnes (3%), has been achieved since the introduction of the scheme. It won 'Best Communications Campaign of the Year' at the [LARAC](#) Conference on 11 October 2023. (R1; R3)

Cross-cutting activity

67. The following section highlights work that has impacts within the council as well as across the whole county. These examples cut across multiple delivery themes of the

Climate Strategy. This includes communication and engagement work which is key to the delivery of climate objectives.

68. **Climate Adaptation Plan** is due to be completed by March 2025. While it is being developed, work is already underway to raise awareness of climate impacts and how council service delivery will be affected. Climate Change Risk Assessments have been started with key services, and the strategic priorities identified will be incorporated in the Climate Adaptation Plan. (C2; C8; X5; NE5)
69. **Climate adaptation projects.** Wiltshire Council is one of three councils selected to take part in a pilot to develop a **Rapid Adaptation Pathway Assessment toolkit**, with Environment Agency, Climate Sense and ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport). This will take place in Marlborough in October 2024 to help explore short, medium and long term solutions to manage flood risks in the town. **Salisbury River Park** project is nearing completion with benefits for carbon sequestration and resilience, due to its parkland improvements and active travel measures.
70. **Offsetting strategy.** The focus remains on greenhouse gas reduction, however, work is progressing on offsetting options for the council's emissions and will include tree planting on land purchased at Yarnbrook and at West Ashton totalling 10ha. Work will be carried out to assess whether the council's existing activity is enough to offset the council's current and future residual emissions. For Wiltshire-wide emissions to be carbon neutral it will require individuals and organisations to offset their own emissions. There is an opportunity to consider how the council might set up a fund, that would identify and enable carbon reduction projects that would not otherwise happen. This concept is called 'insetting.' (X4)
71. **Assurance:** An Internal Audit was carried out by South West Audit Partnership Lt (SWAP), to assess whether the council has the systems, governance and policy in place to delivery on its carbon neutral ambitions. The audit found that there is a sound level of governance, risk management and control in place. However, the audit recommended actions in relation to allocation of funding/resources and consideration of climate within decision-making, which will further aid the council to achieve its climate objectives, and these actions are being progressed. (C1; X3; X6)
72. **Delivery plans** are currently being reviewed, and insight on priorities for 2025 are being considered alongside the pathway to carbon neutral update. (Please see 'Action Plans for 2025 and beyond' below.)

Communications and Engagement.

73. As set out in the delivery plans, the focus of communications and engagement activity has usually been through the existing channels such as Town and Parish councils, Area Boards and local environmental groups via the umbrella group Wiltshire Climate Alliance. In addition, there has been messaging via social media, press releases and the website, and targeted communications and engagement to support specific projects.
74. The Wiltshire Council Climate and Environment Summer Showcase was held in the Atrium at County Hall Trowbridge, in August. It was very well attended by the public as well as by staff and councillors and helped to raise awareness of the various green

projects which the council is delivering in partnership with other organisations. Importantly it provided visitors with the opportunity to drop in to ask an expert, gain ideas and to be more empowered to help make a difference in tackling climate and environmental issues.

75. The Climate and Environment teams and Waste teams collaborated to coordinate the event. They were joined by further council teams to provide information on climate actions, composting and recycling, tree planting, sustainable transport, including Bikeability and showcased some of the council's new electric vehicles. It was delivered in partnership with over 10 organisations including Wiltshire Climate Alliance, the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, National Self Build and Renovation Centre, Wiltshire Scrapstore, EDF and iChoosr. A number of the council's new electric fleet and solar lighting were on show at the front of County Hall. (X1.4)
76. The 5th Climate & Environment Forum meeting was held on the 17 July and led by the Climate Team, with a focus on Wiltshire Council's ongoing Retrofit work, and included a discussion on potential opportunities in the future. Also discussed was the progress of current projects such as the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) and Solar Together where participants helped identify potential barriers or challenges to retrofit homes in the community and considered how these barriers could be overcome. (X1.1) previous topics covered climate progress reporting, the Air Quality Management Plan, Waste Management and the Woodland Grant application.
77. Promotional campaigns for the two key retrofit projects (HUG and Solar Together) have started during the summer and will complete in the early autumn. Activities have included fortnightly social media posts, emails to thousands of Wiltshire residents, a radio campaign, an in-person event at County Hall, marketing via our external partners and organisations, promotion with the support of Area Boards and parish councils and direct mailouts of thousands of letters and flyers. In partnership with the communications team, we have also posted a series of climate change tweets which cover topics such as switching to LED light bulbs, reducing car travel and washing laundry at 30°C. Regular posts have been published via the council's social media channels. These cover topics such as home heating, composting and recycling, public and active travel as well as some of the projects featured in this report. These posts have received over 34,800 views with an increase in engagement rate from last year (see Appendix 2 for statistics). (X1.4)
78. Communications have been intentionally very project-based with a focus on maximising take up of retrofit schemes such as Solar Together and HUG. These activities include public events, community engagement, a radio campaign. The impact of the communications is being monitored, in order to drive improvements in the number of registrations and lead conversions, and ensure that any messaging is effectively reaching communities. Methods include A/B testing of the inclusion of links in Facebook campaigns, piloting the use of new tools and data to locate eligible groups and testing of the frequency, number of contacts and relationship between each organisation's campaign activities. (X1.4)
79. Nearly 40 press releases during the past year have covered relevant topics such as new cycle infrastructure, consultation on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, Local Plan, electric buses for Salisbury. (Climate-related press releases are collated on our [Climate Emergency](#) webpage) (X1.4)

80. The council's monthly Town and Parish Council meetings with town clerks have included items on support for tree planting projects and retrofit funding. (X1.4)

81. A meeting for Area Board Environment Leads (ABELs) in Feb 2024 heard from Cllr Hocking in Salisbury and Cllr Kidney for Bradford on Avon Area Boards about the focus of work in their areas, and the challenges including identifying where Area Boards can have influence and meaningful impact on climate or environmental priorities. The session looked at climate action planning going forward. An outcome was the identification of the need for a steer on areas of environmental action that Town and Parish Councils can take that will have meaningful impact and influence on carbon reduction and local climate resilience. A summary of environment-related projects within area boards is included at Appendix 4. (X1.3)

82. Last year all 18 Area Boards had an environment or climate priority within their action plans. Appendix 4 sets out a summary of climate-related activities that have taken place during 2023/24. Area Board Environment Leads have been confirmed for 2024/25, and all area action plans have an environment and / or climate-related priority for the coming year. A 'menu' of project ideas has been created for Area Boards. In Autumn 2024 a meeting for Area Board Environment Leads will discuss the potential for multiple areas to collaborate and be supported on a shortlist of these projects, in order to generate a bigger scale of impact on climate and environmental priorities. Supporting this, Carbon Literacy is being offered to Wiltshire Councillors in Autumn 2024, initially for up to 20 people. Further sessions will be available in the future (X1.2; X1.3)

83. **Finance and funding.** Funding and resource bids continue to be submitted where the funding aligns with identified areas of focus. (X3) These are not always successful but they can make an important difference to climate objectives when awarded. These include:

- South West Net Zero Hub (SWNZH) fund, bid for Fleet data analysis was successful.
- The council was chosen to take part in a pilot being run by ADEPT and Environment Agency to develop a rapid adaptation toolkit.
- The council applied and is now taking part in the Local Energy Net Zero Accelerator (LENZA) pilot with SSEN and a related project with graduate support to help make the most of the LENZA tool.
- HUG funding of up to £1.7M for 2024/25 was agreed in May 2024 of which £232K is the Administration and Ancillary budget for revenue costs.
- SWNZH funding of £10K towards the foundational stages of Local Area Energy Planning which will support early stages of the project, including early engagement with external stakeholders.
- A project with communities on Future Energy Landscapes, with Centre for Sustainable Energy has been submitted to Ofgem Redress fund.

84. **Lobbying.** Wiltshire Council is represented on national networks and boards, such as ADEPT, which are a channel for lobbying government on net zero concerns for local

authorities and responding to government consultations such as Future Homes Standard and Heat Network Zoning.

Action plans for 2025 and beyond

85. The council's Climate Strategy (2022-27) remains the framework that steers both the council's delivery and sets out what Wiltshire as a county needs to deliver to achieve net zero and to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

86. The **review of climate delivery plans** is underway, and a new annual action plan will be published later this year. The update at **Appendix 1** sets out 'what next' by Climate Strategy delivery themes. Examination of updated evidence, government policy, engagement with colleagues and councillors is helping to inform the new delivery plans.

87. Initial conclusions show that activity will continue in key areas such as:

- Reducing the council's operational emissions, through reducing energy demand, switching to renewable energy and low carbon fuels and using a green tariff. Produce an Offsetting Strategy.
- Consideration of Scope 3 emissions to help develop measures to reduce these, with the focus remaining on top-emitting suppliers (including waste, highways and social care contracts)
- Embedding climate into council processes and decision-making
- Incorporating climate into the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan
- Supporting residential retrofit through advice, and targeted projects such as Solar Together and HUGs
- Retrofitting all council homes
- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) strategy and rollout of charging stations.
- Council staff and councillor carbon literacy training to reach Silver Award.
- School travel plans, as well as staff travel plan, while continuing delivery of walking and cycling infrastructure plans and delivery.
- The Grant and Planting (GAPs) team have identified tree and woodland planting in the 2024-25 season so far: 68Ha of Woodland, 50 individual trees, 6379m of hedgerow. The team are beginning to work with farmers on agroforestry schemes, integrating trees within both livestock and arable farming systems.
- A Woodland, Tree and Hedgerow Planting Strategy will be published in 2025, to provide guidance on planting the right tree in the right place.

- Waste services will continue their focus on reuse, recycling and diverting waste from landfill, in line with the waste and carbon hierarchies, and to consider carbon emissions and circularity within current and future waste service design.
- The council is exploring alternative, low carbon fuels for its fleet of waste collection vehicles, and is purchasing one electric vehicle for town collections but will also enable exploration of feasibility for dispersed, rural collection rounds.
- Food waste and soft plastics recycling collection due to commence in Wiltshire August 2027.
- Climate Change Risk Assessment of key council services, as part of the emerging Climate Adaptation Plan

88. There will be new or stronger focus on supporting delivery of projects across Wiltshire to support the county to reach net zero and become more climate resilient. This will include new project delivery targets, clear priorities, actions and alignment to resources. Progress against key milestones will be tracked and monitored throughout the year to ensure council emissions remain on the pathway to meet the 2030 targets and the council is using its influence to help the county become carbon neutral.

89. Going forward, activity will include:

- Partnership and collaboration such as working on a collaborative projects between Area Boards
- Supporting rooftop solar installations on schools and commercial buildings
- Engagement with community organisations and residents, including Carbon Literacy training, provision of information and support and working with communities on home retrofit, climate adaptation and resilience projects.
- Focus on engagement of staff with environmental action both in the workplace and at home, building on existing carbon literacy training
- Considering battery storage to complement property PV on council owned properties
- Early engagement with developers and businesses on climate requirements in the planning process, including engagement with businesses looking to expand or invest in Wiltshire
- Developing partnerships with private and community sector to scale up retrofit and green finance
- Initial activities to start a retrofit strategy
- Local Area Energy Planning to understand the decarbonisation pathway for the energy system in Wiltshire, and supporting delivery, especially through the community energy model

- Developing relationships with training providers to close the ‘green skills’ gap
- Nature-based projects and local nature recovery strategy to measure and demonstrate outcomes for carbon reduction and climate resilience
- Exploring alternative fuels and mileage reduction for council fleet, including waste vehicles and school transport.

90. We will continue to make the most of linkages between the climate strategy delivery themes, and we will continue to join up the work between strategies and teams across the council to make the most of synergies and effective delivery.

Safeguarding Implications

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

94. 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. Bringing nature based solutions into towns and villages such as tree planting and new green corridors, can help mitigate climate change and connect people with nature which has been shown to significantly improve wellbeing.

Procurement Implications

95. There are no direct procurement implications of this report. However, there are continued opportunities for collaboration with the Procurement team and services across the Council when designing tenders procurement tenders, whereby environment and climate considerations can be incorporated, resulting in carbon reduction (as evidenced by the Milestone case study in Appendix 1), and measures for climate adaptation and resilience.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

96. One of the key principles is for the Climate Strategy to be equitable, ensuring the transition to low carbon, climate resilient future is fair. For example, the current projects encouraging home energy retrofits, Solar Together and HUG, jointly provide an offer to those that are 'able to pay', and those that are on low incomes, and thereby these groups of people will be able to benefit from houses that are cheaper to run and healthy. Data is used to help target projects towards certain groups, as well as making sure the council's budget is spent on those that need it the most and that projects will be efficient and effective. The Local Area Energy Planning project aims to identify the most cost effective way to achieve net zero in Wiltshire, and this will be refined to look at specific locations and neighbourhoods.
97. The Climate Adaptation work is targeted towards people and communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Evidence suggests that vulnerable demographic groups experience disproportionate effects on their health outcomes from climate related impacts.
98. 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 flooding. 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.
99. Going forward, through the review of the climate delivery plans, the council will consider how we can monitor how our climate projects are benefitting and impacted different groups within Wiltshire.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

100. 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.

Workforce Implications

101. This report does not have direct workforce implications, however the internal audit opinion was clear that the council's climate action plans must identify the necessary resources including workforce development. This will be included in the delivery plan review which will be brought to Cabinet in December 2024.

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

102. This paper is for Cabinet to note and does not require a decision to be made. While it sets out priority areas of work going forward, these will be formally proposed, and their impacts assessed, as part of the new climate delivery plans being brought to cabinet in council in December 2024.

103. However, the report highlights the progress made to mitigate the strategic risk of not achieving the council's objective to be carbon neutral by 2030, and increasing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

104. This paper is for Cabinet to note and does not require a decision to be made. While it sets out priority areas of work going forward, these will be formally proposed, and their impacts assessed, as part of the new climate delivery plans being brought to Cabinet in December 2024.
105. By implementing action towards being a carbon neutral council, and a carbon neutral county, the council risks using measures that may be accessible to some members of the community and not others, or measures may be beneficial to some residents and have a negative impact on others. This is mitigated by carefully considering the range of impacts of measures, carrying out due diligence, using data and evidence to help inform decisions, and discussing with cabinet members and scrutiny members as part of developing projects. Consultation is also undertaken where appropriate. For example, the council's Climate and Environment Forum may be used as a sounding board before rolling out projects or communications to the wider community.

Financial Implications

106. In response to the climate and ecological emergency and the resolution made by Council to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral, Sustainable Environment is one of the four guiding themes of the Council's Business Plan. "We take responsibility for the environment" and "We are on the path to carbon neutral" are the missions that set out the council's commitments.
107. As part of the Budget Setting process, Revenue and Capital budgets are updated to deliver against this objective, this includes continued investment, new investment and savings and covers programmes listed in the report above.
108. To 31 March 2024 spend from council budgets that contribute to delivering against the climate programme totals £54.104m Capital and £26.174m Revenue, either fully or in part. Investment has been committed for 2024/25 and future years totalling £77.854m Capital and £50.298m Revenue. In addition, grant bids have been successful for a further £8.415m and will be added to the relevant programme in due course. The tables below provide detail at programme level, where we have information.
109. Apart from the dedicated climate team, and a number of projects such as Home Upgrade Grant and Solar Together, many projects undertaken by the council have a primary purpose that is not climate change, but nevertheless contribute to either carbon reduction or adaptation and resilience to climate impacts. For example, the nutrient neutrality projects to improve water quality, have a significant benefit for climate strategy delivery, because improved ecosystems are more resilient to climate change. Many nature-based projects have multiple benefits such as improving habitats, decreasing flood risk, which increases resilience to climate change, as well as reducing carbon through absorption by soil, plants and trees.

Capital projects such as Trowbridge Leisure Centre, school build projects and depot renewal are all taking account of climate objectives in their design stages, in line with the council's Environmental Policy to aim for new build that is net zero in operation. However, it is difficult to know at the outset exactly what measures can be included for carbon reduction and climate resilience, which is a challenge in terms of budget setting. As projects are delivered, and knowledge grows, so that going forward we will be better able to budget for the necessary measures to make sure that these projects are contributing to the council's carbon neutral goals.

110. Funding through Area Boards for climate and environment projects is detailed in Appendix 4.

Table 1 – Capital Programmes

CAPITAL	Previous Years Spend (cumulative £'m)	2024/25 Estimated Spend £'m	Future Estimated Spend £'m *	Total £'m
Salisbury Transport Strategy (electric buses)			1.000	1.000
HRA - Capital spend on climate related activity	14.132	5.765	36.643	56.540
LED Programme	12.991	-	-	12.991
Salisbury River Park Scheme	7.774	-	-	7.774
Fleet - Carbon Neutral Fleet / Electric Vehicles	2.233	0.191	9.214	11.638
Fleet - EV charge points	0.778	0.092	0.900	1.770
Local Authority Treescape Fund - BOA	0.070	0.009	0.017	0.096
Property Carbon Reduction Programme	5.992	2.408	2.000	10.400
Park & Ride Solar Panel Canopies	0.014	0.519	2.967	3.500
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Projects	5.205	-	-	5.205
Passenger Transport RTP1	0.633	0.062	-	0.695
Active Travel Fund	4.015	0.354	-	4.369
Bikeability	0.167	0.230	-	0.397
Home Upgrade Grant 2	-	1.513	-	1.513
Nutrient Mitigation	-	9.800	-	9.800
Air Quality & AQM	-	0.256	-	0.256
UKSPF Improving Mobility - Demand Responsive Transport	-	0.975	-	0.975
UKSPF Skills Infrastructure Grants	-	0.509	-	0.509
UKSPF Invest in Wiltshire grant scheme	0.100	1.430	-	1.530
UKSPF Business Fit for Future (Growth grants)	-	0.300	-	0.300
UKSPF Business Fit for Future (Net Zero grants)	-	0.200	-	0.200
UKSPF Business Fit for Future (Net Zero grants)	-	0.200	-	0.200
Wiltshire Towns Programme (Energy Efficiency grants)	-	0.300	-	0.300
Total Capital	54.104	25.113	52.741	131.958
Grant	22.548	15.820	0.017	38.385
S106/CIL	-	0.256	-	0.256
Borrowing	17.424	3.272	16.081	36.777
HRA	14.132	5.765	36.643	56.540
Total Financing	54.104	25.113	52.741	131.958

Table 2 – Revenue Programmes

REVENUE	Previous Years Spend (cumulative £'m)	2024/25 Estimated Spend £'m	Future Estimated Spend £'m *	Total £'m
Park & Ride	0.276	0.277	0.277	0.830
Mainstream school transport	9.035	9.737	9.737	28.509
Public Transport	7.442	7.360	7.360	22.162
Bus concessionary fares	3.662	3.730	3.730	11.122
Community Transport Grants	0.122	0.115	0.115	0.352
Better Bus Fund - Bus Service Enhancements	0.053	-	-	0.053
Capability Funding (Active Travel England)	0.103	0.449	-	0.552
Rural Mobility Grant	0.672	0.549	-	1.221
COMF - Warm & Safe Wiltshire	0.095	0.090	-	0.185
Public Health - Warm & Safe Advice Service	0.170	0.085	-	0.255
Additional Investment in Gully Emptying	0.665	0.335	-	1.000
Climate Change and Sustainable Living Book Collection	0.002	-	-	0.002
Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy	0.250	-	-	0.250
Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (habitat creation)	-	0.040	0.040	0.080
Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (Recreational pressure)	-	0.037	0.045	0.082
River Avon Special Area Conservation	-	2.000	-	2.000
Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (HUGS2)	-	0.267	-	0.267
Retrofit Coordinator (UKSPF supported)	0.048	0.067	-	0.115
Energy Team	0.356	0.403	-	0.759
Sustainable transport team	2.145	1.650	-	3.795
LEVI team	-	0.240	0.240	0.480
UKSPF Skills for Net Zero	-	0.224	-	0.224
UKSPF Fit for Net Zero support	-	0.200	-	0.200
Wiltshire Towns Programme (Energy Efficiency grants)	-	0.200	-	0.200
Dedicated Climate team	0.959	0.297	0.304	1.560
Climate delivery budget	0.119	0.048	0.050	0.217
Total Revenue	26.174	28.400	21.898	76.472
Grant	2.838	4.404	2.273	9.515
S106/CIL	0.250	2.077	0.085	2.412
Revenue Budget	23.086	21.919	19.540	64.545
Total Financing	26.174	28.400	21.898	76.472

Table 3 – Successful Grant Bids

Bids	Total £'m
DfT 'ZEBRA' fund - electric buses in Salisbury	3.400
National Bus Strategy (Bus Service Improvement Plan)	4.200
Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (Revenue)	0.280
HLF Coronation Living Orchard	0.050
Fleet - data analyst (South West Net Zero Fund)	0.025
Fit for Net Zero (UKSPF)	0.200
Local Nature Recovery Strategy	0.260
Total Bids	8.415
Grant	8.415
Total Financing	8.415

*In 'Future Estimated Spend' only figures that have already been confirmed are included. Projects and programmes may continue, however we are not yet able to indicate the budget until grants have been allocated or budget confirmed.

111. 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. Further capital investment in vehicles, infrastructure and incorporating climate considerations into new buildings will help to achieve its objective. Detailed costings will be identified as part of the emerging Climate delivery plans for 2025 and beyond.
112. Decarbonisation of council property and fleet often means switching from fossil fuels to electricity, which can mean a rise in energy bills as electricity is currently more expensive than gas per kWh. Costs are offset by the work to install renewables such as solar PV so that the council can generate as much electricity as possible. In 2023/24 there was a saving of approximately £650,000 on the council's energy costs.

Legal Implications

113. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The council will be responsible for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Swindon and Wiltshire, under section 105 of the Environment Act 2021.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

114. The Climate Emergency Task Group has 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 13 September 2024.

Options Considered

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

Conclusions

116. Since the 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 great number projects and development work has been achieved.
117. Cabinet is asked to note the considerable amount of work being undertaken across all the themes of the Climate Strategy, through cross-cutting projects being delivered by a wide range of service areas. Achievements in greenhouse gas reductions within the council, with suppliers and within the wider county are due in part as a result.
118. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is still a huge amount to be done, the achievements that have been made over the last year have kept the council on target to be net zero by 2030 for Scope 1 and 2 emissions and remains aligned with its pathway to carbon neutral. Wiltshire-wide emissions are largely not within the control of the council however there is a great deal the council can and is doing to help reduce these emissions. The council is focussing on areas it can have an influence and impact, and reporting progress to provide leadership and a basis for partnership working.
119. With the council's own scope 1 and 2 emissions programmes on target the emphasis over the coming year will be on increasing county wide retrofit activities and developing a Local Area Energy Plan to ensure green energy supply can keep up with demand and businesses and communities transition to net zero emission. In addition the council will continue to work to define and reduce the council's Scope 3 emissions.
120. More emphasis on community engagement, and delivery of climate projects via partnerships with Wiltshire organisations will help to scale up activity and achieve the impacts needed. Activity on climate will help to achieve the Climate Strategy's primary aims of greenhouse gas reduction and resilience to climate change impacts and lead to benefits in terms of health, biodiversity and nature recovery, air quality and the local economy.
121. This year has seen closer working with partners such as the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Wiltshire Climate Alliance through projects, such as the Green Open Homes Initiative and the Summer Showcase. The intention is to continue these extremely valuable partnerships to be able to deliver more together than we can alone and to help reach wider audiences that can sometimes be hard to reach.
122. Developing local retrofit skills in partnership with Wiltshire College is another new area of successful partnership working. Having a strong skilled workforce that can deliver projects successfully, and that have the technical knowledge to promote green energy solutions, such as air source heat pumps, will be critical to ensure a smooth transition to green energy, help demystify retrofit options and empower communities with the knowledge they need to make sound decisions for their properties.
123. To achieve the scale of action needed to be carbon neutral and climate resilient, and to ensure wider benefits are accessible to all, the council delivery plans and

individual service plans need to identify appropriate funding, as recommended in the climate internal audit to ensure achievement of the council's climate objectives.

124. The council's Climate Strategy 2022-27 remains the framework for action in response to the climate emergency. The council is currently reviewing its climate delivery plans and new annual plans will be brought to Cabinet and Council later this year for approval. The new delivery plans and supporting process will be the key to keeping actions on track and being delivered at a pace that is needed.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update on the council's response to the climate emergency

Appendix 2 – Climate KPI Scorecard

Appendix 3 – Solar Together Report Scheme 2

Appendix 4 – Area Board climate-related activity

Background Papers

None
