

## Climate Strategy and Natural Environment Plan - Consultation

### Briefing Note No. 21-15

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We are giving residents, businesses and local groups in the county the opportunity to have their say on our draft Climate Strategy, which will help to shape the next five years of the council's action on climate change.

From Wednesday 1 September to 11.59pm on Sunday 17 October, people can comment on the draft strategy, which covers seven delivery themes: transport; built environment; waste; green economy; energy generation, storage and distribution; natural environment, food and farming; and carbon neutral council.

At the same time, we will also be consulting on 'Our Natural Environment Plan' - A Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy for Wiltshire, which looks at the future for Wiltshire's natural environmental assets focussing on the need to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, halt and reverse biodiversity loss and contribute to the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire's residents.

'Blue infrastructure' means water courses such as rivers, lakes, canals, ponds and wetlands, while 'green infrastructure' covers plant life such as fields, forests, hedgerows and parks, and the GBI Strategy will set a clear vision, goals and principle to guide delivery through partnership working. Having a strong GBI will help mitigate against the effects of climate change through nature-based solutions such as, increased water retention in the land to reduce the risk of flooding, maintain and improve biodiversity, and help to provide improved access to the countryside.

A member briefing will be held at 10am on 9 September 2021 to run through both strategies and give members an opportunity to ask questions.

#### **Our approach**

A climate strategy discussion document and green and blue infrastructure strategy overview were presented to Council in February 2021 (see item 107 [here](#)). Significant stakeholder engagement has taken place for both strategies and the Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group has been involved in the process.

The climate strategy document has deliberately been kept simple and succinct to encourage a wide readership. The UK Climate Change Committee estimates that local authorities can influence one third of emissions in their area. This makes public engagement and buy-in from organisations and businesses critical to tackling the other two thirds – as well as advocating for strong government action. This high level strategy sets out our objectives and areas of focus while remaining flexible. As the world around us evolves in terms of knowledge, legislation and policy, technology and the market, we will adapt to take advantage of these opportunities. Detailed delivery plans will be developed, and in recognition that we are facing an emergency, we are already taking action on a number of fronts.

This strategy is built on the currently available evidence base, recognising that there are gaps in understanding and more work will need to be undertaken over time. Technical studies will be commissioned as required to address these gaps.

### **How the public can get involved**

The next step is to consult publicly on both strategies, raising awareness of what the council is doing on this agenda and encouraging communities to do their bit. People can share their views on both draft strategies by taking the online surveys during the engagement period, and there will also be a series of joint online and in-person events covering both strategies that people can join to find out more and ask questions. To join these events, people must sign up online in advance. The full schedule of engagement events is as follows:

- 9 September, 6pm, online launch event with Claire Perry O'Neill
- 15 September, 10.30am to 11.30am, first engagement webinar
- 30 September, 7pm to 8pm, second engagement webinar.

Libraries drop-in sessions:

- 14 September, 10am to 12 noon, Salisbury Library
- 23 September, 10am to 12 noon, Devizes Library
- 27 September, 10am to 12 noon, Chippenham Library
- 7 October, 10am to 12 noon, Trowbridge Library.

For more information about the Climate Strategy see: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/climate](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/climate).

For more information about the GBI Strategy see: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-green-blue-infrastructure](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-green-blue-infrastructure) where both the full document and a summary version are available to download.

You can sign up for the online events [here](#).

### **Your role**

To support the consultation and raise awareness of what the council is doing, please do:

- complete the online surveys
- share social media content during the consultation period
- encourage residents to respond to the consultation
- encourage communities to consider a project under the [Together for Our Planet scheme](#)
- encourage your town and parish councils to display a poster on their notice boards. A copy of the poster has been sent out to every town and parish council and it is available to download from our web page should additional copies be required.
- encourage your town and parish councils to discuss the strategies and complete the online surveys if they have a meeting that falls during the consultation period. All parish clerks were given prior notice of this consultation (and dates) via their Community Engagement Manager back in late June/early July.

### **Next steps**

Both strategies will be reviewed during autumn 2021 in light of consultation feedback and any relevant changes in national policy (a raft of announcements are expected in the run up to [COP26](#) in Glasgow). The final strategies are expected to be adopted by Council in February 2022.

The GBI strategy will inform the development of new policies in the emerging Local Plan and other council documents such as the Local Transport Plan and set the framework for a new Local Nature Recovery Strategy that will identify biodiversity net gain sites (a new requirement in the Environment Bill).