



Adapting and Mitigating Climate Change & Biodiversity

**Thematic Progress Update
January 2023**

Lead Member Introduction

In 2020, the Council declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and I am pleased to see that we have quickly taken steps to implement a full action plan and are working with partners to deliver key actions.



Cllr Tom Holway
Lead Member for adapting and mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity

Having adopted our new Better Lives for All strategy in September, this update reflects the progress of those actions that we have identified to support our response to the Climate and Biodiversity emergency over the next three years.

This is by all means not all that we are doing and I continue to provide regular updates to Executive and Overview & Scrutiny on progress against our detailed Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan.

There are a number of achievements during this period from the last update in January 2022

- ✓ **Successful consortium bid to the LGA for support in developing a plan for encouraging greater uptake of retrofitting measures. A trial design has been proceeding at pace with a trial in the field expected in early 2023**
- ✓ **£155,000 in grants issued through the Climate Engagement Fund and Climate Infrastructure Fund**
- ✓ **Received a review of our fleet following a commission to the Energy Saving Trust, this was done for free.**
- ✓ **Secured £228,000 through the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund to produce a heat decarbonisation plan for our leisure centers with pre construction detail up to RIBA stage 4**
- ✓ **Obtained 4 new EV vehicles for our fleet**
- ✓ **Submitted a £75,000 bid under the Innovate UK Net Zero Pioneer Places programme, this will provide a proportion of revenue funding for SHDC, funding for Sustainable South Hams and some for City Science to work on a 3-month engagement and behaviour change study with the potential to lead to an £8m fund.**

Activities on Track	Activities slightly off track but plan in place	Activities at risk of not completing as agreed	Activities not yet due to start
2	2	1	0

Over the coming pages, we set out more in-depth updated for each action.

Cllr Tom Holway

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Executive Member for Climate and Biodiversity



AM1.1 – Converting our environmental management vehicles to electric	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scoping requirements and holding initial discussions with providers re feasibility - Upgrading of power to depot and Follaton House and install electric charging points 	
Key Highlights	
<p>The action consists of a number of different strands of work – logistics, HR, procurement- and will be delivered as a project. We have procured 4 new EV fleet vehicles since the last update. Whilst we were unable to fill a short-term role to carry out some of fleet planning work, we commissioned the help of the Energy Saving Trust to undertake a review of our fleet and various options available. There is also now sufficient capacity in the organisation to move this work along, we are now in the process of forecasting a vehicle replacement schedule along with costs forecasts. At the moment there is likely to be a budget pressure to change our fleet vehicles, and a risk that a full fleet transition to EV is unable to occur by 2024.</p> <p>Furthermore, there is costly grid reinforcement that needs to occur to charge the fleet. We currently have seconded our electrician to a new role to lead this work</p>	
Key Risks / Issues	
<p>The lack of existing EV charging infrastructure, limited range of some EVs and the large area covered by some roles/vehicles represents a challenge in terms of ensuring that service delivery remains efficient with an EV fleet.</p> <p>Likely budget pressures associated with switching fleet vehicles</p>	
Looking ahead to the next 6 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecasting vehicle replacement schedule and understanding budget pressure in more details 	
Overall Rating	Amber – while some of the project is on track to deliver, such as the fleet plan, the grid upgrades, associated charging infrastructure and full fleet to EV is currently at risk of not occurring in full by 2024

Action AM1.2 – Carrying out feasibility studies for renewable energy on our land and buildings	
- Review existing and further commission a feasibility study to assess opportunities for renewable energy scheme across Council owned assets	
Key Highlights	
<p>We met with the South West Net Zero Hub (formerly SW Energy Hub) who were able to offer some free oversight on some previous feasibility to install solar on some of our car parks. Verbal advice was given through a workshop and due to the size and other physical constraints, most of our car parks are unsuitable for solar canopies, the cost of installation vs the return on energy is unlikely to stack up in a business case, only one site stood out for potential and this was Dartmouth Park and Ride. Advice was to stick to looking for opportunities for roof mounted solar on existing assets.</p> <p>As for PV on our leisure centres, the last update provided was that fusion have been sourcing alternative companies to provide solar panels on the roofs and it is hoped this this work would commence in April 2023. The latest update is that both companies have completed their site surveys and will be submitting their final proposals and costings to Fusion by January.</p>	



To compliment this, £228,000 has been secured through the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund to produce a heat decarbonisation plan for our leisure centres with pre construction detail up to RIBA stage 4. This will provide the necessary detail to be able to install low carbon heating systems (Air Source Heat Pumps)

Key Risks / Issues

- Supply chain issues for ordering and delivery of the panels.
- Costs for heat decarbonisation of Leisure Centres

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Review options upon submission of final proposals and costings
- Continue to horizon scan for funding and collaboration opportunities and apply where possible

Overall Rating **Green – On Track**

Action AM 1.3 – Explore renewable energy opportunities across the District

Key Highlights

This action consists of actions to commission a study into renewables capacity in the district and use this to inform a review of the JLP

Key Risks / Issues

This has not yet commenced, as this will need to be done in alignment with the JLP review as part of a Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon review of opportunities, the JLP review has not commenced yet. Furthermore, the newly published Devon Carbon Plan commits the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to developing a Devon Energy Plan, the preparation of the Energy Plan will involve a county-wide review of the potential renewable energy resource available for a variety of renewable electricity and heat technologies at different scales, including onshore wind

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Continue discussions within the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership, producing an energy plan for the County remains a priority action within the Devon Carbon Plan

Overall Rating **Red - merely because under taking this work out of alignment with partners will risk duplication of effort and resources.**

Action AM1.4 – Deliver funding for community projects

- **Launch Crowdfund for Climate Projects**
- **Member Locality Fund promoted to residents**

Key Highlights

We have launched our Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Fund on Crowdfunder in 2021 , however after DCC pulling out of the platform (who subsidised our platform fees) it was agreed that the Crowdfunder will be closed down and to use the £200k set aside for this to offer direct grants for specific purposes. Only one project was funded through Crowdfunder, the Totnes Climate Hub (£4,800).

Two grant scheme were set up and promoted this year, the Climate Engagement Fund and the Climate Infrastructure Fund, these funds delivered £155,285 worth of grants, which include match funding, has unlocked £399,157 worth of Climate and Nature projects in South Hams. Climate Engagement Fund projects are due to report back with outcomes in April 2023 and Climate Infrastructure Fund projects are due to report back with outcomes by October 2023.

Key Risks / Issues

Ongoing project monitoring and receiving reports in time



Looking ahead to the next 6 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider what do with the remaining budget left from the £200k set aside, taking away the Climate Hub (£4800) Climate Engagement Fund (£55,285) and Climate Infrastructure Fund (£100,000), £39,915 remains. 	
Overall Rating	Green – on track.

Action AM1.5 Adopting an electric vehicle (EV) Strategy - 9 more EV installations in Public Car Parks	
Key Highlights	
<p>During this period EV charging points have come online at Mayors Avenue in Dartmouth and Creek car park in Salcombe. Pavillions car park has also had Civil and DNO works completed as is due to be commissioned in December 2022. The other 6 sites are at various stages; however, all need to be completed by March 2023 deadline. The 4 Deletti 2/ORCS sites are in the initial stages of the project but will be completed in 2023/24.</p> <p>An O&S EV strategy task and finish group meeting was set up in October 2022, development of the EV Strategy is proceeding at pace, a draft of which is envisaged to come before O&S committee in January 2023</p>	
Key Risks / Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays with WPD for cabling works Delay in installation of charging equipment Due to the pre-election period and need for a consultation following Executive having sight of the EV Strategy following January O&S an EV Strategy will not be able to be adopted by Full Council before March 2023. However, work is programmed and completion of this is expected to be in the early part of the 23/24 financial year 	
Looking ahead to the next 6 months	
<p>Western Power Distribution (WPD) works to be scheduled Further 4 leases to be signed ready for installation (DELETTI 2/ORCS) EV Strategy considered by O&S in January, followed by Executive and then a public consultation</p>	
Overall Rating	Amber – public EV charging installations on track with the EV strategy off-track with plans in place

Action AM1.6 – A 10% increase in biodiversity on Council Land -Commence review of Ground Maintenance specification with Lead Member and consult residents on proposals	
Key Highlights	
<p>In early 2022, following a positive public consultation on the principle of managing Council owned land to increase biodiversity and wildlife value across the District, and consultation with Town and Parish Councils, Members agreed to more biodiversity management of parts of our greenspaces where supported locally. Budget was approved to facilitate the approach.</p> <p>Tree planting has been undertaken at numerous sites in 2022, however changes to the Grounds Maintenance approach itself was not undertaken, namely due to staff changes within the Grounds Maintenance team, and pausing the purchase of equipment to enable a review with incoming staff (not least to ensure the approach was both sensible and supported by those that will be undertaking the works).</p>	



Key Risks / Issues	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing public expectations, and using communications to avoid the perception, that Council land is being neglected. Allowing for a period of adjustment for the Grounds Maintenance operatives and managers to become accustomed with delivering the new site maintenance and habitat creation schedule, whilst learning and refining our approach based on experience. Phasing – it is likely that we will incrementally increase the amount of land included in cut and collect regime/biodiversity regime as operatives and managers become more familiar with the approach, and learn what works well and where.
Looking ahead to the next 6 months	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of equipment has been trialled during autumn 2022, with cut and collect equipment to be order in December 2022 ready for use in spring 2023. Further tree planting is underway in winter 2022/23. Some modest wildflower meadows will be sown in 2022, which will act as trials for the approach.
Overall Rating	Green – on track

This update will be considered at South Hams District Council Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 15th January 2023 at 9am. Watch live on  YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/southhamsCouncil>

