

PART I - DELEGATED

7. CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of various initiatives included in the Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan. Update have been provided by officers and heads of service where appropriate and reflect the work undertaken over the last year.

2 Description

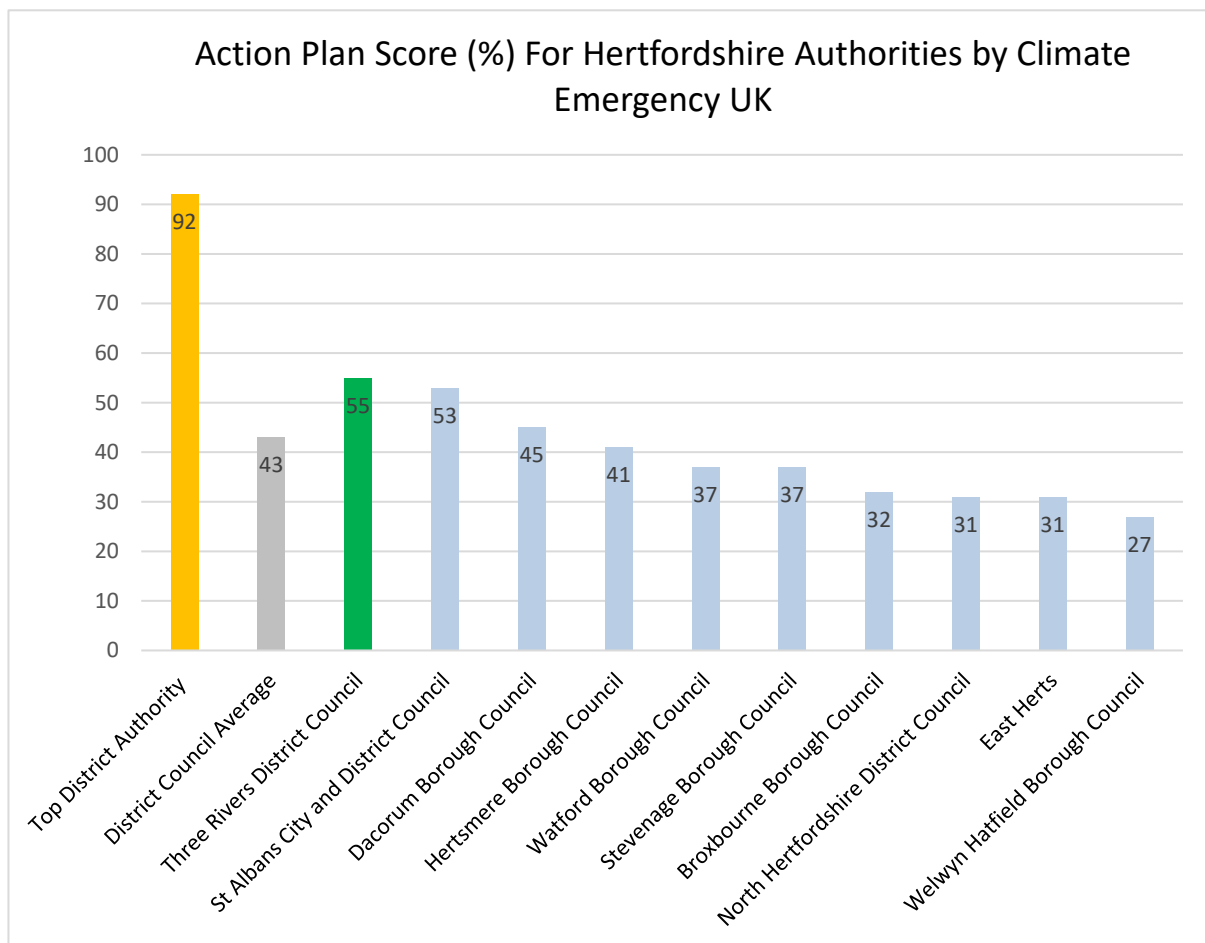
2.1 The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan was created to deliver on the aims and objectives set out in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy.

2.2 The Action Plan covers the following key areas:

- Enable and Engage
- Energy
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- Efficiency of Existing Buildings
- Sustainable Travel and Air Quality
- Waste and a Circular Economy
- Biodiversity
- Water and Flooding
- Adaptation and Resilience
- Food and Agriculture

2.3 Progress towards the various actions in the Action Plan is regularly updated within the live version of the document using a RAG rating system (see Appendix A).

Summary of Progress



2.4 Climate Emergency UK scored 325 Local Authority Climate Action Plans according to 28 questions grouped into nine categories, including how well councils' plans would mitigate the impact of climate change locally, whether climate and ecological emergency was integrated into existing policies, community engagement, climate education, scale of emissions targets and commitments to tackle the ecological emergency. TRDC's Action Plan scored the highest in Hertfordshire and was above the national average but we intend to further develop the Action Plan to improve its performance in a number of key areas identified by Climate Emergency UK, including: governance, funding, education and training. See [District Councils' Climate Plan Scorecards | Climate Emergency UK \(councilclimatescorecards.uk\)](#)

2.5 Enable and Engage:

2.5.1 The Greener Living e-newsletter has been used to update residents and businesses on campaigns, projects and grants the Council is involved in, and share topical information on how people can live more sustainably. So far, 8 editions of the newsletter have been published with a total of 8,121 newsletters delivered and 1,776 subscribers. The newsletter has achieved a 52% opening average and 8.1% click rate.

2.5.2 Social media posts including the One Step Greener campaign which saw Officers sharing videos of actions they take at home to be more sustainable have proved

popular with 6 out of the top 10 most interacted with Instagram posts relating to Climate Change and Environment.

- 2.5.3 Engagement has continued offline too, with visits to Woodoaks Farm to re-plant hedgerows, environmental film screenings at Watersmeet during Great Big Green Week, and a COP26 film screening and expert panel discussion event attended by over 200 people.
- 2.5.4 A Greener Living Booklet developed in partnership with Watford Borough Council, Watford and Three Rivers Friends of the Earth, and Sustainable Three Rivers to give residents insights into the work Three Rivers is doing to tackle environmental issues locally, as well as suggest simple actions people can take in their own lives to live more sustainably, has been published.
- 2.5.5 To embed environmental consideration into the workings and governance of the Council, the following are in progress: Staff Environmental Charter, Sustainable Procurement Strategy and an Environmental Impact Assessment Tool which will be used for decision making on projects, policies and procurements.
- 2.5.6 Utilising the Additional Restrictions Grant fund, the Three Rivers Sustainable Business Programme has been launched to help SME's develop their climate action plans supported by grant opportunities to assist implementation of their climate goals where funding is required.
- 2.5.7 The Environmental Forum continues to meet three times a year bringing together local residents, charity organisations and other stakeholders to discuss a range of issues from water and flooding to transport, air pollution, biodiversity and waste. The meetings include expert speakers followed by questions and a round-table discussion to encourage cross party working.
- 2.5.8 On behalf of Three Rivers District Council, Watford and Three Rivers Trust administer a sustainability fund to community groups across the District to assist in their climate emergency goals. To date 13 groups have been assisted with an average grant of £1,113 on projects such as replacing inefficient lighting in a community hall, helping 9 Lives with their recycling, assistance to purchase an electric van for Get Set to Tennis, and supporting volunteer recruitment for hedge planting at Woodoaks Farm,. The fund will continue next year.

2.6 Energy:

- 2.6.1 The Baseline Carbon emissions for the Council have been established (see Appendix B). Carbon emitted by council operations in 20/21 was 2153t CO₂e - a reduction of 3% since 18/19. Surveys have been completed on all Council buildings and we are awaiting the reports on how they can be decarbonised. Once all data is collected, the route to net-zero carbon will then be professionally modelled. We will report on these findings at LEC in October. District emissions can be found at [Three Rivers emissions report 2019](#). They have fallen by 26% since 2005 to 531,000t CO₂e.
- 2.6.2 Separately, the fleet team are working with several other Hertfordshire authorities to assess alternative fuel options to decipher how to decarbonise the fleet performance in a cost effective manner.
- 2.6.3 Facilities are reviewing our electricity supply options to assess if we can switch to a renewable source of energy. Given the uncertainty in the energy market, this is complex at present.

2.6.4 The Solar Bulk Buy scheme has been temporarily postponed while Dacorum Borough Council develop the contract for the managing agent, and the MoU for the Local Authorities who wish to join.

2.6.5 A report is currently being considered to assess feasibility of solar schemes on Council owned assets.

2.7 Efficiency of Existing Buildings:

2.7.1 Both Green Homes Grant LAD1B projects are in the delivery phase having successfully recruited eligible homes and are closed to new applicants. LAD2 which is being delivered by the South East Energy Hub is still open.

2.7.2 LAD1B is fully funding a range of energy efficiency measures including wall, loft and floor insulation, heating controls and solar panels for owner occupied and socially rented properties. Homes treated under the Grant will have improved EPC ratings, and Grant recipients should have warmer, healthier, more comfortable homes that are less costly to heat, and produce less carbon dioxide emissions.

2.7.3 Our LAD1B schemes are both due to complete by June 2022.

	Number of Applicants in Pipeline:	Number of Homes with Installations Completed:	Quantity of CO ₂ saved from completed energy efficiency improvements so far in Three Rivers (homes with new Energy Performance Certificates issued).
Three Rivers-Watford Project:	Total: 151 TRDC: 92 (full allocation of EWI, Cavity Wall, and Solar PV)	Total: 43 TRDC: 22	32.7 Tonnes CO₂ per year (total) This translates to an average of 1.49 Tonnes of CO ₂ saved per home each year.
Hertsmere-Three Rivers Project:	Total: 91 TRDC: 43 (in excess of full allocation)	Total: 20 TRDC: 10	4.9 Tonnes CO₂ per year (total) This translates to an average of 0.54 Tonnes of CO ₂ saved per home each year.

2.7.4 **Release and Promotion of the Hertfordshire Energy Advice Tool (HEAT) App:** Three Rivers has partnered with the Energy Savings Trust on a new interactive app which offers residents the opportunity to receive personalised energy-saving hints and tips to help them save energy at home at low- or no- cost.

2.7.5 **Upcoming Plans:**

2.7.5.1 **Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Phase 4 Funding:** We are preparing to participate in a new phase of ECO funding beginning in April 2022, which will fund multiple energy efficiency measures for eligible homes to achieve “deep retrofit”.

2.7.5.2 **Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 2 Funding:** We have applied for Phase 2 of the HUG. This scheme would fund air-source heat pumps for low-income, off-gas properties with poor energy efficiency ratings, and ECO4 funding would be used in

conjunction to install fabric measures. If successful, the scheme would begin in April 2022 and end in March 2023.

2.7.5.3 **Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding WAVE 1:** TRDC and WBC have been awarded £1.6m to support the retrofit of 139 social homes owned by Thrive and Watford Community Housing in a capital project worth £3m.

2.7.5.4 **Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund:** £375,000 grant won to deep retrofit Three Rivers House to save 38 tonnes of CO₂e annually. Retrofit to commence April 2022.

2.8 Waste:

2.8.1 Despite a challenging year for waste with residents spending more time at home, eating at home, and getting deliveries during the pandemic, Three Rivers have maintained their position in the top three recyclers in England; recycling, reusing and composting 63.1% of their household waste.

2.8.2 A Hertfordshire-wide compositional analysis of the County's refuse and recycling bins revealed food waste was a significant issue, accounting for 29% of our refuse bins, 86% of which was deemed avoidable with 52% of all discarded food still in packaging. To tackle the food waste issue, a countywide project has commenced in order to reduce food waste in the home, and Three Rivers has been selected as the pilot District where focus groups and interventions will take place.

2.8.3 Social media campaigns and projects have been run and developed in conjunction with Waste Aware including a successful Christmas campaign which resulted in a winner from Three Rivers. A Three Rivers Officer is leading a new working group aimed at reducing sanitary waste through a new Herts Sustainable Periods project.

2.9 Biodiversity:

2.9.1 A new Tree Strategy for the District has been adopted and the Trees and Landscapes team have started work on its implementation. This includes the development of an Action Plan for delivery of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit of minor TRDC open spaces, and a publicly accessible online portal for protected trees in the district.

2.9.2 A Community Biodiversity Officer has also recently been appointed, who has commenced the development of a new Nature Recovery Strategy for TRDC in anticipation of the Environment Act 2021 coming into force.

2.9.3 The River Gade in Croxley Green is set to become a new home to Water Voles as a team of anglers have been working to improve a 350m stretch in partnership with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust in conjunction with fundings from Three Rivers District Council. The stretch of river at Croxley Hall Fisheries is has little suitable habitat for water voles. The team of anglers have worked through the winter to remove fallen and over-shading trees. This will open up the river corridor and encourage in-channel vegetation in channel and on the banks during the project, significant volume of trapped waste has been removed.

2.9.4 Over 700 new trees will be planted across the District to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as part of the national Queen's Green Canopy. Three English Oak trees have been planted at The Green in Croxley Green and will be followed by another 21 trees across Leavesden Country Park, Chorleywood House Estate, Scotsbridge, King George V Recreation Ground, Romilly Drive Playing Fields, Eastbury Recreation Ground and Holmside Rise, South Oxhey. In November 2022,

700 native small trees will be planted in at the The Horses' Field, Leavesden Country Park, and Denham Way Recreation Ground, Maple Cross.

- 2.9.5 In October 2021 four parks across the District were awarded with Green Flag status with Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Chorleywood House Estate, South Oxhey Playing Fields and Leavesden Country Park all receiving the award. Furthermore, Leavesden Country Park has achieved the Green Heritage Site Accreditation collecting the maximum overall score for both the Green Flag Award and the Green Heritage Site Accreditation. Leavesden Country Park also won the most Improved Space of the Year category at the Green Flag Awards - the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.
- 2.9.6 The HIVE in Leavesden has become a hub for hands on teaching and learning for many members of the community with everything from bat and butterfly walks to building bug hotels and bee baths. The activities reach a wide range of residents including home school pupils, nursery children, young carers and passers-by using the park and encourage them to explore and engage with nature in a number of exciting ways.
- 2.9.7 Ten pilot sites with reduced grass cutting were established across the district in 2021, aimed at assessing what wildflowers might grow if left uncut over the spring and summer months. A district-wide Biodiversity Opportunities Audit is currently being completed to identify further improvements to TRDC open spaces for wildlife. In addition a Hertfordshire-wide Biodiversity Baseline Survey is currently being carried out, which will allow improvements to be monitored and measured over the long term.
- 2.10 Water, Flooding and Adaptation:
- 2.10.1 A water partnership group has been formed with key officers from the Council and relevant stakeholders to work on key issues connected to rivers, water quality, and flooding. Officers are working with stakeholders on the Chess and Colne to improve water quality and keep focus on discouraging sewage discharge. We also supported Affinity Waters recent 'Save the Streams' campaign and were actively promoting water saving measures with our residents.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 By delivering the Action Plan and its outcomes, the Council and District will be actively working towards addressing the "climate emergency" it declared in May 2019, and the targets set out in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy of net-zero by 2030 for the Council's own operations, and by 2045 for the wider District.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The budgets associated with the actions are identified within the report at Appendix A. They are within current policy and achievable within existing budgets or external grants. If the outcomes of the actions where further research and work is required to develop projects, future reports to Policy and Resources will be developed or external grants may be sought.
- 4.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators:

Indicator Reference	Indicator Title
CP50	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan
CP52	Greenhouse gas emissions reported as CO2 equivalent
EP18	Satisfaction with doorstep recycling
EP14	Reduce fly tipping across the District
EP16	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces
EP12	Percentage of eligible properties signed up to the garden waste scheme
EP19	Delivery of schemes to promote and raise awareness of recycling
PS06	Undertake a review of the Council's energy efficiency options
ESD07	Adoption of the Local Plan, with the Draft publication, submission, examination and adoption by 2023
TTP01	Production of a Local Walking and Cycling Strategy

5 Environmental Implications

5.1 The sole purpose of the Action Plan is to address the climate emergency by reducing carbon emissions within the Council's own operations and within the District. In addition it addresses the ecological crisis by initiatives to enhance biodiversity water loss and pollution.

6 Financial Implications

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

8 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

8.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the

report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

- 8.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships service plan. All departments across the council are impacted or have areas of delivery in the action plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
The Council fails to deliver the Action plan and meet targets.	The Council will fail to deliver improvements to address climate change within the District.	For the Committee to continue delivery of the action plan and approve progress.	Tolerate	4
The Council fails to act to reduce its' emissions	The Council 2030 and 2045 pledge is unlikely to be met, unless a co-ordinated programme of activity is implemented. The Council will not be addressing the Climate Emergency and thus will contribute further to the increase in global warming and its' consequences. (For details of risk see Climate Change Strategy Supplementary document)	For the Committee to continue the delivery of the Action Plan to ensure effective project management to deliver the actions.	Treat	6

8.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- ▼ Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
Impact Low -----► Unacceptable				

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

9 Recommendation

That

9.1.1 Leisure, Environment and Community Committee enable officers to continue with the implementation of the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan and where necessary add to the action plan.

That public access to the report be immediate

Report prepared by: Joanna Hewitson

Data Quality

Data sources:

Data sources were contained in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy which was approved by Council 25th May 2021

Data checked by: Elen Roberts, Climate Change, Sustainability and Recycling Officer.

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

Appendices:

Appendix A – Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan (LIVE) Document

Appendix B – Baseline Carbon Emissions for the Council