

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - 23 NOVEMBER 2022

PART I - DELEGATED

11A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE (EHoS)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the wide range of initiatives within the Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan. Updates have been
- 1.2 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 and the report outlines some highlights. (See Appendix A)

Summary of Progress

2.4 Enable and Engage:

- 2.4.1 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, 14 editions of the newsletter have been published with a total of 21,844 newsletters delivered and 2,611 subscribers as well as shared on social media. The newsletter has achieved a 57.5% opening rate average and 6.9% click rate.
- 2.4.2 Social media posts have proved popular, with 5 out of the top 10 most interacted with Instagram posts in 2022 so far relating to Climate Change and Environment. These included soft plastic recycling in Tesco, the winner of the WasteAware Christmas Competition, a post about one of our Officers from the One Step Greener campaign,

a new dog poo bin, and 9 Lives second hand furniture shop. We have also posted videos to a new TikTok account, generating over 1,500 views across them.

- 2.4.3 Engagement has continued offline, with an event at Woodoaks Farm to engage with local Food Heroes for a new edible food waste reduction campaign, a talk to inspire local action at Chorleywood Residents Association AGM numerous school talks and events, and ongoing open mornings at the Leavesden Country Park HIVE.
 - 2.4.4 Officers staged a Fast Fashion Conference at Watersmeet November '22, with expert speakers and short video's raising awareness of the horrifying impacts of fast fashion on water and waste in particular. A healthy debate ensued, and it is hoped that members of the audience encouraged by officers will inspire local action to reduce impacts.
 - 2.4.5 The Rickmansworth Festival was attended by both the Climate Change team and Waste Aware, engaging with over 200 people on topics ranging from home energy use and grass cutting, to reusable nappies and period products. To date this year, over 1050 people have been engaged in-person through talks, stalls, and school visits.
 - 2.4.6 To embed environmental consideration into the workings and governance of the Council, a Staff Environmental Charter has been adopted, a sustainable procurement strategy is in development, and a Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment tool to be used for decision making on projects, policies and procurements has been produced and is being reviewed by senior leadership.
 - 2.4.7 Utilising the Additional Restrictions Grant fund, the Three Rivers Sustainable Business Programme helped 12 SME's develop climate action plans, and 14 benefitted from grants up to £7000 to assist implementation of their climate goals, including low carbon infrastructure where funding was required.
 - 2.4.8 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 spring meeting this year was attended by a speaker from HS2, discussing the environmental concerns around the project and their mitigation strategies, while the summer meeting saw two of our Officers present on the new Grassland Management Strategy. The autumn meeting had a talk on action this council and partners are taking to tackle fly tipping.
 - 2.4.9 On behalf of Three Rivers District Council, Watford and Three Rivers Trust administer a sustainability fund for community groups across the District to assist in delivery of their climate emergency goals. This financial year, the fund has had six applications, with three group's successfully securing funding, receiving a combined total of £4,000. Unfortunately two of these applications were not linked to climate or sustainability, therefore were unable to access the grant, and one was for an event which has since been postponed. The successful projects included iMatter Health and Wellbeing Support CIC for furniture collection and restoration, Watford and Three Rivers Friends of the Earth to fund marketing for Great Big Green Week 2022, and Sarratt and Chipperfield Community Foundation to purchase a 5,000 litre water tank.
- 2.5 Energy:
- 2.5.1 The Baseline carbon emissions for the Council for 21/22 have been collated, are currently being assessed and will be published in by the year end on the website

- 2.5.2 The 'Route to Zero' trajectory for the Council's own emissions has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by officers to develop the business case modelling to support decision making on the proposals. This is a complex process which will be reported on in the next financial year.
- 2.5.3 Electric Vehicle charging points have been installed at the new Depot. Three Electric vans are due to be delivered before Christmas 2022 for Enforcement and Animal Welfare Licensing Officers. The fleet team are working with several other Hertfordshire authorities to assess alternative fuel options to decipher how to best decarbonise the wider fleet performance
- 2.5.4 Procurement officers have reviewed the Council's energy supply options to assess options for switching to a renewable tariffs, but due to the price uncertainty in the energy market it has been decided not to pursue this year.
- 2.5.5 The Solar Bulk Buy scheme for our residents has been launched, 1213 residents registered, 133 accepted solar PV and 7 solar batteries. There were 1816 acceptances for solar PV across Hertfordshire, of which TRDC had 7.3%. 30% of the acceptances were based in St Albans. The auction took place on 27th September and Carbon Rewind, who were initially based in Three Rivers, but now Watford are the appointed installers. This will enable them to continue to appoint and train local people in the retrofit industry. It provides a strong work stream to follow on from our LAD1B project with Hertsmere where they successfully retrofitted approximately 30 homes in this district.
- 2.5.6 Feasibility of solar installations on Council-owned assets is currently being assessed.
- 2.6 Efficiency of Existing Buildings:
- 2.6.1 Local Authority delivery (LAD) schemes fully fund a range of energy efficiency measures including wall, loft and floor insulation, heating controls and solar panels for eligible owner-occupied households. Homes treated under the schemes benefit from improved EPC ratings, with grant recipients enjoying warmer, healthier, more comfortable homes that are less costly to heat, and which produce less carbon dioxide emissions.
- 2.6.2 The Hertsmere-Three Rivers Green Homes Grant LAD1B project completed in June 2022. The project delivered improvements to 30 homes in Three Rivers. The average home saved 1.27 tonnes of carbon per annum
- 2.6.3 The Three Rivers-Watford LAD1B project finished at the end of September with final snagging due to complete by end November. Despite nationwide supply chain challenges and constraints on local contractor resources, we have installed measures to 174 homes. 66% of the homes treated have achieved an EPC of C and above with an average carbon saving of 1.56t per home / year. With the average home in Three Rivers emitting 5t CO₂ per year this is a considerable reduction. The scheme saved 272t CO₂ - equivalent to 630 barrels of crude oil, or 4498 tree seedling grown for 10 years. At current prices this will save households involved an average of £319/ annum.

LAD 1 B TRDC / WBC			
	Social	Private	TOTAL
TRDC Ext Wall Insulation	22	20	42
TRDC Solar PV	0	40	40
TRDC Cavity Wall Insulation	0	2	2
TRDC Loft Insulation	0	3	3
TRDC Total	22	72	87
WBC Ext Wall Insulation	48	12	
WBC Solar PV	0	27	
WBC Total	48	39	87
TOTAL HOMES BENEFITTED	70	104	174

2.6.4 The LAD2 scheme, which was controlled and delivered by the South East Energy Hub, has finished. The scheme struggled from being delivered at such a scale, and we understand that the numbers of homes benefiting from the scheme is below the 35 anticipated.

2.6.4.1 **Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding WAVE 1:** TRDC has been leading on Wave 1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, alongside Watford Borough Council. The project aims to improve over 130 social homes owned by Thrive and Watford Community Housing with external wall insulation. The project has moved past initial set-up stage and properties are now being surveyed. Installations are programmed to begin in the November (2022).

2.6.4.2 **Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund:** The programme of works for Three Rivers House has commenced delivery with the server room upgrade complete

2.6.5 Upcoming Plans:

2.6.5.1 **Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Phase 4 Funding:** The new phase of ECO funding – ECO4 has opened in November '22. The scheme is expected to enable eligible homes in target areas to receive multiple, fully funded, energy efficiency measures which will improve properties by at least two EPC bands, achieving “deep retrofit”. We are running a targeted scheme in South Oxhey with E.ON to optimise uptake. Low income residents in the rest of the District can access the scheme through the Home Energy Support Service. For more information <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/eqcl-page/energy-company-obligation-eco-funding>

2.6.5.2 Further funding is available to low income residents from the LAD3 scheme, which can also be accessed via the Home Energy Support Service.

2.6.5.3 **Planning Guidance Document:** To encourage residents to incorporate sustainable changes to their property (to reduce its energy and water use and enhance its biodiversity value), a planning guidance document – A Guide to Greening Your Home – has been produced and is being issued at pre-app stage by planners to encourage sustainable residents to optimise sustainability in their plans. [See Appendix B](#)

The intention is that this comprehensive guidance document will be issued to residents who engage with the Council’s planning department, or the planning section of the Council’s website, as well as being promoted through other more general channels. The rationale behind this soft intervention is to maximise the opportunity

of the change point as people making significant changes to their home, are often open at this time to consider other improvements too for financial and practical reasons. Parts of the guide are used in social media campaigns such as the recent hedgehog video <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/news/watch-making-your-garden-hedgehog-friendly-this-autumn>.

2.7 Waste:

- 2.7.1 Three Rivers has maintained its position as one of the top three recyclers in England; recycling, reusing and composting 63.1% of their household waste.
- 2.7.2 A Hertfordshire-wide compositional analysis of the County's refuse and recycling bins revealed food waste remains a significant issue, accounting for 29% of refuse bins, 86% of which was deemed avoidable with 52% of all discarded food still in packaging. In response, a countywide food waste reduction project has is being delivered targeting specifically residential food waste Three Rivers has been selected as the pilot District for the project which will include focus groups and targeted interventions. A full campaign linking with local "Food Heroes" is programmed to roll out in September/October for a duration of 6 months.
- 2.7.3 Three Rivers Officer has been leading the new Herts Sustainable Periods project. To date over 400 Hertfordshire residents have applied for a discount code, and a number of schools and health professionals have been trained in reusable period product education and supplied with branded demo bags to encourage their use and increase awareness in young people as part of a pilot. Following the pilot's success, two new dates have been set for October/November this year to train more teachers.
- 2.7.4 Two new sub groups have formed under the WasteAware group to focus on increasing recycling in Flats, and improving Schools recycling.

2.8 Biodiversity:

- 2.9 Environment Act: Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will need to ensure that they have appropriate Policies in place to support the delivery of biodiversity net gain (BNG); resource to assess the Biodiversity Net Gain Plan; suitable locations on which to put offsite BNG; either S106 or Responsible Body to enter into Conservation Covenant(s); and a means to review and if necessary, inspect the net gain delivered. Development Management are reviewing how to implement the BNG requirement. Consideration is being made to utilise a shared service via Herts LEADS provided by Herts County Council. It has been noted that a growth bid for additional financial resource to cover participation in the shared service would be required. Mandatory BNG is likely to become law in 2023.
- 2.9.1 A new Tree Strategy for the District has been adopted and work is underway on its implementation. An online portal for protected trees has been launched with plans for additional tree planting being progressed
- 2.9.2 A Community Biodiversity Officer has been recruited and work has commenced on both the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit and the development of a new Nature Recovery Strategy for TRDC. In addition, a host of wildlife events have been organised across the district, including bat and butterfly walks as well as opportunities to build bug hotels and bird boxes.

- 2.9.3 A 350m section of the River Gade in Croxley Green has been cleared enabling water voles to transit safely through from Croxley Common Moor to Croxley Hall Fisheries. The 3 tonnes of trapped, mainly hard to treat, plastic was taken to a plastic recycling centre in Hull where it has been turned into usable plastic boarding. <https://fb.watch/eqoKi4l-vk/>
- 2.9.4 As part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, and in addition to 21 standard trees planted last winter, over 700 new trees will be planted to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Two community planting events, at Denham Way and Horses field will take place in November and December 2022
- 2.9.5 Early in 2022, the Council approved the implementation of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit and Alternative Grassland Management Initiative, and committed to a Council Motion to increase the amount of TRDC owned grassland managed for Biodiversity. Members took the decision to start implementing the changes in 2022 and as a result a host of open spaces across the district have had new areas of hay meadow and long grass established. Plans are also being developed to make further biodiversity improvements, including tree planting and hedge restoration, in future years. A public consultation has been launched to gather opinions on the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit and the Alternative Grassland Management initiative and this can be found on the Consultations page of the Council's website.
- 2.9.6 Residents have been offered free trees, as part of the Hertfordshire County Council Tree Strategy with an additional 2000 trees funded by TRDC and ring-fenced for Three Rivers residents. To date 70% of our allocation has been claimed.
- 2.10 Water, Flooding and Adaptation:
- 2.11 Adaptation considerations and climate risk mitigation measures are being reviewed and revised/added as appropriate to service risk registers as part of the annual service planning process.
- 2.12 The Water Partnership has met twice, with the last meeting focussed on the impact of HS2 on the Colne and ensuring local concerns are raised with the contractors
- 2.12.1 Advice on keeping safe in a heat wave was shared with residents via social media.
- 2.12.2 Two sites in Three Rivers have been identified by LLFA to install pilot retrofit SUDS projects, one in South Oxhey and one in Northwood. Officers from TRDC are working with the project team to ensure it integrates with the new grassland management programme.
- 2.13 Sustainable Travel
- 2.14 Croxley Green walking way finding scheme was introduced during the summer of 2022 and is being promoted in the area to help reduce car journeys. The project promotes walking to busy local destinations, both to support public transport users and to encourage local people to walk by providing regular signs along routes that include estimated walking times, while promoting local services and landmarks including local shops, sports grounds and the Grand Union Canal. This type of directional signing reduces street sign clutter by reducing the number of posts at junctions and more directions can be included throughout the route that are easy to follow.
- 2.15 A new community shopper service was introduced in March 2022 to connect every settlement in the district with a major supermarket for people with mobility difficulties,

to enhance the District Council's support of public bus services. The fully accessible door to door service to major supermarkets in the local area provides a more sociable, low cost alternative to taxi/private hire journeys for those who face challenges in using standard public transport.

- 2.16 A new personal travel planning tool was offered to staff at over 650 businesses across the district aiming for a demonstrable reduction in car emissions. The free software actively encourages people to consider all the options, by showing how they can save money and the planet, based on up to date travel data. It also supports local businesses' sustainability objectives by making more sustainable travel easy to use.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Through the delivery of the Action Plan and the achievement of the outcomes those actions produce, the Council together with partners is actively working to address the "climate emergency" it declared in May 2019, and achieve the targets, set out in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, to reach 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 projects are outside of existing budgets then separate reports will be submitted to Policy and Resources, and or grant funding may be sought if available.
- 4.2 The interventions outlined in this report contribute to 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 across the District. In addition, the interventions delivered through the address the ecological crisis through the enhancement of biodiversity, and reduction of water consumption and pollution.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report. However, the 'Route to Zero' business case referenced at paragraph 2.5.2 is likely to have significant financial implications which will need to be considered by the Council before further actions are adopted

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	For the Committee to continue delivery of the action plan and	Tolerate	4

	within the District.	approve progress.		
The Council fails to act to reduce its' emissions	<p>The Council 2030 and 2045 pledge is unlikely to be met, unless a co-ordinated programme of activity is implemented.</p> <p>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)</p>	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 Remote ----- Likelihood	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

