

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 13 OCTOBER 2021

PART I - DELEGATED

9. DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN (CED)

1 Summary

- 1.1 In May 2019, Three Rivers District Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 for its own emissions, and assisting the District in achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest), in line with the Government's legislative target.
- 1.2 The declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' commits the Council to use all practical means to reduce carbon emissions and lower the environmental impacts of council services.
- 1.3 This declaration acknowledged the crucial role that Local Authorities play in delivering national and international climate mitigation (and adaptation) policies and targets. Local Authorities can drive and influence emissions reductions and climate resilience in their areas through the services they deliver, their role as community leaders and major employers, and their regulatory and strategic functions. For District councils, this can include more energy efficient buildings and assets; changes to vehicle fleet and travel arrangements; changes to procurement and contract management; embracing reduce/reuse/recycling; improved flood protection; planning; regeneration; community development and educating and enabling our communities to encourage the adoption of pro-environmental behaviours.
- 1.4 Following the declaration of a 'Climate Emergency', a Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy was developed to provide a strategic framework for action. The Strategy outlines how the Council aims to deliver and facilitate the changes needed to tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity decline in the District while enabling greener, healthier lifestyles and a thriving local economy, in collaboration with local residents, businesses, community groups, voluntary organisations and partners.
- 1.5 In March 2021, the Policy and Resources Committee and the Leisure, Environment, and Community Committee approved the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, and on 25 May 2021, the Strategy was approved for adoption at Full Council.
- 1.6 The draft Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan (attached at Appendix 1) has since been created to deliver the aims and objectives set out in the Strategy with a series of actions assigned to an array of relevant Council departments and partners for implementation.
- 1.7 The draft Action Plan was developed in consultation with relevant officers across the Council to ensure actions agreed were specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, and that they were consistent with and complementary to other Council policies, projects and objectives.
- 1.8 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

- 1.9 The Action Plan is a live document to enable it to be dynamic and responsive to legislative, scientific and technical developments and emerging grant funding opportunities. Progress on delivering the action points will be regularly reviewed and reported on, and the document itself has the facility to monitor progress internally through a RAG rating system and a “Status and Comments” column.
- 1.10 The version of the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 contains actions for delivery up until March 2023 and the actions for the following years will be presented to Committee following a review.
- 1.11 The Leisure, Environment and Communities Committee will receive bi annual updates on the Climate Change Emergency and Sustainability Strategy. The first will take place on 13 October via the draft action plan at Appendix 1.

2 Details

- 2.1 The Action Plan details a range of major initiatives the Council will implement (or is currently implementing) to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and a number of other key environmental problems. These initiatives include:
- 2.2 All the carbon emissions data for the Council has been collated and will be provided for the recently procured consultant to determine the “Route to Zero” for both the Council’s operations (2030) and District emissions (2045). For the Council emissions it includes assessment of Council assets and services and the options to reduce emissions and the associated costs. This work starts autumn 2021.
- 2.3 Considering the requirements of the forthcoming Environment Bill and how it impacts the Council
- 2.4 Conducting an audit of the District biodiversity to establish a baseline, and an opportunities audit of Council-owned land to identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity further. Together with the pilot no mow sites, and the tree strategy this work will inform a biodiversity strategy. This enables the District to be positioned perfectly to manage funds arising Biodiversity Net Gain and grant opportunities.
- 2.5 Continuing the delivery of Green Homes Grant funding for domestic retrofit to improve the energy efficiency of over 150 homes in the District; helping to alleviate fuel poverty and drive down domestic carbon emissions. Applying for further rounds of funding to support housing associations and another 100 owner occupied homes.
- 2.6 Inspiring residents to help tackle the climate and ecological crisis with a range of community engagement activities, including:
- 2.7 A programme of events for Great Big Green Week September 2021, working together with partners Watford Borough Council, Friends of the Earth Watford, and Sustainable Three Rivers to collate all the events across the District. This includes

two screenings at Watersmeet, alternative period products promotion (part of our period poverty project), and in addition an e-leaflet with practical advice and information about positive actions people can take to reduce their environmental impact

- 2.8 A climate-specific film screening and panel discussion (Three Rivers COP26) at Watersmeet October 18 2021 organised for the lead to the United Nations COP26. Residents will be able to engage with local experts about the challenge of human-caused climate change and responses to it.
- 2.9 A monthly “Greener Living” e-newsletter which provides information about sustainable lifestyle choices, adapting to the impacts of climate change, and the latest environmental news, and promotes local eco-events, activities and funding opportunities.
- 2.10 Make available to residents the Energy Saving Trust’s app to encourage behaviour change in homes by December 2021. This project is in partnership with all district councils and Hertfordshire County Council through Hertfordshire Climate Change Sustainability Partnership.
- 2.11 Progress the emerging review of the Cycling and Walking Strategy to adoption (part of the Sustainable Travel Strategy).

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council declared a climate emergency and has agreed a strategy as noted above. The reason for the recommendation is to enable officers and partners to work together to deliver the Climate Emergency and Sustainability strategies aims and objectives. The recommendation is that the Action Plan is adopted by Leisure, Environment and Communities Committee.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The budgets associated with the actions are identified within the report at Appendix 1. They are within current policy and achievable within existing budgets. 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 Financial Implications

- 5.1 All actions are covered within existing budgets or will be managed by separate reports to committee, growth bids or external grants subject to additional research and development.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Local authorities in England have been requested by Government to measure and report their greenhouse gas emissions from their own estate and operations (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sharing-information-on-greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-local-authority-own-estate-and-operations-previously-ni-185>).
- 6.2 In 2008, the government set a target for the UK to reduce its greenhouse emissions in 2050 by 80% compared with 1990 levels (the Climate Change Act 2008) and, in June 2019, government passed legislation committing it to achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019) .
- 6.3 In its December 2020 report, Achieving Net Zero (<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Achieving-net-zero.pdf>), the National Audit Office highlighted the role of local authorities in supporting emissions reduction at a local level, and thereby contributing to the achievement of the 2050 net zero target.
- 6.4 The Environment Bill 2020, if passed into legislation, will have an impact on this action plan, which will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes.

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 Staffing Implications

8.1 The enactment of the Environment Bill will enable certain aspects of this plan to be delivered. The obligations of the Bill may require an additional resource, but the requirements are yet to be published or any new burden funding associated with the delivery. At this point in time the timescales for the Bill to become law are not clear.

8.2 As the plan indicates each service area within the Local Authority is involved with the delivery of the plan.

9 Environmental Implications

9.1 The entire 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.

10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 None specific

11 Public Health implications

11.1 Initiatives within the action plan will have a positive impact on people's health, for example increase use of cycling or walking, improved air quality and increasing biodiversity and protecting habitats to support the avoidance of future pandemics.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

12.1 None specific.

13 Communications and Website Implications

A communication plan is contained within the Action Plan and promotion of each specific action is promoted appropriately. A key theme is to enable and engage with those who live, work and visit Three Rivers.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 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.

14.2 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 agree	The Council will fail to deliver	For the Committee to	Tolerate	4

the Action plan to deliver the climate change and sustainability strategy.	improvements to address climate change within the District.	approve the Action plan		
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 approve the Action Plan and the Council to ensure effective project management to deliver the actions.	Treat	6

14.3 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.

Likelihood Very Likely ↓	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12

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

Data checked by: Joanna Hewitson Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy Officer, Gordon Glenn, Performance and Projects Manager

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

Background Papers

Climate Emergency Strategy, May 2021

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/download?id=49779>

Climate, Change Supplementary Document, March 2021

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/download?id=49277>

Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report, May 2021,

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/download?id=49750>

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan