

Executive Member Response to Environment & Economy Select Committee Review of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency

(Consolidation of composite document including the interim recommendations dated 23 March 2022 and final report 17 January 2023)

Date Recommendations of final report agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee on 17 01 23:

(circulated Wednesday 25 January 2023)

Date responses should be made by:

Executive response on behalf of the relevant Executive Portfolio Holders should be received by Wednesday 22 March 2023

Recommendations:

Executive Response:

Resident engagement:

Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 1

- (i) With regards to the Citizen Panel, the handling of future iterations needs to be improved regarding the feedback with the group and ongoing engagement.

Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller, Communities, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council, Cllr Sandra Barr.

<p>(ii) That the plans for working alongside and influencing local people be provided to Members.</p> <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory</p>	<p>(i) The engagement following the Citizen Panel was limited due to COVID-19 restrictions, yet officers have responded to all previous Panel Members. Learning from the experience of the Citizen Panel, to improve the level of engagement and focus, the future <i>Topic People Panel</i> style engagement will provide an opportunity for local ward members and officers to hear the concerns of local people and provide opportunities for engagement and involvement in driving solutions.</p> <p>(ii) Moving forwards the Co-operative Neighbourhoods approach will develop to include resident engagement at a local street/neighbourhood level around climate change. This will enable local ward members to be at the forefront of this engagement activity with local people. Projects that been planning include the Climate Change Community Fund (aka Dragon Den), Street Planning and Neighbourhood Green Plan.</p>
<p><u>Baseline figures - measuring how we are doing with regards to our Net Zero targets for 2030 linked to a shared study with the University of Hertfordshire Zero Carbon Lab</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers continue to work with the University of Hertfordshire to assist with achieving the council’s zero carbon ambitions. <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator EH & SBC, David Thorogood</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>SBC is continuing to work with the University of Hertfordshire Zero Carbon Lab on areas of joint research with Dr Lubo Jankovic. It is also working with the Lab through HSCCP on research about lower carbon buildings and evaluating embodied carbon of existing and new building.</p>
<p><u>Establishment of a Climate Change Lead Officer</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 3</u></p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and SD Resources Section 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> that this post be made permanent. <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed & SD Resources, Section 151 Officer Clare Fletcher</p>	<p><i>Speller, Executive Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economy Cllr Lloyd Briscoe and Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources, Cllr Joan Lloyd.</i></p> <p>The post has been made permanent, and Veronica Chan has been appointed and starts with SBC on the 13th of September 2022.</p> <p>Following the October 2022 Executive update report and November 2022 Executive budget suggestions. February’s full Council has agreed the budget for a new Head of Climate Action role to support SBC in delivering their net zero work.</p> <p>Supporting local SME businesses with their journeys to net zero and make the most of opportunities in the green economy with 100 free Wenta (Business Technology Centre) net zero training packages.</p>
<p><u>Interim HEART – Community Group - Challenge</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the Council engage further with HEART to provide some Member seminars on the Climate Emergency and that the Council teams up with HEART in support of a social enterprise such as a Climate Resilience Hub, or Climate Emergency Centres (CEC’s) Increasingly, these local physical hubs or spaces are popping up over the UK, and they collaborate, network and learn from each other. There are none so far in Hertfordshire – see presentation to E&E Select Committee 18 11 21 <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller, for Communities, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council, Cllr Sandra Barr</i></p> <p>Through the recent award of the Shared Prosperity Fund the council will be keen to support the growth of social enterprises and co-operatives of this nature. This can be explored with HEART.</p> <p>Both E&E and officers continue to engagement with HEART and they are likely to be part of our work through Topic Reference Panels and wider advice sharing.</p>

<p><u>Mainstreaming of Climate Emergency thinking with regards to all Council activities</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council activities to ensure carbon friendly practices are truly embedded. (Strategic) • Look for opportunities where the Council can consider if an activity or an event can be made as low carbon as possible. A helpful tool is the good ideas about running a reduced carbon and more sustainable event, considering things such as measuring the current event’s carbon footprint; making a plan; consulting with contractors; organise essential waste management and start simple – How to make an event sustainable (7 examples) Eventbrite blog <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller and the Leader of the Council, Cllr Richard Henry</i></p> <p>With the appointment of the new Climate Change Lead Officer, they have been reviewing the Council work streams and challenging each AD to demonstrate how their Business Unit is work in a low carbon way, including Estate, Housing Development, SDS, and HR.</p> <p>Due consideration will be given to the council’s own events calendar, alongside new events being programmed at the new Event Island in the Town Centre. In addition, the current guide for community organisations on running and event provided by the council events team will be updated to include such considerations. The ideas from Eventbrite will be considered where suitable.</p>
<p><u>Protected and enhanced Tree Canopy</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 6</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Executive Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Regeneration and Officers establish a plan to meet the 2% gap in Stevenage’s Tree Canopy, and that an even more ambitious plan be considered to expand the number of trees in Stevenage or offsetting in other locations as this offers one of the best measures for carbon reduction open to the Council ideally once any feasible mitigation measures have been implemented. <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator EH & SBC,</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan, Arboriculture & Conservation Manager, Cristian Pinta and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>Officers had drafted a report, outlining future opportunities for consideration by Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee. Officers presented this report to Members at the meeting on the 20 October 2022.</p> <p>Officers are also finalising a public consultation document that will help inform the development of a Tree & Woodland Strategy (alongside the Amenity Tree Management Policy) that will provide further direction about how additional tree planting can be delivered successfully and with support from the Stevenage community.</p>

<p>David Thorogood & Arboriculture & Conservation Manager, Cristian Pinta & Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Julia Hill</p>	
<p><u>Planning & Development</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 7</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the constraints of the exiting planning legislation and powers for local planning authorities, establish a plan to make Climate change a planning consideration for all applications. • Officers devise a strategy re tree management & Planning & Development (Strategic) <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator EH & SBC, David Thorogood & Arboriculture & Conservation Manager, Cristian Pinta & Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Julia Hill</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>All Strategic Major applications now have a paragraph on Climate Change impact so decisions makers can understand the impact.</p> <p>The Local Plan review will have a large focus on where we can strengthen Local Plan Policies around Climate Change, particularly low carbon buildings and the identification of ‘carbon sinks’</p> <p>Planning working with SDS will develop an updated tree management strategy.</p>
<p><u>Focus on improved Recycling</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 8</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Executive Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Regeneration and AD Stevenage Direct Services brings back a report to Scrutiny Members on the actions and strategy it is taking to improve the Council’s recycling rates. <p>Action: AD Stevenage Direct Services, Steve Dupoy, Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Julia Hill, & Interim Assistant Operations Manager, Colin Littlechild.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Stevenage Direct Services, Steve Dupoy and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>Officers wrote a report for consideration by Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee, outlining actions to date and future opportunities for improving recycling rates. Officers presented this report to Members at the meeting on the 20 October 2022.</p> <p>Some future actions, which has the ability to have an impact on local recycling rates, will be influenced by the Governments’ emerging Resources & Waste Strategy.</p>

<p><u>Protecting climate emergency targets within the budget setting process</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 9</u></p> <p>(i) That Members and Officers involved in the budget setting process, as a minimum, consider the climate change implications of any budget decisions. Nor should there be a cut to services if there is a detrimental climate change implication; and</p> <p>(ii) Going further, scrutiny members would like the Executive to consider creating a small ring fenced budget in each service delivery area to investigate the long term budget implications of climate change for that business unit.</p> <p>Action: SD Resources, Section 151 Officer Clare Fletcher</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SD Resources Section 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Resources, Cllr Joan Lloyd</i></p> <p>All Executive reports now have a climate change section to detail the impact of that decision on climate change. Going forward officers are reviewing options for more clearly reporting on both the climate change impacts and the funding required to deliver it.</p> <p>At the October Executive there is a report coming forward for the PH for Environment & Climate Change about allocating £7.5k per ward towards local infrastructure improvement, that could be used to lower carbon and improve local biodiversity.</p> <p>PH and AD will need to identify from their own resources any additional requirements, however the new Climate Change Lead officer can offer both support and guidance across the Council.</p> <p>When considering the need to make savings Officers and Members will have due regard for all the Council’s priorities and set out any implications prior to any options being approved.</p>
<p><u>EV Charing Points in Neighbourhood Centres & Electric Car Club</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 10 (i) & (ii)</u></p> <p>(i) Re EV Charging in neighbourhood centres – Members recommended that, where possible, officers consider the locations used should be close to the cycle network.</p> <p>(ii) Members suggested that when the Electric Car Club charging equipment was reinstalled in town centre locations that a promotional campaign with residents of town centre accommodation be carried out to promote their use and officers</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Enterprise & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe.</i></p> <p>(i) and (ii) are agreed and under way.</p>

<p>should consider rebranding it, making it clear that it is for public use not just for SBC officers as the original livery made it appear it was just for corporate use.</p>	
<p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed</p> <p><u>SBC Social Housing & resident led environmental community projects</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 11 (i) , (ii) , (iii) & (iv)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That Officer’s provide Members with the plans to decarbonise its housing stock over the coming decade. (ii) That new tenants receive information on climate change in their “welcome packs” when they enter a new property, to include the Council’s ten climate change pledges and the most up to date information on recycling at their property. (iii) In addressing the gap between the Council’s current engagement processes and where it needs to be, can more be done with residents groups to, over time, move residents away from the day to day housing tenant issues to considering wider, more strategic, Climate change matters that in time will affect all residents? (iv) encouraging very local, small scale, grass roots events that can focus resident’s involvement in things such as environmental projects (gardens/trees) or community kitchen/growing or bulk buying schemes as an example, which needs to be joined up with other neighbourhood activities and needs to be a thread through all activities to address climate change, not as an add on or special one off focus. The Assistant Director, Communities and Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory agreed with this approach and informed members that he was working with his teams 	<p><i>Response supported by Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Deputy Leader and Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.</i></p> <p>(i) The HRA Business Plan will include the council’s aspirations to decarbonise its housing stock over the next 30 years. This will be updated this year. It will be vital that funds are released from central government to enable this to happen. In addition, officer’s will be proactive in bidding for any external opportunities to deliver on the decarbonisation agenda.</p> <p>(ii) This will be included as part of the next refresh of “welcome packs”.</p> <p>(iii) This will form part of new resident involvement functions through Co-operative Neighbourhoods, where council tenants and leaseholders will engage on wider neighbourhood issues beyond housing management.</p> <p>(iv) A number of these types of projects and initiatives are emerging across the town and the neighbourhood teams continue to encourage and facilitate these as communities come forward with ideas.</p>

<p>to mainstream this as a default thinking and activity for all things they do.</p> <p>Action: Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory</p>	
<p><u>E&E Members Quick Wins & Strategic Projects</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 11 – (1 to 5)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Members and Officers lead by example, even if the benefits are small by acting appropriately in Council offices, plastic bottles, drinks cups etc. (Quick wins) (ii) Consider how to represent the progress of the strategy? Fishbone chart/Gantt chart, target lines, KPIs etc.(Strategic) (iii) A communications plan needed with channels, calendar, key messages, campaigns etc. Suggest starting with a campaign on the reduce your heating by 2 degrees (Strategic) (iv) Engage with young people via schools, Youth Mayor and Mayor's activities. (Distinct Project) (v) Promoting the 20 Minute Neighbourhood theory and willingness to encourage local businesses and tap into big business. These items would suit a workshop that needs to be facilitated externally to tease out some tangible actions. Possible HEART (focus on adaptations only, in their view we are past the point where behaviour can affect significant climate change) or Mutual Gain (a neutral facilitation company who facilitated the Climate Emergency Panel – circa £5K) or another external organisation to facilitate? (Officers have suggested that adaptation measures will also be considered on a countywide basis through the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership of which Stevenage is an active member) (Distinct Project) 	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed Communications Manager Lucy Watsham, Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Members, the Leader, for the Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller and (Children, Young People), Cllr Sandra Barr.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) This is supported and Comms can support with this messaging (ii) Under review as part of our climate change reporting (iii) Comms Plan for Climate Change in 22/23 about to be agreed. (iv) The Youth Mayor and Youth Council are keen to support Climate Change activities and would be keen to champion new projects identified. (v) Can be supported by the community development teams.

<p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory</p>	
<p>Flightpath to reaching Net Zero by 2030</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023 - RECOMMENDATION 1 - SBC and area wide pathway and targets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that clear targets and a pathway to 2030 for both SBC targets and area wide targets need to be established. It is not currently clear what the targets or pathway are to see how Stevenage gets from where it is now to 2030. The way progress against the 2018 baseline figure is measured and publicised needs to be thought through so that this is clearly described to show what progress is being made each year and understood by officers, Members and by the public. <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>Officers are currently drafting three pathways on Fleet & Fuels, Building & Energy, and Ways of Working for the Council to get to Net Zero. The pathways are intended to identify the key constraints and cost for the decarbonisation measures so that the Council can make informed decisions on the best way to reduce emissions while addressing other interconnected issues.</p>
<p>Pace of change required to reach Net Zero by 2030</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023 RECOMMENDATION 2 – Pace</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the climate emergency really being treated as an emergency? It is recommended that there is a need to ramp up the pace to get to net zero for the town by 2030. Members accept there are challenges around funding but where it sits in corporate priorities is an area that is a decision for the authority. Members will be looking to see how the pace is picked up leading to 2030. 	<p><i>Response supported by SBC CEO Matt Partridge, AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>Senior management's active involvement and collaboration with county-wide and regional climate change partnerships enable a top-down approach to addressing climate and sustainability issues.</p> <p>Aside from the collaboration, to demonstrate the Council's commitment to embedding climate and sustainability in all decision-making, a budget had been agreed upon for a senior climate change role to influence changes</p>

<p>Action: SBC CEO Matt Partridge, AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan</p>	<p>further. The additional resource will help to accelerate the pace of climate action.</p>
<p>Adaptations of SBC Estate and Sheltered Housing</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023 RECOMMENDATION 3 – Adaptations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review established that due to extreme weather events linked to climate change there is already a need for adaptations to buildings and for up-to-date emergency response plans to care for older residents in sheltered housing schemes. It is recommended that there be an audit of all adaptations required across the Council. <p>Action: SD Resources Section 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher, Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SD Resources Section 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan, Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller, Resources, Cllr Mrs Joan Lloyd, Deputy Leader and Housing, Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.</i></p> <p>Officers are working on climate risk assessments to identify the likelihood of future climate hazards and the potential impacts on the Council’s assets and operations. The potential control or management measure will be evaluated through the assessment process that helps to inform the prioritisation of action and investment in adaptation.</p>
<p>Helping residents to make simple behaviour changes</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023 RECOMMENDATION 4 - Behaviour Change</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that officers from SBC link up with officers from the HCC Behaviour Change unit to work together on behaviour change initiatives. 	<p><i>Response supported by the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan, Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller, and Communities, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council, Cllr Sandra Barr.</i></p> <p>The Council has been an active member at HCCSP, and one of the focus areas is Behaviour Change. Officers will continue to collaborate with partners from HCCSP to influence behaviour changes. Officers will actively</p>

<p>Action: Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Operations Director Communities, Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>seek collaboration opportunities with local communities, the library, the museum and the football club.</p>
<p>Regular monitoring of Climate Change actions</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023 RECOMMENDATION 5 - Future review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been recommended by the Chair of the Environment and Economy Select Committee that the issue of the climate emergency should be under regular review by the Committee and that a progress report should be brought back to the committee on a yearly basis. <p>Action: AD Planning and Regulatory and AD Communities & Neighbourhoods</p>	<p><i>Response supported by the AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p> <p>Officers have presented progress reports to the Executive annually since the publication of the Climate Change Strategy in 2019. The report provides Member with an overview of the climate actions led by the Council and outlines further action being taken in partnership with external stakeholders at a local and county level.</p> <p>Officers are planning to launch an online platform to track all the climate actions that the Council lead on or in partnership with. The platform will be accessible to all member of the public to enhance transparency and improve engagement.</p>
<p>Training package for Members and officers</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023 RECOMMENDATION 6 – Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee recommends the creation of a training package for members, and additional training for senior officers, on climate change mitigations and adaption, so that future decision makers are well informed in all aspects of the councils' operations, and the bearing climate change mitigation and adaption may have on them. <p>Action: HR Managers – Clare Davies/Kirsten Frew</p>	<p><i>Response supported by the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan, Senior HR Manager Clare Davies/Kirsten Frew and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller and the Leader, Cllr Richard Henry.</i></p> <p>In partnership with HCCSP, officers are arranging a workshop on climate risks. The training is targeted to the Heads of service to improve their awareness of the importance of adaptation and to ensure they are equipped to progress on risks related to climate change.</p> <p>Officers are currently developing an Introduction to Climate Change training course for staff at all levels as part of the induction. There are</p>

	plans to organise different climate-related training opportunities for senior officers and councillors, including climate engagement and carbon literacy.
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