

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

This document was updated in November 2023 and is again updated for November 2024.

Recommendations:	Executive Response:	Executive Update 1 Nov 2023:	Cabinet Update 12 Nov 2024:
<p><u>Resident engagement:</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>RECOMMENDATION 1</u></p> <p>(i) With regards to the Citizen Panel, the handling of future iterations needs to be improved regarding the</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, Communities, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council, Cllr Sandra Barr.</i></p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed</i></p> <p><i>We have established the first Topic Reference Panel, on Sustainable Transport and Active Travel, including critical members of the local community. This panel has carried out site visits and has met periodically. We have also participated in engagement activities with local companies, with the NHS and with the</i></p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed</i></p> <p><i>While the original purpose of the Citizen Panel – to support the development of the Climate Change Strategy – has been fulfilled, the Council’s ongoing commitment to collaborative and community engagement on climate action is evident through various ongoing activities.</i></p>

<p>feedback with the group and ongoing engagement.</p> <p>(ii) That the plans for working alongside and influencing local people be provided to Members.</p> <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Climate Change Programme Lead Officer, Veronica Chan.</p>	<p>(i) Officers have responded to all previous Panel Members. 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.</p>	<p>Central Library, where we have been able to publicise the work carried out by the Council on climate change, and we have been able to receive feedback from the community.</p> <p>In June 2023 we participated for the first time with a stand related to climate change at Stevenage Day. We have also been promoting communications through our digital platforms on sustainability matters. Finally, we have been scoping opportunities for street level engagement, promoting the implementation of Green Neighbourhood Plans, of which Bedwell is currently starting a trial.</p>	<p>The Topic Reference Panel on Sustainable Transport and Active Travel remains active, planning future discussions and site visits. The Council continues to engage with local companies, the NHS trust, Stevenage Football Club Foundation, and Stevenage Central Library. Additionally, the Council now produces yearly an updated Climate Change Communications and Marketing Plan, outlining aims, target audiences, key messages, strategies, and specific promotional campaigns.</p> <p>A significant step towards community engagement was the launch of the Climate Action Plan Tracker, available online here, allowing residents to provide direct feedback to the Council.</p> <p>In June 2024, Climate Action officers participated in Stevenage Day for the second year, hosting a stall with educational information on climate change and Council's initiatives, such as the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF). The stall featured interactive activities and giveaways like seed packets, plantable pencils, and biodegradable toothbrushes.</p> <p>The Council has also enhanced sustainability awareness by providing online resources, including an Environmental Days Calendar for 2024, which will be updated annually. Additionally, the Council now offers a Sustainable Event Handbook, guiding residents on organising eco-friendly events, covering renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, and local sourcing.</p> <p>Finally, the Council is exploring opportunities for street-level engagement, promoting Green Street Plans to be developed further this financial year.</p>
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<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</u> <u>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-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Climate Change Officer, Jennifer Bratchell.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawad 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. It is also working with the Lab through HS CCP on research about lower carbon buildings.</p>	<p>SBC has completed work with the University of Hertfordshire Zero Carbon Lab on lower carbon buildings and carbon offsetting. Currently, through HCCSP, it is also related to local carbon offsetting (carbon “insetting”) studies carried out by the University, which regularly takes part in the HSOG meetings.</p>	<p>The collaboration with the University of Hertfordshire Zero Carbon Lab regarding our net zero targets for 2030 has been completed. However, the Council continues to work closely with the University of Hertfordshire through the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) to achieve our zero carbon ambitions.</p> <p>To track our progress, a new Sankey Diagram and graphics showing emissions trends have been included on the Climate Action Plan Tracker website, available here. Additionally, an infographic showing the progress for the entire town has been produced and is available online here.</p> <p>An external audit on climate data and reporting has been completed in September 2024 by the Hertfordshire SIAS (Shared Internal Audit Service). This audit has found 2 low and 1 advisory action. The low priority actions are to incorporate references for data-driven statements in climate-related reports, and to develop a reporting strategy, whereas the advisory action is to liaise with IT to ascertain continuity arrangements to be adopted to ensure there are no system breaches whilst key reports and data are being created.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Climate Action team is currently developing a methodology for annually reporting the Council's emissions using the Local Government Association (LGA) Carbon Accounting Tool.</p>
<p><u>Establishment of a Climate Change Lead Officer</u></p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad and SD Resources Section 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon</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. The post of Head of Climate Action has also been appointed and Fabian Oyarzun started with SBC on the 26th April 2022.</p>	<p>Completed. The Climate Action Team, composed of the Head of Climate Action and the Climate Change Programme Lead Officer is now operating in a steady state.</p>

<p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>RECOMMENDATION 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that this post be made permanent. <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad; SD Resources, Section 151 Officer, Clare Fletcher.</p>	<p><i>Speller 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><u>Interim HEART – Community Group - Challenge</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>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><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad 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>The Council is delivering activities supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (and previously by the Community Renewal Fund) and it has been working to support the growth of social enterprises and co-operatives of this nature. This can be explored with HEART.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council's Climate Community Fund (CCF) – Dragon's Den scheme has been launched and it would cover projects that can be explored with HEART. Officers will soon contact HEART members to provide this information.</p>	<p>The Portfolio Holder and officers have been in touch with HEART, particularly exploring potential projects under the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF). The Council work closely with Wenta, a social enterprise, on the Wenta Zero Action Programme, along with Sustainable X utilising UK Shared Prosperity Funding to support businesses, social enterprises, and the third sector to integrate sustainable practices into their operations. This support includes one to one consultancy support alongside access to resources, template policies, guides, and wider tools to support organisations with their sustainable plans and strategies, help and support with Carbon Reduction Plans and learning how to maximise operational efficiencies.</p> <p>These efforts are part of our broader strategy to foster a supportive environment for social enterprises, community interest companies (CIC's) and the third sector in order to enhance our community's resilience to climate change.</p>

<p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck.</p>			
<p><u>Mainstreaming of Climate Emergency thinking with regards to all Council activities</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u></p> <p><u>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><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawad 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 will be reviewing the Council work streams and challenging each AD to demonstrate how their Business Unit is work in a low carbon way.</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>We have been promoting initial assessment of carbon emissions and carbon avoided in our events. We have promoted the water refill stations across towns for different events throughout the year. We have also considered solar panels on the stage for Stevenage Day and we assessed the solar energy generation through these initiatives. Officers have been scoping how to include sustainable guidelines as part of our SBC Events Guidelines Toolkit.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges the recommendation to ensure carbon-friendly practices in our activities and to explore opportunities for making events as low carbon as possible. We are committed to promoting sustainability in all our activities and events.</p> <p>We continue to promote the assessment of carbon emissions and carbon avoided in our events. Additionally, we have been actively promoting water refill stations across the town for various events. For Stevenage Day, we have used solar panel and/or battery generators to power the stages, significantly reducing our carbon footprint, and demonstrating our commitment to renewable energy and low carbon solutions.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council has now published a Sustainable Events Guide, available here. It includes advice on integrating sustainability into events planning from the outset; using venues with strong environmental practices; promoting the use of public transport, carpooling, and active travel; incorporating effective waste reduction, recycling and composting; using renewable energy sources and energy efficient equipment; sourcing local, organic, and sustainable food and beverage; advocating for the use of reusable, recyclable and biodegradable materials and products, and involving the local community.</p>

<p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun, Corporate Events Manager, Robbie Bratchell; Climate Change Programme Lead Officer, Veronica Chan.</p>			<p>These efforts demonstrate our ongoing commitment to embedding carbon-friendly practices in our activities and events.</p>
<p><u>Protected and enhanced Tree Canopy</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>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-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Arboriculture & Conservation Manager, Cristian</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawad 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 have drafted a report, outlining future opportunities for consideration by Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee. Officers are anticipating presenting 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>The report was considered by Members of the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee in October 2022.</p> <p>In the last 2 years the Council have planted 237 trees in support of increasing the tree canopy coverage, not including around 3,500 newly planted tree saplings creating Fairlane Woodland in Fairlands Valley Park, Southfield. These will take around 15-20 years before they start to contribute to the tree canopy cover, but will not provide full benefit until 30-40 years.</p> <p>An approximate 600 trees a year would need to be planted to meet the 2% canopy increase, and officers are investigating funding opportunities, internally and externally to help support this. A key aspect is to provide the 3-year aftercare each tree needs for it to establish.</p> <p>Further consideration in identifying suitable locations within Stevenage for planting is ongoing. Initial public consultation to help inform the Tree & Woodland Strategy is expected to commence in November 2023.</p>	<p>As part of our Climate Change Strategy, the Council has committed to planting over 4,000 trees by 2030 and increasing the town's tree canopy cover to 19%. According to the Stevenage Amenity Tree Management Policy, the tree canopy cover in Stevenage, including woodlands, was 17% in 2016. One of the key recommendations from the Emergency Tree Plan for the UK (Woodland Trust, 2020) is to provide a minimum of 19% tree cover to support the UK being carbon neutral by 2050. The Council has continued to work towards these targets. Key initiatives include creating Community Orchards and a new 1-hectare woodland (Fairlane Wood) in the South Field of Fairlands Valley Park by planting 3,500 tree saplings. Additionally, the Council will establish three new micro woods using the Miyawaki technique and DEFRA’s Coronation Living Heritage Fund, planting over 4,500 saplings of various species across three sites (St Nicholas Park, Hampson Park, and Shephalbury Park) in December 2024-January 2025. These planting initiatives complement the trees planted through the “Your Tree, Our Future” scheme, which allocated 6,637 trees saplings (2 feet tall) to Stevenage in 2023, and 3,169 trees saplings in 2024, with the latter available for collection and planting in December this year.</p>

<p>Pinta; Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Julia Hill.</p>			<p>However, our internal assessment indicates that approximately 600 adult standard trees (3 meters tall) a year would need to be planted in areas where they can mature individually rather than grouped together in woodlands to achieve the 2% canopy increase. Officers continuously seek funding opportunities, both internally and externally support this effort. A crucial aspect in this regard is provide the 3-year aftercare each tree needs to establish. To meet the 2% tree canopy, increase by 2050, 2% of the town's area, which is 52 hectares, would require 16,250 trees (at 32 sqm per tree), over the next 26 years, equivalent to 625 trees/year. Currently, the Council is not close to these numbers with the existing resources, having planted a maximum of 160 large trees (not whips) in one year, with an average of around 100 adult trees per year.</p>
<p><u>Planning & Development</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u></p> <p><u>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><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>Stevenage Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document has been adopted in January 2023 providing details on sustainability matters included or strengthened in the Local Plan, including building and designing energy efficient building and spaces and carbon neutral specifications.</p> <p>Our Local Plan is being updated and climate change considerations are being reviewed for the version that will be ready in 2024.</p>	<p>The Council is currently conducting a partial review of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP) 2011-2031 to update existing climate policies and incorporate new ones. As part of this review, climate policies are being prioritised in the SBLP's strategic planning. The Council aims to balance new low-carbon homes and developments with the provision of new jobs and infrastructure, while protecting Stevenage's green and cultural assets. The SBLP partial review is now incorporating critical policies related to energy efficiency, which will set GHG emissions targets for developments, overheating and cooling, water and wastewater efficiency and management, green infrastructure, among others. Under the reviewed policies, large-scale major development proposals would be</p>

<p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Arboriculture & Conservation Manager, Cristian Pinta; Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Julia Hill; Head of Planning Policy, Lewis Claridge.</p>	<p>Planning working with SDS will develop an updated tree management strategy.</p>		<p>required to demonstrate whole-life carbon net zero, including the construction phase, through an assessment and statement.</p> <p>In the context of this partial review, the Council is currently discussing an updated tree replacement policy for new developments to reduce net tree loss. This policy would set specific standards for replacing removed trees, ensuring no net loss of tree cover, and aiming to increase tree-canopy cover.</p> <p>Council officers have also conducted public consultation to help inform the current development of a new Stevenage Tree & Woodland Strategy (alongside the existing Amenity Tree Management Policy), which will provide further direction about how additional tree planting can be delivered successfully and with support from the Stevenage community.</p> <p>While tree planting is important, supporting biodiversity requires the provision of a matrix of habitats, including woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, and ancient hedgerows. In this context, SBC has undertaken public consultations for a new Tree & Woodland Strategy and a new Green Spaces Strategy. The Tree & Woodland Strategy will be a comprehensive 10-year plan to enhance and maintain the town's tree stock, ancient hedgerows, and woodlands.</p>
<p><u>Focus on improved Recycling</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u></p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 8</u></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>A recent Defra announcement has now confirmed that a feature of the national Resource and Waste Strategy; 'Consistency' – has been renamed to 'Simpler Recycling' and this will help to define how waste and recycling kerbside services are delivered in the future.</p>	<p>The Council is part of the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), which includes all 10 district and borough councils in Hertfordshire and HCC. HWP focuses on helping residents reduce, reuse, and recycle waste effectively, through public awareness campaigns and long-term strategies.</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; AD Planning & Regulation, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Operations Manager, Kris White; Environmental Policy & Development Manager, Julia Hill; Transformation Project Manager Waste, Claire Nicholls.</p>	<p>Officers have drafted a report for consideration by Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee, outlining actions to date and future opportunities for improving recycling rates. Officers are anticipating presenting this report to Members at the meeting on the 20 October 2022.</p> <p>Some future actions, which have the ability to have an impact on local recycling rates, will be influenced by the Governments' emerging Resources & Waste Strategy.</p>	<p>Details have started to be released by Defra, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirement for a weekly domestic food waste collection by March 2026 (formerly March 2025). Permitting co-mingled dry recycling. <p>Government will provide local authorities with funding to meet agreed "reasonable new burdens" arising from this policy, including up-front transition costs, and revenue and capital funding. SDS are currently working with WRAP (https://wrap.org.uk/about-us) and consultants Circulogic to help model and identify the most suitable waste / recycling collection service. The new information from Defra is timely and will help to inform this work.</p>	<p>Through HWP, SBC has launched various initiatives to promote recycling within the community. The Council also runs an in-house recycling collection service, separating materials into paper & card, glass, plastics, and cans, with private arrangements for their onwards journeys and further processing. In 2023/24, the Council collected over 30,295 tonnes of waste, with 11,855 tonnes recycled or composted, and 18,440 tonnes as residual waste. The goal is to increase recycling rates to 60% by 2035, but the HWP Annual Report 2023-24 shows Stevenage's current recycling rate at 39.1%. The Council is working to boost recycling rates across SBC's sites, housing, and commercial buildings. A pilot programme to improve recycling rates in flat blocks has been launched. The first phase introduced better recycling infrastructure and signage at six flat blocks, resulting in a 185% increase in recycling. The programme featured resident surveys, engagement to understand recycling habits and barriers, and educational resources, with plans to expand successful strategies. The Council is also preparing for a UK Government mandate requiring weekly food waste collections for households starting in 2026 and is collaborating with HWP on a campaign to reduce edible food waste by 20%, saving 10,000 tonnes of food. There is still great uncertainty around EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) and DRS (Deposit Return Scheme) and how this will impact our collection service, the public's participation, and the volume of material in the waste stream,</p>
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			whether recyclable or not. This will impact recycling rates and potentially the Council's ability to accurately record recycling levels in Stevenage.
<p><u>Protecting climate emergency targets within the budget setting process</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>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; AD Planning & Regulation, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun.</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 impact 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 £15k per neighbourhood area 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>The allocation of funding for local infrastructure on climate change and environmental projects has been done, including £7.5k per ward through the Climate Change Community Fund (Dragon's Den scheme). Furthermore, as part of the Pathway 3 aimed to be presented to SLT, we are developing a tool to trial for assessing the sustainability in the decision making across the Council.</p>	<p>All Executive and Cabinet reports now include a section on climate change considerations and implications, enabling members to consider these factors in their decision-making.</p> <p>While no additional budgets have been identified for assessing the long-term budget implications of climate change, a cross-departmental officer working group (Staff Climate Champions Group) has been established to address climate change issues across each department. Furthermore, the first Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) was conducted and completed in 2024, identifying climate-related risks. This work is currently being enhanced by a new climate adaptation assessment conducted by the Climate Action team, which will assess different time horizons and climate scenarios and their impacts on our services. This work aims to be completed by March 2025.</p>

<p><u>EV Charging Points in Neighbourhood Centres & Electric Car Club</u></p> <p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>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 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-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Engineering Services Manager, Rob Woodisse.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawad 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>Underway with some delay due to some technical changes.</p>	<p>(i) The Council is committed to expanding public EV charging infrastructure across the town using different delivery and funding schemes. Over the past year, it installed 18 EV charge points (36 bays) at various locations through the Neighbourhood Centres EV Charge Point Project, funded by the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles. Additionally, the Council installed two Blink EV chargers (4 bays) at Marshgate in 2023, funded by contributions from developer Autolus. In May 2023, 30 EV charging points (single socket) were opened at the Railway North MSCP. Currently, more EV chargers are planned to be delivered through the LEVI funding (from DfT), primarily in car parks supporting local parks, sport facilities, and garage compounds. To determine the locations for EV chargers, the Council considers the compatibility and complementarity between EVs and the cycle network. Additionally, factors such as safety, accessibility, coverage, and other criteria are taken into account.</p> <p>In 2023, an EV Car Club, run by Enterprise, was launched in Stevenage, offering an eco-friendly transport option for staff and residents, who can enrol in it and use these vehicles, without needing to own or use a personal car. Council communications have highlighted the potential benefits of this scheme for our residents (Enterprise Car Club Launches in Stevenage).</p>
<p><u>SBC Social Housing & resident led environmental community projects</u></p>	<p><i>Response supported by Operations Director, Housing Investment & Communities &</i></p>	<p>(i) The revised HRA Business Plan is going to the November 23 executive meeting for approval and</p>	<p>(i) To date the Council has secured over £5m of Government funding to part fund works to help</p>

<p><u>Interim report – March 2022</u> <u>RECOMMENDATION 11 (i) , (ii) , (iii) & (iv)</u></p> <p>(i) That Officer’s provide Members with the plans to decarbonise its housing stock over the coming decade.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(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?</p> <p>(iv) encouraging very local, small scale, grass roots events that can focus resident’s involvement in things such as environmental projects</p>	<p><i>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>incorporates our decarbonisation aspirations. At this point the decarbonisation of the housing stock is not fully funded in the plan. We have to date secured over £5m of government funding to help deliver decarbonisation but it will be vital additional government funding is provided to support the full decarbonisation of the housing stock.</p> <p>(ii) This is being analysed to be included as part of 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. Through our Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme, we have a series of engagement opportunities that take place throughout the year and offer a variety of ways for residents to engage with us on a whole host of topics. Methods used are: face to face at local events, residents meetings, pop ups in local neighbourhoods, ward walkabouts and patrols, digitally through newsletters, consultations and website/social media platforms and more targeted engagement by workshops (on specific subjects). We also have a suite of engagement opportunities that fit both Housing related remits as well as the wider resident engagement functions that are currently being piloted, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Armchair reviewer: Help shape services by reviewing policies and procedures from comfort of your sofa - Resident writer: review communications or suggest/write content for publication on specific topics - Resident Investigator: Interview council officers on services and policies to inform change 	<p>meet our target to improve all homes to a minimum of EPC C by 2030. In order to continue working towards this target and to decarbonise our housing stock it is vital more government funding is secured to meet these targets. At present the decarbonisation of the housing stock is not funded in the Housing Revenues Account (HRA) business plan beyond achieving EPC C by 2030. Due to financial pressures, investment plans including meeting EPC C, may need to be reviewed by prioritising legal and regulatory requirements. A further update can be provided once the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and 2025/2026 budget have been confirmed.</p> <p>(ii) At the moment, our Lettings teams provide energy-related information to the resident at the time of sign-up. This includes an EPC in all lettings pack alongside the gas certificate, electricity certificate and asbestos report. We are permanently analysing the expansion of this to include new climate-related information for residents.</p> <p>(iii) Resident involvement functions are delivered through Co-operative Neighbourhoods, where council tenants and leaseholders can engage on wider neighbourhood issues beyond housing management. Through our Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme, we have a series of engagement opportunities that take place throughout the year and offer a variety of ways for residents to engage with us on a whole host of topics. Methods used are: face to face at local events, residents meetings, pop ups in local neighbourhoods, ward walkabouts and patrols, digitally through newsletters, consultations and</p>
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<p>(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 to mainstream this as a default thinking and activity for all things they do.</p> <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulation, Zayd Al-Jawad, Head of Climate Action; Fabian Oyarzun, Head of Housing Asset Management, Andrew Garside, Housing & Investment Energy & Sustainability Coordinator, Kirsten Simpson; Cooperative Neighbourhood Manager, Jane Konopka.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community participator: attend pop up consultation and get involved in participatory budgeting - Chatty rooms: online forums and webinars” (iv) Linked to our corporate Co-operative Neighbourhoods targets and the CIL, we have also launched the Climate Change Community Fund (Dragon’s Den scheme) through which the projects of this type can now be funded by the Council. . 	<p>website/social media platforms and more targeted engagement by workshops (on specific subjects). We also have a suite of engagement opportunities that fit both Housing related remits as well as the wider resident engagement functions. In addition to this we are launching our new Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2027 that also includes our intention to develop a Resident Influence and Assurance Group that will have a clear remit of scrutiny, making decisions and recommendations, and holding the Council to account.</p>
<p><u>E&E Members Quick Wins & Strategic Projects</u></p>	<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</i></p>	<p>(i) We are currently developing a Pathway 3 report focused on people and processes where these matters are aimed to be included.</p>	<p>(i) The “Pathway 3 – People and Processes” Report was developed, completed, and presented to the SLT in late 2023. As part of its implementation, a newly established Staff Climate Champions group is working on various initiatives,</p>

<p>Interim report – March 2022 RECOMMENDATION 11 – (1 to 5)</p> <p>(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)</p> <p>(ii) Consider how to represent the progress of the strategy? Fishbone chart/Gantt chart, target lines, KPIs etc.(Strategic)</p> <p>(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)</p> <p>(iv) Engage with young people via schools, Youth Mayor and Mayor's activities. (Distinct Project)</p> <p>(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</p>	<p><i>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> <p>(i) This is supported and Comms can support with this messaging</p> <p>(ii) Under review as part of our climate change reporting</p> <p>(iii) Comms Plan for Climate Change in 22/23 about to be agreed.</p> <p>(iv) The Youth Mayor and Youth Council are keen to support Climate Change activities and would be keen to champion new projects identified.</p> <p>(v) Can be supported by the community development teams.</p>	<p>(ii) We are developing an action tracker which is going to be presented in this November 2023 E&E Select Committee session.</p> <p>(iii) Comms Plan for Climate Change in 23/24 about to be agreed.</p> <p>(iv) We have been working with HCC led Stevenage Youth Strategy Group and we are delivering a local school intervention (for leaders) through the Sustainable X project funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>(v) To be analysed in the context of the Local Plan update. Currently being supported by the design and implementation of the Hire to Cycle Scheme across the town.</p>	<p>including leading by example, and coordinating matters related to ways of working, such as resource usage (plastic, printed paper) and recycling.</p> <p>(ii) Currently, progress is being displayed in the Climate Action Plan Tracker (available here), which has been online since February 2024 and shows the advancement of each action. This tracker is updated 6-monthly. The next step in the implementation of the tracker is to identify critical KPIs for some of the priority actions. Additionally, graphs have been included on the website to show the trend of GHG emissions for both the borough and the Council, including a Sankey diagram for the latter.</p> <p>(iii) Now, each year, an updated Climate Change Communications and Marketing Plan is prepared by the Council. The plan outlines the aims, target audiences, key messages, and strategies for the year ahead alongside specific campaigns for promotion. Furthermore, the Council has developed an online resource called Environmental Days Calendar for 2024 (available here), which will be updated annually, serving as a quick go-to resource for identifying important international and national environmental dates throughout the year, facilitating community awareness activities around these.</p> <p>(iv) We continue to participate with HCC led Stevenage Youth Strategy Group and we are delivering a local school intervention (for leaders) through the Sustainable X project funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>(v) This is currently being analysed in the context of the Local Plan partial update and being supported</p>
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<p>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> <p>Action: AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Communications and Marketing Officer, Lucy Watsham; Climate Change Programme Lead Officer, Veronica Chan; Climate Change Officer, Jennifer Bratchell; Head of Planning Policy, Lewis Claridge.</p>			<p>by the design and implementation of the Hire to Cycle Scheme across the town. Furthermore, the Council is taking part in the Sustainable Travel Town programme led by HCC (further information: Sustainable Travel Town Programme).</p>
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<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-Jawad, Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Climate Change Lead Officer, Veronica Chan; Climate Change Officer, Jennifer Bratchell.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p>	<p>We have been working on updating our baseline from 2018 which included transport and buildings as an organisation. Our most accurate data at the moment is the new updated baseline on our own fleet but we have been making improvements on our buildings' emissions baseline moving from previous 12 SBC sites to 549 sites. It is underway to keep on improving this baseline.</p> <p>At Stevenage level the data we use is the data from DESNZ. A bottom-up baseline at Stevenage level would require new carbon accounting tools.</p>	<p>Currently, the Climate Action team is developing a methodology for annually reporting the Council's emissions, systematically including Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, with a view to expanding the incorporation of Scope 3 emissions in the future. To achieve this, the use of the LGA Carbon Accounting Tool or the GHG Protocol is being considered. Additionally, graphs have been incorporated to show the progress made at the town and Council levels in reducing emissions compared to the base year 2018. These graphs are available online at Stevenage Climate Action Plan. At Stevenage level the data we use is the data from DESNZ, produced and updated annually.</p>
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<p>Pace of change required to reach Net Zero by 2030</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023</u> <u>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>Action: SBC CEO, Matt Partridge; AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by SBC CEO Matt Partridge, AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p>	<p>We are now working at county wide and regional level through the HCCSP and the Regional Climate Change Forum established by the East of England LGA. Our Chief Executive has lead positions in these initiatives. As part of the Pathway 3 report aimed to be presented to SLT, we are developing a tool to trial for assessing the sustainability in the decision making across the Council.</p>	<p>The Council continues to work at the county-wide and regional level through the HCCSP and the EELGA Regional Climate Change Forum (RCCF). Our Chief Executive holds lead positions in these initiatives, and our Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance is now the Chair of the HCCSP for the current year. Furthermore, tackling climate change is now one of the priorities in the Corporate Plan: Making Stevenage Even Better (2024-2027), showcasing the strategic importance given to the subject within the organisation.</p>
<p>Adaptations of SBC Estate and Sheltered Housing</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023</u> <u>RECOMMENDATION 3 – Adaptations</u></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</i></p>	<p>We are currently working now to include climate related risks as part of our risk register and actively working with the HCCSP Adaptation to support this assessment. An initial assessment is expected to be completed by December 2023.</p>	<p>We have completed a first Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) for SBC as an organisation, including 51 specific climate-related risks, within four categories and across 18 service areas. This CCRA included risks such as extreme weather events causing deterioration of building fabric and damage to buildings, air quality issues for SBC tenants due to warmer wetter winters leading to</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; AD Planning & Regulation, Zayd Al-Jawad; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Climate Change Programme Lead Officer, Veronica Chan; Climate Change Officer, Jennifer Bratchell.</p>	<p><i>Change, Cllr Simon Speller, Resources, Cllr Mrs Joan Lloyd, Deputy Leader and Housing, Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.</i></p>		<p>increased mould and damp, increased flood risk causing damage to council owned residential buildings or access to them, SBC residential tenants affected by surface water or fluvial flooding, overheating of Council housing stock resulting in increased energy consumption, increased water consumption, increased complaints, and risk of morbidity or death. These risks are currently being reviewed to be presented at the Audit Committee and will be updated in the context of SBC's participation in the ARP4 voluntary round with DEFRA for climate adaptation reporting, aiming for completion by March 2025.</p>
<p>Helping residents to make simple behaviour changes</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023</u> <u>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>We are currently part of the HCCSP Behavioural Change subgroup, and we are working on the updates required for its action plan design and delivery.</p>	<p>Underway. We are currently part of the HCCSP Behavioural Change subgroup, and we are taking part in all the actions analysed and delivered by the subgroup, particularly those related to homes retrofitting.</p>

<p>Action: Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun; Climate Change Programme Lead Officer, Veronica Chan.</p>			
<p>Regular monitoring of Climate Change actions</p> <p><u>Final Report Jan 2023</u> <u>RECOMMENDATION 5 -</u> <u>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 Regulation, Zayd Al-Jawad; AD Stevenage Direct Services, Steve Dupoy.</p>	<p><i>Response supported by the AD Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad and the Lead Climate Change Officer, Veronica Chan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller.</i></p>	<p>Agreed and underway.</p>	<p>Agreed and underway.</p>
<p>Training package for Members and officers</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</i></p>	<p>As part of the Pathway 3 aimed to be presented to SLT, we are developing a strategy to establish Climate Champions (or an eco-staff volunteer group) as part of every team across SBC. This will involve a</p>	<p>The Council has been delivering internal activities, as well as those through the HCCSP, to train key and senior officers on climate change topics. These have included Carbon Literacy training for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and for the Climate</p>

<p>Final Report Jan 2023 <u>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; Head of Climate Action, Fabian Oyarzun.</p>	<p><i>for Environment & Climate Change, Cllr Simon Speller and Resources, Cllr Mrs Joan Lloyd.</i></p>	<p>strategy for carbon training and carbon literacy for these champions.</p>	<p>Champions, with invitations extended to other interested officers. The Staff Climate Champions Group has been established in 2024, with representatives from all different departments, to discuss cross-cutting climate action themes. The training activities have also included sessions on Biodiversity Net Gain, Planning for Climate Officers, Climate Change for Planning Officers, and Sustainable Buildings Certification.</p>
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