

ANNUAL UPDATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Executive Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the Council's climate change activities, highlighting in particular work undertaken in furtherance of its climate and ecological emergency declaration.

To set this in context, this report begins with a brief overview of Woking's climate change activities to date, our local pledges and continuing climate commitments.

The report then goes on to highlight work undertaken in the last year as well as outlining future projects and plans.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the activities undertaken to date and those planned in furtherance of the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration, be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	<u>Woking 2050</u> <u>Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress Reports</u> <u>Report and presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 22 March 2022.</u>
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1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council has long been committed to protecting the environment. Its first climate change strategy was adopted in 2002, although activities in this area began much earlier in 1990. A timeline of activities is available on the Council's [climate change webpages](#).
- 1.2 There are two key strategy documents that underpin activities in this area. [Woking 2050](#) is the borough's current climate change strategy. This sets out a vision guiding our collective efforts to create a sustainable Borough by reducing our impact on the environment. The significance of the year 2050 used in the strategy's title is tied to the national legislation in place at the time of its adoption. The UK's Climate Change Act sought to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 on the 1990 baseline. This was adopted as a local target at the time of the last revision of the Climate Change Strategy (2015). This national target has been superseded by a pledge to reach net zero by 2050, which has also been adopted locally as part of the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration (2019). The strategy is currently under review to reflect these changes, as well as other actions that have been developed as part of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. Further detail on this is outlined later.
- 1.3 Complementing Woking 2050 is the [Natural Woking](#) strategy (adopted in 2016), which is the Council's equivalent strategy for biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy. It sets out how we intend to enhance the provision and accessibility of green spaces, conserve existing biodiversity and habitats and create opportunities for species to return to the Borough.
- 1.4 Delivery against the Woking 2050 and Natural Woking strategies is monitored through regular reporting to the Greener Woking Working Group (formerly the Climate Change Working Group) whose members include representatives from the community, business, environmental organisations, Councillors and Council Officers. This cross party group was established in 2003. It is a non-public meeting though notes of topics covered are published on the Council's website at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-change-working-group. A wide range of projects have and are being delivered in implementation of the objectives of the climate change strategy and Natural Woking, by the Council, by partner organisations and groups. More information about these is available at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability. This earlier work provides a strong foundation on which the Council is building as it takes additional steps in light of the urgency of the climate challenge.
- 1.5 On 25 July 2019, the Council declared a [climate and ecological emergency](#). This cross-party declaration recognised the continued priority and commitment the Borough gives to addressing climate change, both through mitigation and adaptation. The Council pledged to become net zero by 2030 across its own estate and operations, and by 2050 (or sooner) across the wider Borough.
- 1.6 Further to the declaration, a [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) (CEAP) was approved by the Council on 13 February 2020. The plan highlights and acknowledges this is a continuation of the long-term commitment of the Council to protecting the environment and addressing climate change.
- 1.7 Given the breadth of the pledge to reduce (and eventually eliminate) the Council's own impact and contribution to climate change, the action plan is naturally broad ranging. Crucially, it acknowledges the need to accelerate existing climate focused activities in order to meet the pledge. Every quarter an update on the CEAP and progress against its actions is considered by the Greener Woking Working Group and is [published online](#). The CEAP is a living document which continues to be developed as more information is gathered about potential new projects and activities.

2.0 Activities undertaken during 2022/23

- 2.1 A number of key activities and projects have been progressed post-declaration. These activities build on a strong [foundation of green initiatives](#) that pre-date July 2019.
- 2.2 A full record of progress is available through the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) reports that are taken to the Greener Woking Working Group each quarter and are published [online](#).
- 2.3 The table below records a selection of highlights and achievements since the last update report received by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on [22 March 2022](#), grouped by theme.

Theme	Activity
Our assets	<p>On 20 January 2022, the Executive received a report on the Council’s climate change and conservation activities. It resolved to approve a number of priority activities for the forthcoming year including the allocation of funding for an independent Carbon Footprint Assessment. Formal support of Surrey County Council’s Climate Change Delivery Plan was also noted.</p> <p>The Carbon Footprint Assessment was completed in September 2022. The study improves the Council’s knowledge of its footprint helping to identify key areas of focus in reaching our net zero target by 2030. It includes the following agreed outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust carbon footprint assessment highlighting key areas of action. • A reporting tool and methodology that can be taken forward and updated by Council officers. • Emissions trajectories and interim reduction targets demonstrating where the Council will be in 2030 and what it needs to do to reach net zero. • Advice and guidance on reductions needed for net zero and insight into where best to invest to yield carbon reduction and value for money. • Financial modelling of the actions WBC needs to take to reach net zero by 2030. • An overview and commentary on whether the remit of the existing Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) is fit for purpose in addressing the scale of the Council’s zero carbon ambition. <p>On 21 November 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on domestic energy efficiency. The report gave an overview of what the Council continues to do to ensure local homes across a range of tenures are being brought up to modern energy efficiency standards. It examined the level of energy efficiency measures developers currently provide in new residential developments, the local and national context in which any new actions will need to be considered and highlighted some further opportunities for action subject to funding availability.</p> <p>The Council’s Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions report for 2021/22 showed that emissions have increased by 6.2% between 2020/21 and 2021/22 and have decreased by 42.1% on the baseline year (2018/19). The slight annual increase can be attributed to the easing of lockdown restrictions during the reporting year with a return to work and gradual opening-up of sites. This and previous reports are available online at www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/sustainability-data). However, going forward it is intended that the</p>

	<p>methodology used for the Carbon Footprint Assessment will replace the GHG reporting.</p> <p>Delivery of energy efficiency improvements to Midas House and Export House and their connection to ThamesWey’s Poole Road energy centre are in progress with £3 million funding received through the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme.</p> <p>ThamesWey Energy received £9.4 million in government support through the national Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) which will help deliver plans to expand and decarbonise the supply of heat to Woking Town Centre. Over the next seven years, the funding will help facilitate extension of Woking’s heat and cooling networks to supply energy to new developments in the Town Centre including sites south of the railway line. The HNIP funding will also enable further decarbonisation of heat through the addition of large-scale heat pumps and heat storage capacity at Poole Road.</p>
Transport	<p>In February 2022, the Council was successful in its bid to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for £166,090 towards the installation of 70 electric vehicle charging points in the Victoria Place Red Car Park.</p> <p>Surrey County Council’s On-Street Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) project has seen the installation of a total of 20 charging bays at Church Street East, Oriental Road, Montgomery Road, Maybury Road and Lavender Park Road in West Byfleet. SCC was successful with a second funding application to OZEV for a further phase of the pilot which will see the installation of an additional 110 charging bays across the county, including locations in Woking Borough. Further information about the project is available online.</p> <p>WBC continues to participate in the Surrey Electric Vehicle Strategy Forum. The aim of this forum is to work together to deliver a consistent strategy across the county to provide the necessary EV infrastructure for Surrey residents to help meet common climate targets and facilitate a shift to zero emission transport in line with the government’s Road to Zero Strategy which bans the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030.</p> <p>A key objective of the Surrey EV Forum is to accelerate delivery of EV charging infrastructure across the county. Districts and Boroughs have expressed their interest in exploring a fully funded concession framework for EV chargepoint installation, to be led by Surrey County Council. Concession frameworks are a popular delivery mechanism for local authorities looking to increase EV infrastructure as they offer no or low-cost options with extensive roll out of fast and rapid chargepoints. SCC completed its competition to identify a concession framework operator in December 2022 with the contract to be finalised in early 2023. The contract will be extended to interested Districts and Boroughs to formalise participation and identify suitable chargepoint locations soon after.</p> <p>The proposed introduction of fees for EV charging was agreed at the Executive on 17 November 2022 as part of the Review of Fees and Charges 2023-24 report.</p> <p>A bid application was submitted to South Western Railway’s Customer and Communities Improvement Fund 2023-24 for additional secure cycle</p>

	<p>storage close to Woking Railway Station, in August 2022. The bid was shortlisted in December 2022. An outcome is anticipated soon.</p>
<p>Policy, leadership and behaviour changes</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure has begun the Woking 2050 climate change strategy review. An initial draft strategy has been prepared following a self-assessment and gap analysis to identify what the revised strategy needs to include based on good practice and external feedback. The draft also reflects WBC’s CEAP and other local and national developments since 2015 including SCC’s approved Climate Change Delivery Programme. The draft was considered by the Greener Woking Working Group on 8 February 2022 and has also been the subject of WBC officer consultation. Feedback is being considered and where appropriate incorporated into a further updated draft ahead of public consultation planned for mid May 2023.</p> <p>The Action Surrey Green Jump Surrey scheme concluded in March 2022. Funded with £9.4 million government funding with a top up of £372,000 from Surrey County Council, the programme was a major success, delivering energy efficiency improvements for low-income households and hard-to-heat properties. A total of 775 installations for almost 600 households were delivered across the county and estimated to reduce annual energy bills by an average of £660 (at April 2022 prices). The installations will help protect the fuel-poor grant recipients from continued rises in energy prices.</p> <p>Following the success of the Green Jump Surrey project, Action Surrey delivered further fully funded energy efficiency measures under the government’s LAD2 scheme for eligible households across the county. The scheme launched mid-February 2022 with measures completed by end of September 2022. Over £1.1 million of funding for 202 energy efficiency measures including solar photovoltaics (PV) and loft, cavity wall and floor insulation were delivered to 116 low-income households.</p> <p>Furthermore, Action Surrey was successful in its bid to become the delivery agent for Surrey County Council’s Sustainable Warmth contract. The contract will serve the consortium of Surrey Districts and Boroughs in delivering £12 million funding for household energy efficiency improvements under the third wave of Sustainable Warmth funding (also known as LAD3 and HUG). Action Surrey launched the Sustainable Warmth grant funding scheme on 3 October 2022. People living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes, could receive grants between £10,000 and £25,000 to improve insulation and install renewable technology - helping to save energy, reduce emissions and combat rising energy prices. Improvement measures include loft insulation, cavity and external wall insulation, underfloor insulation and renewables, such as solar electricity panels. The funding is subject to eligibility and time limited with all measures to be completed by end of March 2023.</p> <p>Community Energy South is working with the Shah Jahan Mosque, Surrey Faith Links and Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum. Together they are developing an Energy Champion project to reach local residents to share energy efficiency advice and signposting to grant funding. The organisations are working together to apply for grant funding to employ a specialist energy advisor to provide this free community support. An energy audit was also completed at the mosque and showed potential for the installation of solar PV. Community Energy South is now in touch with WBC Planning development management officers for pre-application advice. The Surrey Muslim Association held an event on 11 November 2022 at the Lakeview Community</p>

Centre to raise awareness and share information on a range of energy saving devices and materials to help residents improve their home energy efficiency.

Resident engagement and awareness raising continued through Woking Environment Action (WEAct). The WEAct climate hub opened on 11 June 2022. Based in Mercia Walk until early February 2023, the pop-up centre offered information and advice on how residents can do their bit for the local environment. The group hosted its second **Woking Climate Forum on 24 February 2022**. The evening gave attendees an opportunity to discuss key environmental issues with panellists including Jonathan Lord MP. WEAct hosted a full programme of events for **Great Big Green Week (24 September – 2 October 2022)** focusing on the theme of **‘Woking Takes the Jump’** encouraging residents and businesses to sign up to one or more of six shifts, taking a jump into a more sustainable life. Further information about WEAct is available [online](#). Further details about the Jump campaign are available at www.takethejump.org

The **Surrey [Solar Together](#) group-buying solar PV project** which launched during summer 2021 has since seen **114 approved installations in Woking Borough** resulting in a total of 558 kW installed capacity, 1,551 panels installed, and 91,822 kg saved CO2 emissions. Woking households participating in the scheme have invested just over £721,677.

The **Surrey Learn climate change e-learning module** has been trialled by Neighbourhood Services staff, and recently made available more widely to all staff in December 2022. To help continue to embed climate change and sustainability corporately across the Council it is proposed to roll it out as part of the Council’s wider corporate training programme.

Woking Borough Council held a **Cost of Living Summit on 27 September 2022** bringing together officers from across the Council and external agencies to discuss support for residents across a range of themes including energy and eco-solutions. A cost of living focused edition of the Woking Magazine published at the end of October 2022 also featured a Planet Woking article entitled “Good for the Planet, Good for the pocket” sharing tips on sustainable living that can also save money. The online edition is available [here](#).

In November 2022, Surrey County Council launched a network of ‘warm hubs’ across the County: free, safe, and friendly environments where residents can go to keep warm, meet with other people, and receive advice on cutting their energy use. By visiting a warm hub, residents can reduce their energy bills and carbon footprint by turning off their heating and help boost their health and wellbeing in the colder months. **Woking Borough’s warm hubs include the [centres for the community](#), Eastwood Leisure Centre and MASCOT in Sheerwater, St Andrew’s cafe in Goldsworth Park, The Lighthouse in Woking town centre and Renew 88 based at Knaphill Baptist church.** Further information is available online on Surrey County Council’s [Welfare Support](#) page.

Collaborative working on the climate agenda across Surrey continues with monthly meetings of the District and Boroughs’ climate change officers. Also, in furtherance of Surrey County Council’s [Climate Change Delivery Plan \(CCDP\)](#), the **Greener Futures Partnership (GFP) Steering Group** gives senior managers and portfolio holders from across the districts and boroughs to receive updates on partnership working and projects delivering against our common carbon neutral targets.

The [CREST22 sustainable business awards](#) took place on 19 May 2022. The event was hosted at WWF's Living Planet Centre and saw local businesses celebrated for their contribution to sustainability across a range of categories.

[Low Carbon Across the South and East \(LoCASE\)](#) aims to help businesses become more competitive and profitable while protecting the environment and encouraging low carbon solutions. Supported by the European Regional Development Fund it provides a free business support programme offering focused, individual support to small and medium sized enterprises (including social enterprises) improving competitiveness and creating jobs through increased energy efficiency and new low carbon business. Grants are available for businesses of up to £20,000 as well as an environmental training scheme and events. Targeted business support is on offer for companies who offer 'green' or low carbon goods and services. **To date, LoCASE has received 53 enquiries from Woking businesses resulting so far in nine successful applications receiving £44,077 in LoCASE grants. The projects will save just over 31 tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions and a total annual saving of at least £34,243 in energy costs for these businesses.** Funding is available until April 2023.

Climate change and biodiversity focused communications continue through the Council's [Planet Woking](#) programme:

- 8 – 10 posts each month on social media;
- [Sustainable transport webinar](#) held in May 2022;
- New case studies uploaded to the Planet Woking website encouraging the public to get involved and make sustainable choices. Recent topics include: [composting](#); [Digging for low-carbon victory](#); [green skills training](#); and [COP15](#).
- A full-page Planet Woking feature in the autumn/winter edition of the Woking Magazine which is available online [here](#).
- The November 2022 edition of the Planet Woking newsletter was sent out to subscribers and is available [online](#).

The programme continues to successfully engage the public and raise awareness of the local environmental action.

The Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) commissioned [an independent review of the government's approach to delivering its net zero target](#), to ensure that it is pro-business and pro-growth. Officers from Green Infrastructure and Planning Policy submitted a response in October 2022 to the local authority focused questions which is available on request.

Officers from Green Infrastructure continue to attend the **Woking Chamber of Commerce's Environment Committee**. These meetings provide an opportunity to continue to raise the profile of the climate and ecological emergency declaration and how the business community can assist and build on their own sustainability practices.

<p>Sustainable development</p>	<p>A twelve-week consultation took place between 25 July to 17 October 2022 on the draft Woking Town Centre Masterplan which incorporates sections on green and blue infrastructure, sustainable construction, and active travel.</p> <p>Last autumn Planning Policy officers commissioned WSP consultants to review the Council’s Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Subject to committee consideration, a public consultation will run in parallel with that of the Council’s proposed revised climate change strategy later in 2023.</p>
<p>Adaptation, ecology and habitats.</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure Officers continue to take six monthly updates on progress towards and activities linked to the Council’s Natural Woking strategy.</p> <p>The Wild About Woking event took place in May 2022. This successful joint event by Surrey Wildlife Trust and Woking Borough Council, and involving many other local environment organisations, took place in Woking Town Centre 21 and 22 May to help raise awareness of how the public can help care for the environment through local biodiversity and greenspace projects. The two-day programme included a variety of engaging activities such as a pop-up wildlife garden, a town centre nature trail and wildlife themed crafts, plus other related events took place around the Borough throughout May 2022.</p> <p>Conservation and management of the Borough’s heathlands continues through work with the Surrey Heathland Partnership.</p> <p>Woking Borough Council offers ongoing support to the Woking Peregrine Project. Two birds were successfully raised in 2022.</p> <p>The Council helped WEAct with the purchase and loan of three new wildlife cameras to support its new Woking Hedgehogs project, which launched in May 2022.</p> <p>Green Flag is an international quality mark for parks and green spaces. In July 2022 it was announced that Brookwood Cemetery had successfully obtained the Green Flag Award.</p> <p>In September 2022, the Council’s Sports Development team launched the Woking Nature Walks initiative. The weekly guided walks around the Borough are led by a trained walk leader and are aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of participants through being active and connecting with nature.</p> <p>The RHS Communities Team hosted a gardening session at Sheerwater Youth Centre on 20 October 2022. The engagement session invited local residents to get involved in creating a community garden for all to look after and enjoy.</p>

3.0 Partnership working and collaboration

- 3.1 Many activities and projects continue to be made possible through working together with key stakeholders, commercial partners and volunteer organisations to meet our common environmental goals. These activities are key to achieving net zero both across the Council estate and Borough wide.

Annual Update on Climate Change

- 3.2 Our continuing collaboration with ThamesWey and Action Surrey is highlighted in projects listed in section 2 and the CEAP updates. Such projects are central to decarbonising corporate energy supplies (e.g., Poole Road Energy Centre) and engaging residents in the take up of energy efficiency measures (e.g. Green Jump Surrey) and the reduction of the Borough's domestic carbon footprint. Action Surrey provides an impartial energy advice service through which Surrey residents can access a network of trusted, local and experienced installers for various energy saving measures, such as loft insulation, cavity and solid wall insulation, energy efficient boilers, LED lighting, solar panels and more. As well as improving household energy efficiency, their services assist in tackling local fuel poverty.
- 3.3 Another significant partner in progressing community focused climate and ecological activities is [Woking Environment Action \(WEAct\)](#). WEAct works to tackle global environmental concerns on a local scale, encouraging sustainable living and working in the Woking area, helping residents, businesses and organisations to make a positive difference to our local environment. The Group's work also contributes towards delivery of the Woking 2050 and Natural Woking strategies. Woking Borough Council supports their projects and they are represented on its Greener Woking Working Group to help progress our action plans and key objectives. Various WEAct activities are highlighted in section 2 of this report.
- 3.4 Organisations such as the Surrey Heathland Partnership and Surrey Wildlife Trust are also essential to the valuable management work being undertaken, in partnership with the Council, to protect our local habitats and species in furtherance of our ecological commitments.
- 3.5 Since March 2020, officers from all Districts and Boroughs in Surrey, plus the County Council, have convened monthly through virtual meetings of the Surrey Climate Change Officers' Group to progress joint working across the agenda and share good practice. All local authorities within this Group have formally acknowledged the climate situation and need for urgent action.
- 3.6 Surrey County Council's [Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan \(CCDP\)](#) sets out its ambitions to reduce emissions and tackle the effects of climate change in line with its net-zero carbon targets. There are clear links between Woking Borough Council's own climate commitments and those of the County plan and we will be continuing to work together with our local authority partners to achieve area-wide climate and ecological action. Woking Borough Council's Executive formally supported the CCDP at its meeting on 20 January 2022.
- 3.7 Further examples of Woking Borough Council working collaboratively with authorities across Surrey on sustainability issues are listed in section 2 and the CEAP.

4.0 Future Plans

- 4.1 The CEAP provides a framework for identifying continuing and future actions. As discussed in section 2, many themes and actions are rolled forward to reflect their ongoing nature. Key activities for 2023/24 include:

Activity	Outputs
Climate Change Strategy review and consultation	<p>The draft revised strategy was considered by the Greener Woking Working Group on 8 February 2023. The draft will be considered by the Executive and Council on 23 March and 30 March 2023 respectively.</p> <p>Feedback from these meetings along with that received from internal officer consultation will be incorporated into a further updated draft. This document will then be subject to a six week public consultation from mid May 2023 with anticipated adoption of the final strategy in autumn 2023.</p>

Annual Update on Climate Change

Climate Change SPD review and consultation	A public consultation on the draft new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will run in parallel with that of the climate change strategy review (see above).
Energi Raven pilot	Officers in Property Services are engaging with Woking based SAV Systems on the potential for a pilot of their Energi Raven energy monitoring software. The product is designed to help identify potential energy, carbon and financial savings on a building by building basis. If feasible, the pilot could contribute to a recommendation of the carbon footprint assessment to improve the energy performance of Council owned and leased properties.
Corporate Utilities Monitoring Database	Officers in Property Services are developing a comprehensive database of energy and water consumption across the Council's assets. The database will improve knowledge of the complexity of current suppliers and help identify opportunities for possible efficiencies in consumption, carbon and expenditure.
Climate Emergency UK Local Authority Score Cards	<p>Last year, Climate Emergency UK (CE UK) compiled their Council Climate Action Score Cards based on local authority climate and ecological action across the Country. Assessment was made against over 100 criteria covering themes such as plans for decarbonisation; collaborative working and action to conserve wildlife and biodiversity. Woking Borough Council was awarded a score of 70%, placing it tenth in the Country's list of District Councils.</p> <p>During February and March 2023, CE UK will be undertaking a review of subsequent local authority action. A five week 'Right of Reply' during April-May 2023 will again enable local authorities to review and submit further evidence in response to CE UK's initial appraisal. Final revised score cards are then due to be launched in autumn 2023.</p>
Electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure	<p>Continued expansion of EV infrastructure in Woking Borough via SCC's on-street pilot project and the anticipated countywide EV concession framework during 2023.</p> <p>Telemetry equipment is to be installed at the EV charging points at Victoria Place Red Car Park to enable usage monitoring and proactive fault detection. The software will also facilitate the introduction of fees for EV charging.</p>
Household energy efficiency	Households across the Borough will continue to benefit from government grant funding for energy efficiency improvements through Action Surrey.
Continued engagement through the Planet Woking programme	Ongoing communications and engagement to further raise the profile of what the Council and its partners are doing locally to address the climate and ecological declaration.
Planet Woking Green Garden Guide	The Planet Woking Green Garden Guide is currently being drafted to provide practical tips for residents on how they can turn

Annual Update on Climate Change

	<p>their gardens into wildlife havens. This builds on resident feedback from a Planet Woking webinar.</p>
Climate change e-learning	<p>In order to assist staff and Councillors to understand their roles in achieving the Council's climate targets, an online climate e-learning module has been made available to staff. It is intended to add this to the Council's wider corporate training programme.</p>
Engaging with the business community	<p>Continued engagement with the Woking Chamber of Commerce's Environment Committee to raise the profile of the climate and ecological emergency declaration and how the business community can boost their own sustainability practices.</p> <p>Officers in the Economic Development Team launched the Go Green pages of the Woking Works website in January 2023. These offer sustainability advice and information to local businesses along with local case study examples.</p>
Continued collaborative working across Surrey	<p>Woking Borough Council's Executive formally noted support of Surrey's Climate Change Delivery Plan at its meeting on 20 January 2022. This support recognises the clear links between our environmental objectives and continuing delivery against our area-wide climate and ecological action plans.</p> <p>WBC is represented at the Surrey Climate Change Officers' Group that meets monthly to progress joint working across the agenda and share good practice. There are also a number of linked officer working groups that have been set up in furtherance of SCC's Climate Change Delivery Plan and District/Borough climate action plans.</p>
Conservation	<p>Continuing work with partners to protect our local habitats and wildlife with local heathland conservation work and initiatives such as the Great Crested Newt district level licencing scheme project and rain gardens.</p> <p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature established by the Environment Act 2021. Secondary legislation is expected early 2023 to inform LNRS development from April 2023. LNRS are designed as tools to encourage more coordinated practical and focused action and investment in nature. There are expected to be around 50 county based LNRS which will cover the whole of England. Together these will help to map an overall Nature Recovery Network (NRN). Surrey County Council is provisionally the responsible body for coordinating preparation of LNRS for Surrey. WBC officers will engage with the LNRS preparation as appropriate.</p>
Supporting biodiversity through day to day service and project delivery	<p>The Council and its partners - including ThamesWey and Serco – continue to expand practices that support biodiversity. For example, new development schemes featuring swift bricks (supporting the Swifts in Woking project), green walls and green roofs, SuDs ponds/raingardens, and suitable tree and</p>

	<p>landscaping planting selections. These practices are also being incorporated into Council owned housing.</p> <p>Also continuing support for the successful conservation of peregrine falcons in Woking Town Centre (the Woking Peregrine Project).</p>
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5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council has long been committed to protecting the environment. This update report reaffirms the pledges made by the Council in July 2019 through its climate and ecological emergency declaration and its continuing local action.
- 5.2 The declaration seeks net zero emissions across the Council's estate and operations by 2030. The CEAP provides a framework for identifying, progressing and monitoring actions in furtherance of this commitment. Much work has been undertaken to date and examples have been highlighted in this report.
- 5.3 However, momentum against the CEAP will need to be maintained and further progressed in order to reach zero carbon within seven years. The revised climate change strategy will set out further actions to contribute to this ambition, incorporating good practice recommendations, feedback from external assessment and outputs from the independent carbon footprint study.
- 5.4 Ongoing collaborative working plus the identification of external and innovative funding mechanisms at a time of increasing financial pressures will also continue to be crucial to this agenda.

6.0 Corporate Strategy

- 6.1 The activities outlined in this update report progress the commitments the Council has made in respect of its climate and ecological declaration and net zero pledge. Climate change is corporate priority and links to a number of corporate objectives, most notably effective use of resources, improving the Borough's biodiversity and green infrastructure, engaging our communities, and supporting sustainable development and a strong economy.

7.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 7.1 There are no financial or risk implications associated with this update report, however delivery of the CEAP will require an ongoing financial commitment by the Council and access to external funding.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 7.2 There are no equalities or human resources implications associated with this update report. However, it is noted that the impacts of a changing climate can be felt more acutely by those that are vulnerable within our community. Examples of this include flood risk and tackling fuel poverty.

Legal

- 7.3 There are no legal implications associated with this update report.

8.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 8.1 Much has been done in climate change communications through [Planet Woking](#) since its launch in September 2020 and this continues to be a platform through which to build on this to help raise awareness and strengthen community understanding and engagement with the Borough's climate emergency declaration. A Planet Woking hub on the [Woking Community Forum](#) further raises awareness of environmental projects and consultations.
- 8.2 The Climate Change Strategy review, referred to in section 4 of this report, will be subject to a six week public consultation from mid May 2023.
- 8.3 Public and stakeholder consultation will not only help shape and inform the final strategy but will also provide an opportunity for public engagement and further awareness raising of the need for all to play their part in local climate action.

REPORT ENDS