



Adapting and Mitigating Climate Change & Biodiversity

**Thematic Progress Update
January 2022**

Lead Member Introduction

In 2020, the Council declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and I am pleased to see that we have quickly taken steps to implement a full action plan and are working with partners to deliver key actions.



Cllr Tom Holway
Lead Member for adapting and mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity

Having adopted our new Better Lives for All strategy in September, this update reflects the progress of those actions that we have identified to support our response to the Climate and Biodiversity emergency over the next three years.

This is by all means not all that we are doing and I continue to provide regular updates to Executive and Overview & Scrutiny on progress against our detailed Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan, with the latest update being provided to today's meeting as a separate agenda item.

There are a number of achievements during this period (remembering that the Better Lives for All Strategy was only adopted in September)

- ✓ **Climate and Biodiversity Crowdfunding platform launched enabling the Council to match fund schemes that are taking positive action to reduce their carbon emissions - £4,800 so far awarded**
- ✓ **Funding secured from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund project. This project will see 300 trees planted at 15 sites in early 2022 and a further 300 will follow early in 2023 at another 15 sites**
- ✓ **1,000 responses received and analysed in respect of proposal for more wildflower areas on Council land**
- ✓ **Completed Carbon Literacy Training for the Senior Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team in partnership with Torbay Council to embed the climate emergency into our organisation**

Activities on Track	Activities slightly off track but plan in place	Activities at risk of not completing as agreed	Activities not yet due to start
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Over the coming pages, we set out more in-depth updates for each action.

Cllr Tom Holway

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Executive Member for Climate and Biodiversity



AM1.1 – Converting our environmental management vehicles to electric

- Scoping requirements and holding initial discussions with providers re feasibility
- Upgrading of power to depot and Follaton House and install electric charging points

Key Highlights

The action consists of a number of different strands of work – logistics, HR, procurement- and will be delivered as a project. The officer originally identified to undertake the work has been reallocated and therefore a replacement officer will be recruited, via secondment, to deliver the project in line with the delivery plan timeline. We are in discussion with other Councils regarding potential joint approaches to elements of the project.

Key Risks / Issues

The lack of existing EV charging infrastructure, limited range of some EVs and the large area covered by some roles/vehicles represents a challenge in terms of ensuring that service delivery remains efficient with an EV fleet.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Scoping of project
- Recruitment of officer
- Review of feasibility

Overall Rating **Green – On Track**

Action AM1.2 – Carrying out feasibility studies for renewable energy on our land and buildings
 - Review existing and further commission a feasibility study to assess opportunities for renewable energy scheme across Council owned assets
Key Highlights

Progress is planned in advance of the end of March deadline through either commissioning a feasibility report or by utilising resources from within the Assets Team to deliver the same – to be confirmed

Key Risks / Issues

None at this stage

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Review options arising from feasibility study.

Overall Rating **Green – On Track**

Action AM 1.3 – Explore renewable energy opportunities across the District**Key Highlights**

NOT DUE TO COMMENCE UNTIL 2022/23

Key Risks / Issues**Looking ahead to the next 6 months**

Overall Rating **Not yet due to commence**



Action AM1.4 – Deliver funding for community projects

- **Launch Crowdfund for Climate Projects**
- **Member Locality Fund promoted to residents**

Key Highlights

We have launched our Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Fund on Crowdfunder and a revised funding model has been agreed by the Councils Executive which will result in a two phase direct grant scheme which will seek projects to deliver specific outcomes, the first fund will be related to community engagement. So far, £4800 has been pledged through Crowdfunder and £21,986 has been committed through the members Climate Change and Biodiversity Locality Fund to help towards realising £120,000 worth of community projects.

Key Risks / Issues

Devon County Council have advised that they are likely to withdraw from Crowdfunding from April. This means we may need to source an alternative platform for provision of the Crowdfund climate fund. Work is in progress and will mean that the scheme can continue relatively unaffected from a customer perspective.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Explore options for continuing to deliver a Crowdfund platform.
- Publishing the new direct grant scheme in February which will seek applicants to provide community engagement activity, £50,000 will be on offer.

Overall Rating

AMBER – Due to unforeseen possibility that Crowdfund platform will become expensive to run if DCC pull out.

Action AM1.5 Adopting an electric vehicle (EV) Strategy

- **9 more EV installations in Public Car Parks**

Key Highlights

During this period we have signed the Initial lease signed for Electric Vehicle charging bays for Mayors Avenue car park in Dartmouth

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Key Risks / Issues

- Delays with WPD for cabling works
- Delay in installation of charging equipment

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Western Power Distribution (WPD) works to be scheduled
Further 8 leases to be signed ready for installation
Procurement to take place for ORCS funding bid (4 car parks)

Overall Rating

Green – On Track

Action AM1.6 – A 10% increase in biodiversity on Council Land

-Commence review of Ground Maintenance specification with Lead Member and consult residents on proposals

Key Highlights

During Summer 2021, the Council undertook a public consultation on the principle of managing Council owned land to increase biodiversity and wildlife value across the District.

The public engaged positively with the consultation resulting in over 1,000 responses, with over 700 respondents adding further comments or ideas. Over 97% of responses were in favour of the general principle of improving biodiversity and wildlife value. Furthermore over 90% were in favour of relaxing of cutting regimes, leaving areas of long grass on verges and peripheries of parks and enabling new areas of wildflower planting. The full report to Executive on the consultation response can be seen [here](#)

Following the consultation, officers are now reviewing Council owned green spaces (namely 'grass' sites) District-wide to compile a proposed Grounds Maintenance map layer reflecting how the aspirations could translate on a site by site basis.

Key Risks / Issues

It will be important that the Council takes steps to manage the public expectations but also ensure a robust communications plan to avoid the perception that Council land is being neglected.

Equally important is ensuring that a well-planned and delivered period of adjustment for the Grounds Maintenance operatives and managers to become accustomed with delivering the new site maintenance and habitat creation schedule.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Undertake mapping of proposed sites and embed on the Council's interactive mapping as a layer. This will firstly be shared with SHDC Members and then Town and Parish Councils for review and comment.
- Detailed proposals , equipment specification, revenues and capital expenditure to deliver the biodiversity gain will be considered by Executive on 27th January 2022

Overall Rating **Green – On Track**

This update will be considered at South Hams District Council Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 20th January 2022 at 10am. Watch live on  YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/southhamscouncil>

