



Growing our Natural Environment

Thematic Progress Update

15 February 2022

A Plan for West Devon



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 Lynn Daniel
Lead Member for growing our natural environment

Having adopted our new Plan for West Devon in September, this update reflects the progress of those actions that we have identified to support and enhance our natural environment over the next three years.

This is by all means not all that we are doing and I continue to provide regular updates to Overview and Scrutiny and Hub on progress against our detailed Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan.

There are a number of achievements during this period (remembering that the Plan for West Devon Strategy was only adopted in September)

- ✓ Council's application to the Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Compliance and Enforcement Competition was successful and we (WDBC & SHDC combined) received a grant allocation of £44,331
- ✓ Commissioned a study in to solar capacity on our car parks
- ✓ 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 10	Activities off track 0	Activities not yet due to start 0
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I am also extremely pleased that our Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and accompanying action plan scored well by Climate Emergency UK (who assessed every climate action plan in the UK). Our Action Plan scored 72% compared to the average UK district council score of only 43%, falling 7th in the overall ranking.

Over the coming pages, we set out more in-depth updated for each action within our Natural Environment theme.

Cllr Lynn Daniel

Cllr Lynn Daniel

Lead Hub Member for Natural Environment



Action NE1.1 Phased conversion of our environmental management fleet to a greener fleet**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. Recruitment has commenced to offer a temporary role to existing staff to bring this back on track.

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

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

Overall Rating **Green – on Track**

**Action NE1.2 Increasing availability of electric charging points across the borough
- 5 more EV installations in Public Car Parks****Key Highlights**

The Council has entered into The Devon and Torbay Residential Chargepoint scheme. This is a scheme that would enable the Council to install electric charging points at one more location in the Borough with the grant funding. Subject to the necessary surveys being carried out, a 22kW dual charging point will be installed at Pilgrims Drive car park, Bere Alston

Key Risks / Issues

In many respects we are constrained by the ability of suppliers with potential risks including:-

- Delays with Western Power Distribution for cabling works
- Delays with installation of charging equipment

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Continued progress on EV installations

Overall Rating **GREEN – ON TRACK**

Action NE1.3 – Carry out a feasibility study of renewable energy schemes on our Council land**Key Highlights**

The council has commissioned a study into the solar capacity for some of our car parks and officers are now considering the next course of action. Additional work remains for renewables capability on our land and assets.

Key Risks / Issues

TBC once feasibility fully considered

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Review options arising from feasibility study

Overall Rating **GREEN – ON TRACK**



Action NE1.4 - Promote recycling and reduction of waste (at source) to our residents

Key Highlights

The Communications Team ran a Shop4Good campaign with our partner CarbonSavvy to tie in with COP26. This involved tips on shopping sustainably and how to repair, recycle and compost items rather than disposing of them and buying new. This included a carbon calculator to aid residents' understanding and future choices. This also had the additional benefit of supporting the local economy, saving resident's money and helping the Borough's carbon footprint.

We promoted the Tamar Energy Fest in Tavistock and supported the event with Design promotional materials. Although this was primarily a Climate Change event, it included an underlying recycling message which was promoted within a media release, e-bulletin and via social media.

Fly tipping posts – with the nudge theory that most residents and visitors take their waste home, there's no excuse, so why don't you?! Take it home and dispose of it properly. This will be an ongoing theme.

We ran our annual Halloween pumpkin campaign, encouraging residents to recycle them into their food caddy rather than their waste bin. We also shared links on how to use the flesh and seeds inside of the pumpkin for recipes.

Our Christmas recycling campaign involved suggestions for a different type of Christmas trees. Go for the traditional and sign up to the Garden Waste Service or perhaps, use an artificial, driftwood or potted tree as an alternative choice. Information on how to use food waste with recipes from Recycle Devon and how to freeze food to make it last longer. Along with the usual tips on how to recycle the materials from your mince pie, Christmas paper and cards etc. and where they should go were all explained with a link to an even more comprehensive page on the website. The Bank Holiday collection dates were advertised online, social media and in the local publications.

Key Risks / Issues

- Collection issues have caused some round delays – which has caused some negative feedback on social media posts
- More difficult to be out getting video footage due to ongoing Covid pandemic

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

- Promote the renewal of the Garden Waste Collection
- Promote Easter recycling and Bank Holiday Collection Dates
- Summer Litter Campaign
- Summer Fly Tipping Campaign

Overall Rating **GREEN – On Track**



Action NE1.5 – A 10% increase in biodiversity on Council land**Key Highlights**

On 1st Feb, Hub Committee considered an update report regarding opportunities for Natural Woodland regeneration at Council sites at Harrowbeer Lane, Yelverton and Bedforde Bridge, Horrabridge. A total of 8.2Ha across the two sites will see, after 5 years around an 80% increase in biodiversity.

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

It is proposed to apply to the English Woodland Creation Offer in 2022 for financial support to undertake natural woodland regeneration at both these sites which, if successful, could result in upfront payment of approx. £7,000 per site with an annual Forestry Commission maintenance grant of approx. £500 a year for 10 years on each site.

Overall Rating	GREEN – On Track
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Action NE1.6 Support delivery of a mix of woodland, on street habitat corridors and hedgerows through the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest**Key Highlights**

Announced in June 2021, the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest will stretch from the heart of the city to the edge of the moor, with an ambition to deliver 1,900 hectares of forest to form a mosaic of different habitats. Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest is seeking interested landowners for planting starting in 2022 within their area, through the Trees for Climate woodland establishment programme.

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

Ongoing engagement with landowners and wider consultation

Overall Rating	Green – On Track
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Action NE1.7 Support Nature recovery through larger wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors and nature preservation schemes**Key Highlights**

In February, Hub Committee approved awarding a 25 year lease in order to establish an allotment site on underused Council owned land at Milton Abbot. This proposal will offer a more biodiverse habitat as well as reducing food miles for the local community.

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

Continue to identify opportunities

Overall Rating	Green – On Track
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Action NE1.8 Map our ecosystems, species, waterways and other natural capital to better inform future land use**Key Highlights**

In late Nov first iteration of the Nature Recovery mapping was presented to stakeholders. This will be made public soon.

Key Risks / Issues

Looking ahead to the next 6 months

Commence work on development of Nature Recovery Strategies

Overall Rating **Green – On Track****Action NE1.9 – Work with partners to promote tree planting within the Borough****Key Highlights**

We continue to monitor funding opportunities to enable organisations and residents to plant trees within the Borough. Through our Climate Change and Biodiversity newsletter, and in partnership with Devon Local Nature Partnerships, we promote these opportunities.

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

Continue to promote opportunities through our communications and networks.

Overall Rating **Green – On Track****Action NE1.10 – Work with landowners and partners including Tamar Valley AONB, Dartmoor National Trust, English Heritage, Westcountry Rivers and the Biosphere****Key Highlights**

In January Council Members were provided with an update by our partner Tamar Valley AONB through the Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

We continue to engage with Dartmoor National Park to explore opportunity to deliver a short term active travel promotion scheme, linking the park with key town centres. This project will need to conclude by 31st March 2022. It is weather dependent and so it is anticipated delivery will be as late as possible (potentially Feb half term).

Next month, Devon Climate Emergency will be running a public consultation on the actions developed following our Citizens' Assembly in summer last year.

Assembly members were asked to consider onshore wind, building retrofit and transport. They came up with fourteen resolutions, with conditions. The Advisory Group considered these resolutions and a response was sent on behalf of the Council to the secretariat of the Devon Climate Emergency highlighting a number of issues and in particular, the potential negative (and disproportionate impacts) on rural communities arising from some of the proposed actions. Please see Climate and Biodiversity update). The Devon Climate Emergency Partnership, which includes us, have been working hard to transform these resolutions into actions to include in the Devon Carbon Plan.

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

Continue to work with key stakeholders to identify opportunities and promote schemes that will contribute to our ambitions for the Natural Environment.

Overall Rating **Green – On Track**