

# Full Council Meeting – 29 September 2020

## Report of Councillor Peter Pilkington – Climate Change

- **Countywide Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy**

Following the temporary pause due to COVID, SCC have now redrafted and re-issued this document ready for approval and formal adoption across all 5 councils. The Strategy will be considered by the Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group towards the end of September. It is then scheduled to start the approval process within SWT at Scrutiny on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, followed by Executive on the 20<sup>th</sup> October and Full Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

- **Somerset West and Taunton Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan (CNCR)**

The final draft of this document has been shared with 'All Members' at the briefing session on the 24<sup>th</sup> August and was circulated via email and added to Mod.gov on the 4<sup>th</sup> September. It will now be shared with staff.

The Plan is a response to the target to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030, which has already been adopted through the Council's Corporate Strategy.

The CNCR will then be considered by Scrutiny, Executive and Full Council alongside the County-wide Strategy.

- **Operational Service Plan – Climate Change**

Chris Hall (Assistant Director for Climate Change, Regulatory Services, and Asset Management) and Sue Tomlinson (Programme Manager Climate Change) have reviewed the CNCR immediate actions and are incorporating them into their service plan. Actions with no existing budget will be developed into business cases and bought through the democratic process for necessary approvals.

- **Climate Change Structure**

Chris Hall has now received approval for his structure and we have gone out to recruit additional resources to help progress the immediate actions within our developing service plan.

- **CDP**

The Council completed its annual disclosure of climate action to CDP in August. CDP is a not-for-profit charity that runs a global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts. By disclosing our climate actions, we are able to benchmark our actions against other local authorities in the UK and around the world, learn from others and raise the Council's own profile as an organisation and as an area. In 2019, our disclosure earned the Council a score of "C" – Awareness. The emerging CNCR Action Plan

will set an aspiration to work towards achieving a score of "A" – Leadership by 2023. We will discover our score for 2020 later this year.

- **All Member briefing session 24<sup>th</sup> August**

All Members we invited to a briefing session where they received presentations and updated on the following items;

1. Broadening our Knowledge – Corporate Emissions and Environmental Impact (Dr Dan Lash, University of Exeter)
2. Countywide Climate Emergency Strategy
3. SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan
4. Taking Action Now;
  - a. New Build Homes Standards
  - b. Zero Carbon Affordable Homes Pilot
  - c. DC Share
  - d. SWT EVCP Grant Funding
  - e. EScooter Trial

- **Countywide EV Strategy**

In partnership with the other Somerset local authorities, the Council has commissioned WSP to produce a Somerset EV Charging Strategy which will provide a basis for the local authorities to;

- Develop and deliver specific projects on their own land and assets as appropriate, informed by the best way to future proof investment, maximise opportunities and benefits
- Influence investment in the grid and work to release capacity in the grid by WPD
- Set policies and guidance and allocate specific sites for charge point development through Local Plans and other means
- Lobby Government and others on what prerequisites are required in order to proliferate EVs in Somerset
- Understand what their role should be on delivering charge points going forward.

A public survey, prepared by graduates on the Somerset Local Government Graduate Scheme, was undertaken in June to gauge the attitudes of the public towards EVs, and the potential influence that the varied geography and communities of Somerset may have on EV take-up across the county.

The Strategy is expected to be complete by the end of September.

- **DC Share**

Riccardo, WPD and SWT are progressing due diligence to confirm site locations and preparing an Ofgem update by the end of September.

15 rapid charge points in total of which 10 will be 50kw and 5 will be 100kw, split across three locations (Coal Orchard, Firepool and Canon Street)

- **Fleet Transition to Electric Vehicles**

Officers (and PFH) attended the 'Low Carbon Emission Vehicles for Local Authority Fleets, Market Awareness & Demonstration Days' organised by Mid Devon Council and held at Trucksmith in Uffculme.

We have since taken delivery of a Renault Zoe demo vehicle to assist with our thinking and vehicle selection, ahead of procuring new electric vehicle leases to replace our existing pool cars, as they come to the end of their lease agreements later in the year.

- **Electric Vehicle Charge Points**

WPD have now provided the DNO costs associated with installing charge points at key locations across our district and we are working with EVCP operators to develop an installation plan. We will provide further detail in due course.

- **DfT EScooter Trial**

SWT submitted a bid to the DfT on the 28<sup>th</sup> August to take part in the trial, and at the time of writing are awaiting confirmation as to whether our bid has been approved.

- Rental E-Scooters legally allowed on UK roads, cycle lanes and cycle tracks in trial areas from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020
- E-Scooter operator selected via procurement process
- Concession contract between SWT and operator
- No cost to SWT
- Operator must comply with DfT vehicle standards and data requirements
- Operator will service and maintain the scooters and manage the scheme
- Thorough Equalities Impact Assessment completed
- SCC have amended the TRO's
- Joint comms and engagement with ASP and operator
- Scheme start date end of Sept/beginning of Oct subject to DfT approvals
- Trial will run for 12 months

- **Oak Trees Offer / 3 Free Trees**

We will be launching this scheme in time for Parish and Town Councils to plant their trees during National Tree Week which runs from 28<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December.

- **Water Refill Stations**

Working with Wessex Water we are planning to install a water refill stations in prominent locations within our district. Very much at the planning stage at present, we will provide further detail in due course.

- **Solar PV**

We are actively progressing the option to install Solar PV at our wellington depot and will provide further detail in due course.

- **Zero Carbon Affordable Homes Pilot**

The PFH for Climate Change and for Housing were provided with an in depth briefing on progress in early September.

The briefing included;

- 5 sites have been prioritised
- Planning pre application in September and these could deliver 43 units. Two other sites will progress as ownership issues are resolved and these could delivery ten units.
- Energy advisors Hydrock have been appointed to support the council deliver low carbon heat and power solutions.
- The procurement process has identified two shortlisted volumetric modular suppliers with who the council will have a dialogue. The council will seek to appoint a main supplier over the next few weeks following study visits to schemes they have developed and their factories.
- Work is progressing with the employers agent to retain the fast pace of this programme and manage the complexities of delivering zero carbon homes.

The NTWP team are working with Engie to improve the low carbon credentials of the new homes above the current building standard requirement. Options including improved fabric insulation and fabric first approach are being explored.

Members will be asked to consider a new scheme at Seaward Way, Minehead of 53 units later in the year. The schemes is seeking to apply the emerging SWT low carbon standard including the potential for ground source heat pumps.

- **EcoFlex Scheme**

SWT is joining the EcoFlex scheme allowing private sector owners and landlords access energy saving measures using funding from the big energy companies.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) - is a requirement placed on energy companies over a certain size to help improve domestic energy performance of the homes of those vulnerable to the cold or on low incomes. In the ECO3 phase there is a new additional facility called Flexible Eligibility. This is where Councils can set criteria to direct assistance towards local private sector homes at risk of fuel poverty, but falling outside of the normal rules of ECO (usually qualifying benefits). ECO flexibility will support the delivery of national fuel poverty targets to improve the

EPC ratings of households in fuel poverty. This statement of intent will also help deliver the aims of the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework which facilitates a partnership approach to the delivery of sustainable, warm and healthy homes for all Somerset residents.

SWT have worked with Somerset independent living to agree the approach. Although the scheme is aimed at reducing fuel poverty it has links to energy reduction.