

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Community Scrutiny Committee - 27 January 2022

Title of Report: Annual Update of CNCR Progress

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member Cllr Dixie Darch

Report Author: Jonathan Stevens, Assistant Director Climate Change, Regulatory Services and Asset Management.

1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides the first annual update on Council progress against its Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan.
- 1.2 The CNCR plan contains 180 'immediate' Year 1 actions. This report focuses on those actions.
- 1.3 The report summarises the main actions and successes. There is detail on all 180 actions in the attached appendix.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 There are no recommendations associated with this report.

3. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

- 3.1 The CNCR plan is an extensive list of aspirational activities. It contains a number of cross cutting actions and open-ended commitments. To support delivery the team, led by the Portfolio Holder (PFH), reviewed the actions to form a prioritised list which features in the 21/22 service plan for the External Operations and Climate Change directorate. Without a prioritised list of activity, the team could become conflicted in trying to deliver in an unfocussed or uncoordinated way.
- 3.2 The commitments list within the service plan is challenging, there is a considerable amount of work on this list. Any draw on the team outside the agreed business plan will impact delivery performance.

4. Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and appointed an Executive Member for Climate Change.
- 4.2 SWT approved its own Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan in October 2020. The plan provides an overview of the key issues facing Somerset in relation to the climate emergency and a strategic basis for working towards addressing these issues over a 10 year period.
- 4.3 The plan is owned by the External Operation’s Climate Change team, but actions attributed to SWT are delivered by services across the Council.
- 4.4 The plan does include actions to address nature recovery, but a separate document is being worked up to reflect the Council’s Ecological Emergency declaration in October 2020.
- 4.5 The CNCR Plan is split into 4 sections: ‘immediate’ year one actions, short term year two and three actions, medium term year four to six actions and long term year seven to ten actions. This report concentrates on the year one actions.
- 4.6 The status of the year one actions is as follows:

Complete	55
Current	63
On Hold	26
Pipeline	36

Full updates on each action are included within the appendix.

- 4.7 A significant amount of the actions within the CNCR plan are not within the control of the Council to directly deliver and will be delivered by external partners and bodies. However, the Council has a role to influence and support, and these actions are tracked in the appendix. Furthermore, there are a number of lobbying and awareness raising activities that appear in the plan as current, but they are ongoing and will never be fully ‘complete’.
- 4.8 A summary of the Council’s main achievements in the first year are as follows:

4.8.1 Planning

The Council has an approved ‘Climate Positive Planning: Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency’. It explains that the Climate Emergency is a material consideration and provides further guidance and explanation in relation to specific adopted policies of relevance to the Climate Emergency.

The emerging Districtwide Design Guide will also provide guidance on how carbon reduction, sustainability and climate resilience should be integral to high

quality design in new developments, ensuring the level of housing growth needed to meet future demand is high quality, sustainable, and maintains or enhances the character and distinctiveness of the area. The design guide is due for approval by the Council in December.

4.8.2 Zero Carbon Affordable Homes Pilots

The Council's housing service has submitted two planning applications:

North Taunton Phase A – development of 47 new homes with a requirement in the contract to build these to a low carbon standard – an 80% improvement on building regulations. These properties will become zero carbon either through the use of green electricity tariffs or as the national grid decarbonises by 2050. This development is now under way.

Seaward Way, Minehead – development of 54 zero carbon homes – approved by planning committee June 2021.

4.8.3 Transport

SWT secured a government grant worth £136,000 to boost the roll-out of on street Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points in council-owned car parks. 22kW fast EV charge points are being installed in Minehead, Porlock, Taunton, Watchet, Wellington, Williton, Dulverton and Wiveliscombe.

Transition of the Council's pool car fleet to EV has begun with the purchase of two Renault Zoes. Work is also underway to install EV charging points at Council premises in readiness for further fleet transition, and we have secured addition workplace charging scheme funding of £4,200

The Council is also working in partnership with Western Power Distribution to deliver a further 15 rapid EV charging points across three town centre locations.

The Council is running e-scooter schemes to provide a sustainable option for travel in Taunton and Minehead as part of the official Department for Transport trials. It has appointed Zipp Mobility to manage the trial schemes which went live in Taunton on 30 October 2020 and in Minehead on 5 June 202. both schemes will run until end of March 2022.

4.8.4 Buildings

Full decarbonisation strategies have been completed on Deane House, Westpark Depot and the Crematorium. Officers are currently working up plans for future implementation. This will allow the Council to move towards decarbonisation in its three biggest buildings.

A second phase of decarbonisation strategies will commence early 2022.

4.8.5 Open Spaces

The Council has also implemented a 3 for 1 tree replacement programme for any trees that are felled on Council land and has planted approximately 800 new trees over the past two winters. The Woodland Trust have been engaged to help identify area of Council land that would be suitable for larger scale woodland creation. The Council is also donating £8k towards trees for Exmoor National Park's woodland creation project at Bye Wood.

Over the last two summers, the Council's grass cutting teams have sown 60kg of wildflower seed, created several small meadows and left areas of grass to grow longer in some open spaces to help create a better habitat for local wildlife.

The Council has engaged the Somerset Wildlife Trust as a consultant to develop formal design principles for next summer, so that council-owned land is managed with both people and nature in mind. This will include the creation of new grassland meadows across the district.

5. Links to Corporate Strategy

5.1 Environment and Economy

Work towards making our District carbon neutral by 2030 - deliver projects based on a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan that work toward this goal (for example installing electric vehicle charging points across the District)

Shape and protect our built and natural environment, supported by a refreshed Local Plan and develop our heritage, cultural and leisure offer including a clear vision and delivery plan for the Taunton Garden Town.

6. Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 The report is a record of progress against the CNCR plan and as such there are no negative implications of this report.

7. Legal Implications (if any)

7.1 There are no identified implications from this report.

8. Climate and Sustainability Implications (if any)

8.1 The report is a record of progress against the CNCR plan and as such there are no negative implications of this report.

9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)

9.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)

10.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

11. Social Value Implications (if any)

11.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

12. Partnership Implications (if any)

12.1 There are no identified implications of this report. The Council continues to work in partnership with other bodies to deliver against CNCR actions.

13. Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)

13.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

14. Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

15. Data Protection Implications (if any)

15.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

16. Consultation Implications (if any)

16.1 There are no identified implications of this report.

Democratic Path:

Community Scrutiny - Yes

Reporting Frequency: Annually

List of Appendices

Appendix A	CNCR Year One Immediate Actions
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