

Climate Change Action Plan 2023 -26 - progress update for Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 8 February 2024

Background

The Council's revised [Climate Change Action Plan](#) was agreed by Cabinet in July 2024 and contained 12 actions to be progressed over the next three years. This report sets out a progress update on the delivery of each of those actions for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Further additional information will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members at their meeting on 8 February 2024 alongside a presentation of the latest Council carbon footprint information.

Information relation to the Council's carbon footprint for 2021-22 (latest published information) can be found on the [Council's website](#)

Action 1: Transition electricity across the Council's sites to 100% renewable tariffs.

The Council's energy contracts will need to be re-procured before October 2024. Work on this commenced in January 2024 and will include obtaining quotes for 100% renewable tariffs.

Action 2: Switch the Council's car fleet to electric alternatives and investigate options for other Council vehicles.

Work is underway and a verbal update to be given.

Action 3: Achieve a 5% annual reduction in overall travel from employee-owned vehicles for business purposes and refresh the Council's Workplace Travel Plan.

Work is underway to get a plan in place in 2024 which will include signposting to relevant resources.

Action 4: Consider opportunities arising from a relocation of the Council's offices to reduce gas consumption and/or increase renewable energy generation onsite.

The decision to include new Council offices within the RIBA Stage 3 design for the Leisure and Cultural Hub was made in October 2023. This building is aiming to be the first Net Zero Carbon building in the Borough and is being designed to achieve PassivHaus certification which will significantly reduce (at least 70%) operational carbon.

Action 5: To continue to engage young people on climate change through the schools’ programme which is now running in four junior schools within Rushmoor.

Winchester Science Centre (now named Wonderseekers) were given a grant to run a Climate Trackers scheme to schools within the borough. The focus on the scheme is to raise climate awareness, whilst developing interest and skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).

The second year of delivery of this scheme has concluded and was delivered to four schools in the borough. This reengaged the two schools who took part in the first round of the scheme (Talavera and Tower Hill), as well as an additional two schools (Alderwood and Cherrywood). This focused on years 4 and 5, where approximately 300 children took part.

For the coming year, we would like to continue the Climate Trackers scheme out of the climate change allocation fund, with a view of looking at other funding sources for the future to ensure its sustainability and possible expansion.

Action 6: To use the Council’s communications channels (including through Member engagement) to promote opportunities for residents and local businesses to reduce their own carbon footprint, including promoting schemes to the improve energy efficiency of their home or business.

Over the course of 2023/24 the following communications campaigns have appeared on the Council’s communications channels:

Warmer Homes (HUG2 – Home Upgrade Grant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted Mailout• Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)• Radio Interview – Cllr Sheehan (Portfolio Holder for Operational Services)• Warm & Welcome event at Library• Eco Fair• Arena Article• Citizens Advice / Customer Services• RBC Website• Internal communications (Viva Engage & CEX News)• Leaflets (eg. library, Senior Citizens Forum)• Next door
Solar Together (iChoosr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HCC/iChoosr – targeted mailout• Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn)
Eco Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn)• Poster – Southwood Visitor Centre• RBC Website
Big Tree Giveaway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)• Eco Fair – Stallholder• Posters (Southwood visitor Centre, Noticeboards)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RBC website
Recycling & Food waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) • Arena Magazine • Events • Eco Fair
Other – social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Action Plan 2023-26 (Cabinet outcome) • Rushmoor Youth Influence Climate Change Session • Flood Information Event • Eco Explorers • Repair Café • Wellesley Woodlands • Blackwater Valley Partnership • Thames Valley Basin Heath Partnership • Citizens Advice Energy Advice

In addition, the following has been shared with the business community within the Borough:

LoCASE (Low Carbon in the South and East)

LoCASE's offer provided business grants for business of up to £10,000 as well as an environmental training scheme and events. The LoCASE programme is supported by the European Regional Development Fund to provide a free business support programme. It offered 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.

Sustainable Business Network

Rushmoor Borough Council contributes to the Sustainable Business Network (North Hants), and also supports the development of the Sustainable Business Network seminars to improve support and mentoring to SMEs on carbon reduction and sustainable business measures. This is organised and run by Carbon Footprint Ltd.

23/24 sessions have included:

- Renewable Energy On-Site - Cutting Costs & Taking Control
- Net Zero Latest and the Role of Carbon Removal
- Renewable Energy On-Site Pt 2 - Cutting Costs & Taking Control
- Demystifying Sustainability Reporting – Compliance Reporting Now and What's Coming Soon.
- Sustainable Procurement - What is it and how to do it well.

EM3 Growth Hub

The EM3 Growth Hub have been offering Net Zero business workshops for businesses. This has been promoted on LinkedIn.

Action 7: To hold an eco-fair in September 2023 at Southwood Country Park and Field Centre to allow residents to find out more about climate change and opportunities to reduce their own carbon footprint and to hold an event for local businesses on low carbon opportunities.

The Eco Fair was held at Southwood Visitor Centre on Saturday 9th September 2023.

Stallholders Included:

- Rushmoor Borough Council – Contracts team
- Citizens Advice – Energy Advice
- Fleet Beekeepers Association
- Hampshire Tree Partnership – Big Tree Giveaway
- Repair Café
- Tice Meadow Bird Group
- Blackwater Valley Partnership – Childrens activities
- Refill shop selling sustainable products (Weren't able to attend due to unforeseen circumstances)

Stallholder Feedback:

“We really enjoyed the event – a great range among the stalls showing different ways we can all contribute to the environment: and a lovely building; good to see the new centre. The opportunity to talk with other stallholders was great, but we also had a good level of engagement with many of the visitors, to talk about energy saving and answer questions: lots of responses to our quiz!” – Citizens Advice

“We were delighted to be able to help people make the connection between saving energy and saving money - we had a really positive response from the residents we spoke to on the day” – Citizens Advice

“Thanks for inviting the Hampshire Forest Partnership to have a stall, think it was a successful event despite the scorching temperatures(!)” – Hampshire Forest Partnership

The aim is that this will be an annual event. The next event has a hold date of: **14th September 2023**, 10am – 2pm (subject to change).

Action 8: To work with Hampshire County Council to improve access to EV charging facilities across Rushmoor.

The Council continues to work with Hampshire County Council on EV infrastructure throughout the borough. Hampshire County Council are currently applying for Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding and further support will be given as this progresses.

Action 9: To refresh the Council's procurement strategy to ensure that the goods and services that the Council buys support the aim of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council's Procurement Strategy is currently being reviewed. This will take into account procurement reforms arising from the Procurement Act.

Action 10: To review processes for the Council's capital programme so that environmental impacts are incorporated into business case development and whole life cycle carbon assessments are undertaken.

This is now being implemented with environmental impacts embedded into project development for the Leisure and Cultural Hub and a specialist piece of work on the carbon footprint of the crematorium refurbishments commissioned.

The approach will be reviewed over 2024 so that further improvements to business cases for capital schemes can be included.

Action 11: To develop the Council's offsetting approach with a view to ensuring that any offsetting undertaken by the Council has a local impact.

This will be developed further down the timeline, due to not having to offset until 2030. This will ensure that the most up to date opportunities and best practice can be considered.

Action 12: To review, update and publish the Council's carbon footprint on an annual basis, publish an annual report detailing all that the Council has achieved in relation to its climate action plan and associated strategies (e.g., Green Infrastructure Plan).

The annual report will be published in the spring and will include the updated carbon footprint calculations.

Action 12 of the Climate Change Action Plan states that the Annual Report will include details of other relevant initiatives and projects delivered in the last year. These include:

Council Office Ceiling Lighting

In recent months there has been work within the Council offices to replace the lighting. The existing lighting within the council office is not energy efficient and was contributing to the Council's carbon footprint. There are approximately 822 light fittings within the building and each light was 55 watts (with very few set up on sensors). There is now a programme underway to replace the existing lighting with LED energy efficient lighting, which comes with a 5-year warranty for all parts. This provides a more natural light at lower wattage. There will not be the need for as many fittings / lights as we have currently, due to the lighting being more effective and there will also be a cost saving for the Council as a result of this programme.

Reduction in the number of office printers and planned replacement:

The Council has undertaken a programme in 2023/24 to reduce the amount and cost of printing. A recent trial has brought a 22% reduction in printing with little evidence of any productivity issues. In February 2024, the printers within the Council offices will be replaced. These new printers will have a reduced environmental impact and will bring a reduction in electricity costs due to more efficient heating and cooling. The printers have also been procured from a certified carbon neutral supplier.

Introduction of food waste bins in the Council Offices

In June 2023, food waste bins were introduced in kitchen areas across the Council Offices to reduce the amount of food waste being put into general waste bins and going to landfill.

Rushmoor Youth Influence:

Delivered a Rushmoor Youth Influence Session around Climate Change. This included a presentation around RBC's Commitments, Carbon Footprint and an interactive session around carbon footprints and the impact of everyday actions. Guest Speakers from Fluor Ltd on their net zero goals for their premises and carbon capture feasibility projects.

Lunch & Learn

Delivered lunch and learn sessions to officers from across the Council's services. This details Rushmoor Borough Council's Climate Change commitments, as well as an interactive activity to explain and better understand carbon footprints and to engage officers in to how they can reduce their negative environmental impacts, both in and outside of work. Twelve Officers attended the first session, with a further ten due to attend a second session on the 1st February.

Carbon Literacy

Carbon Literacy training was shared that had been developed by The Innovation South Virtual Campus. The Innovation South Virtual Campus is a project initiated by a group of regional Colleges and Universities in collaboration with the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and have developed a variety of short online courses. Carbon Literacy courses were shared with Senior Leadership and Members.

Eco Explorers Club

Eco Explorers Club is held in town centres on the first weekend of every month (Aldershot on Saturday. Farnborough on Sunday. May-December). These workshops focus on a variety of topics that have an environmental scheme, such as pollination, global warming, green energy, plastic, and recycling.

Warmer Homes (HUG2 – Home Upgrade Grant)

Rushmoor are part of a Consortium of districts within Hampshire that have been awarded funding. This gives residents the opportunity of fully-funded energy efficiency improvements. This only applicable to off-grid properties with an EPC of band D or lower. These improvements are funded by the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) funding, which is administered by the Government's Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ). This Scheme runs until March 2025.

Hitting the cold spots service

This service provides advice to residents on heating, insulation, energy bills, smart meters and switching energy tariffs.

It also has a small budget to help residents with heating repairs and can provide portable heaters if a heating system breaks.

Great British Insulation Scheme

Residents are signposted to this scheme on our webpage. This is a scheme to help lower the cost of heating your home, by adding insulation for free or at a discount. Anyone can apply, as long as their home is:

- In a lower council tax band (A to D)
- Rated as with an energy performance certificate D to G

Green Infrastructure Strategy

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for Rushmoor was adopted by the Council in July 2022. The Strategy includes a vision, objectives, and a number of broad priorities. In order to deliver these priorities, the Strategy identifies a number of potential projects. It is noted in the Strategy that these projects were identified as having potential, but their inclusion did not represent a commitment to delivery or assume that partnership working has been agreed.

Since the adoption of the Strategy, the Council has reviewed the potential projects and started to make progress on those considered to be of high priority. These include:

PP3 - A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-Site Scoping Project

The Environment Act 2021 introduces a new mandatory requirement for new development to provide 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This is due to come into force on large sites on 12th February 2024. BNG must be provided on-site in the first instance, but if evidence demonstrates this is not possible, it can be provided off-site. Local authorities can offer BNG units on our own land. Therefore, officers have undertaken preparatory work to establish whether a 'Habitat Bank' of units can be created and offered once the mandatory requirement is in place. This has focussed initially on the Council's three Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) and a number of urban tree planting locations. In January 2024, Cabinet approved the launch of a Rushmoor Habitat Bank and units are expected to be available for applicants to purchase in the coming months.

PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project

This project seeks to identify if, where and what type of tree planting may be desirable within Rushmoor Borough, and how Rushmoor Borough may best contribute towards delivery of national woodland creation commitments. Part of this project is being progressed through the identification of urban tree planting locations which can be funded through off-site BNG payments (see Project PP3 above). The Council has also been successful in securing funding as part of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund. This grant will fund the purchase, planting, and establishment of 194 trees within 14 planting locations, within wards identified as having the lowest canopy cover (i.e. below 20%).

GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project

The creation of the Southwood Country Park SANG (Suitable Natural Alternative Greenspace) offered an opportunity to restore the habitats and physical processes associated with the Cove Brook corridor and associated floodplain, creating a more resilient ecosystem for the benefit of people and wildlife. The Council has entered partnership with the Environment Agency, to progress a project which will achieve river floodplain and habitat improvements on the Southwood Country Park and Cove Brook. The project is underway, but implementation has been on hold awaiting the completion of the ESSO Southampton to London Pipeline Project.

Big Tree Giveaway

The Big Tree Giveaway was in partnership with Hampshire Forest Partnership. The giveaway was launched at the Eco Fair in September 2023 and designed to help increase the canopy cover in Rushmoor. Rushmoor Residents were eligible for two free trees per residential address for planting in residential gardens. The trees were from a selection of 12 native species and were chosen for their suitability to local conditions and their benefits to biodiversity and pollinators.

Round 1: 464 trees were given away as part of the Big Tree Giveaway in Rushmoor. The final round of collections is due in early February 2024.

Solar Together Hampshire 22

Rushmoor Borough Council worked with Hampshire County Council and iChoosr to take part in Solar together. The second round (2022) finished in summer 2023 and registrations opened for a third round in Autumn 2023. This is a Group buying scheme for residents to reduce the cost of Solar PV and battery storage systems, as well as ensuring a trusted supplier.

Solar together scheme was also run in 2023.

	Solar PV		Retrofit Battery Storage	
	Registered	Accepted	Registered	Accepted
2022	390	63	24	10
2023	160	30	1	0

Rushmoor Community in Bloom

The Council's Climate Change Officer was a judge for RVS's Rushmoor Community in Bloom. This was focused on the Best Environmentally Friendly Garden category. The Council will continue in the future to have representation on the planning committee for this scheme.

Greening RVS

Continued working with RVS to offer support in their goal of introducing a sustainability policy and action plan. With the further aim of developing a toolkit for membership organisations to become greener and more sustainable.

RVS Forum – Greening the Voluntary Sector

Climate Change Officer presented at the RVS Forum 'Greening the voluntary sector. This detailed Rushmoor's climate change journey from declaring a climate emergency in 2019 to present, the new action plan and carbon footprint.

Citizens Advice Rushmoor

Worked with Citizen Advice Rushmoor to develop an Environmental Policy and Action Plan, with an aim to reduce their negative environmental impact and raise awareness of environmental issues. This included engagement and a workshop with trustees, staff, and volunteers from across the organisation.

Jet Zero

In April 2023, Tom Bircham, Economic Development Officer at Rushmoor Borough Council was seconded to Enterprise M3 LEP to support their development of a Jet Zero Cluster.

In 2022, department of transport launched the Jet Zero strategy with a goal for aerospace to be net zero by 2050 or 2040 for airport infrastructure. The initial piece of activity has been around bringing the appropriate organisations around a table to discuss the direction of travel we need to be taking in order to develop the cluster. To date, there have been four in-person stakeholder meetings bringing together

representatives from industry, academia, funding bodies and the public sector to have very open conversations on the conditions that need to be created. This has helped the LEP to find out what businesses are doing locally and what the barriers are to growth, including investment and skills.

Additionally, in 2023, the LEP commissioned, economic development consultants, SQW, to map the activity taking place within the region and provide a comprehensive database of local organisations who are engaged in activities related to Jet Zero. Working with an organisation called Glass AI and Oxford Brookes they have used AI to scrape the websites of companies within the geography. They created a taxonomy of the key terms related to Jet Zero and have used this technique to provide a comprehensive database of organisations in the region who are engaged in Jet Zero activities.

The results of this work have been used to identify the strengths of the region and will aid the LEP to provide more targeted support, but also allow them to create a network of businesses that can be approached to be part of the cluster.

SQW also undertook a stakeholder consultation exercise to better understand the requirements of the businesses, specifically around skills, premises, funding, and market conditions as well as where the businesses are on their net zero journey and what the challenges and opportunities are. The results of the above have been used to create an evidence paper, action plan and proposition document making the case for the EM3 region as a great place to locate a sustainable aviation enterprise.

The next meeting of the cluster will take place in February, with businesses such as Farnborough Airport, Gulfstream, Tisics and Farnborough Aerospace Consortium all confirmed to attend.

Contact Details:

Rachel Barker – Assistant Chief Executive
Rachel.barker@rushmoor.gov.uk

Sophie Rogers – Climate Change Officer
Sophie.rogers@rushmoor.gov.uk