

Appendix 2 – Progress against the Action Plan and Scrutiny Review recommendations

No.	Scrutiny Review recommendations 2021	Status	Progress update
Building energy use			
1	Priority consideration should be given to the implementation of low carbon heating systems, e.g. the use of ground source and air source heat pumps, in all newly commissioned buildings and when renewing systems in existing buildings. The most energy efficient type of heat pump currently available should be used where possible (e.g. ground source, then air source heat pumps).	In progress	To ensure that the costs and benefits of any potential project is balanced with the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) implications of carbon reduction initiatives, the following will be considered as part of the Council's Capital Strategy: 1) Energy efficiency measures at the start of any capital project and included in the whole project costs when establishing a business case. 2) Where possible, ESG schemes to be integrated within existing funded programmes, e.g. boiler replacement programme with low carbon replacements as part of the capital building maintenance programme. 3) The specific technology to be deployed (e.g. heat pumps etc) will be dependent on a range of factors including the age, type of building and its levels of insulation/heat retention. 4) A whole building approach to include whole life costings which will range from shorter to longer term pay back periods. It may be possible to use short term savings to subsidise longer term improvements. This will include building fabric improvements and also greater awareness of energy efficient use of buildings by end users.
2	The Council should keep the use of hydrogen gas heating technology under review and ensure all new or replacement boilers are capable of being 'hydrogen ready'.	In progress	Currently, it is not possible to source "hydrogen ready" boilers. The government is due to publish a heat decarbonisation plan in the near future, which may help ESCC to plan for a transition to hydrogen boilers. In the meantime, ESCC is an active member of Hydrogen Sussex, which works with a range of partner organisations to understand and prepare for the emerging hydrogen economy.
3a)	The Council to consider through the RPPR process opportunities for capital funding within the core capital programme to carry out carbon reduction projects in its corporate buildings, notably building fabric improvements, and lobbies Government for additional funding in this area.	In progress	The Council has invested capital in carbon reduction projects for a number of years and in October 2021 Cabinet agreed an additional £3.867m for corporate carbon reduction work up to 2023-24. The Council has also engaged with, and been encouraged to provide feedback to BEIS and MHCLG on the need for consistent and long-term funding from government to enable local authorities to take further action. Salix are proposing to revise the changes to one of their funds in light of feedback from ESCC.
3b)	In developing energy efficiency projects, the Council should take a whole building approach, which is based on whole life costings.	In progress	Updates to the County Council's Capital Strategy in February 2021 included the emerging relevance of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations. The Strategy will now be further updated to support the County Council's climate emergency declaration. Work to tackle climate change has become a part of the Council's core business due to national

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			legislation and is a key priority for the Council, therefore opportunities for investment will be considered as a basic need.
3c)	The Council should explore installing solar panels on its buildings and energy storage where this is possible. In particular, the Council should explore the feasibility of installing solar panel canopies over the car parks at County Hall and use the resultant energy in the building and to power Electric Vehicle/electric bike charge points in the car parks.	In progress	The Council secured funding in 2021 from the national Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to install solar PV and storage batteries at 6 sites. The installation of solar panel canopies in the car parks at County Hall will be considered as part of the work on staff travel, for which consultancy support will be procured.
4a)	The Council, in conjunction with maintained schools, should publish comparative data on energy efficiency (e.g. league tables and energy performance), set a carbon reduction target and encourage engagement with pupils in learning projects and activities to reduce carbon emissions	In progress	The Council holds the relevant energy data, however the energy performance of schools varies for a number of reasons, which means that it would not be possible to compare schools on a like-for-like basis. It would also be complex and costly to try to set school-specific carbon reduction targets, therefore it's recommended that schools should be encouraged to aim for a 13% per year carbon reduction target, in line with the Council's overall target and the target for the county. There's long been engagement with schools on energy reduction, energy efficiency and renewables, for instance through the promotion of ESCC's energy fund and working with the Youth Cabinet to develop a school energy auditing tool.
4b)	The Council consider through the RPPR process providing capital funding for a pilot project to install heat pump technology in one of the County's maintained schools as a best practice case study.	In progress	Funding from the national Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund was secured in 2021 to carry out a whole-building energy retrofit to Ninfield primary school, including the installation of heat pumps, and to carry out feasibility studies to decarbonise heating in a number of other buildings. This work will be completed by summer 2022.
5)	The Council lobbies the Department for Education to provide sufficient funding for new schools to be built to a carbon neutral standard and provide funding for major improvements to retrofit energy efficiency and carbon reduction measures to all school buildings.	In progress	The Council has engaged with, and been encouraged to provide feedback to, BEIS and MHCLG on the need for consistent and long-term funding from government to enable local authorities to take further action.
6)	The Council to review the payback periods used for major building refurbishment projects and adjusts the provision of capital funding for carbon reduction projects to enable more work in this area to be carried out based on whole life costings.	In progress	Updates to the County Council's Capital Strategy in February 2021 included the emerging relevance of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations. The Strategy will now be further updated to support the County Council's climate emergency declaration. Work to tackle climate change has become a part of the Council's core business due to national legislation and is a key priority for the Council, therefore opportunities for investment will be considered as a basic need.

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Street lighting energy use			
7)	<p>The Council should:</p> <p>a) Explore the scope for further energy savings by reducing the amount of time street lights are on through ongoing maintenance and replacement programmes.</p> <p>b) Explore the use of alternative technologies such as solar and wind turbines for less essential lit signs and other street furniture.</p> <p>c) Keep the use of intelligent lighting systems for street lighting under review and install intelligent lighting in the car parks and campus at the County Hall campus as an example of best practice.</p>	In progress	<p>a) The Council is in an 18 month programme to replace the remaining 16,000 sodium lamps with very low energy LED lamps, which will reduce carbon emissions by a further 600 tonnes per year. We will continue to explore further reductions through part night lighting and we will work with communities to apply this where appropriate, though this needs to be balanced with public safety.</p> <p>b) The Council has installed a number of solar powered signs in the past but they have not proved to be reliable. However, as technology and reliability improve, we will continue to explore the use of these technologies for use across our lit network.</p> <p>c) A review of intelligent street lighting systems was undertaken by a consultant in summer 2020 and concluded that they would not provide carbon savings or a financial return. Savings were better achieved by programming the new lighting units to switch off at night as they are installed and where this is approved. As intelligent lighting technology matures so the costs are likely to decrease, so the use of intelligent lighting systems will be reviewed again in 2022-23. County Hall campus lighting was upgraded in 2016. The lamps have in-built daylight sensors and the main car park lights have lamps that are programmed to dim overnight between midnight and 5am. A data logger was used in November 2020 to confirm that dimming is taking place, which brings a saving of about 45%.</p>
Staff travel and commuting (including councillors) and fleet vehicles			

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8)	<p>a) Explore more varied patterns of working to determine what is the best level of remote working from a staff perspective and for the Council to meet its business needs and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>b) Work is undertaken to support cultural change to embed changes in working practices that reduce the need to travel, or encourages less travel, such as the use of technology to hold meetings remotely and provide training using remote meeting technology.</p> <p>c) The Council explores the provision of more capacity for drop-in centres / hot desking and collaboration space in regional offices so staff do not always need to travel into the main office buildings, including County Hall, as part of the future workplace planning arrangements. d) The Council investigate the introduction of hybrid committee meetings where councillors can either attend remotely or in person.</p>	In progress	The development of a staff travel plan will be commissioned from a specialist consultancy. This will be informed by the roll-out of Future Workstyles. The staff travel plan work will review the policies and incentives currently in place (e.g. existing flexible working arrangements) and put forward costed recommendations for addressing the points raised in the Scrutiny review, alongside other staff travel items (e.g. electric vehicles).
9a)	The Staff Travel Plan is revised to encourage, and where appropriate consideration is given to the potential for incentivising, the use of other travel modes (e.g. walking, cycling and public transport) and the uptake of Electric Vehicles to reduce carbon emissions.	In progress	
9b)	The Council considers lobbying the Department for Transport to make changes to season tickets for train and bus travel so they can be used flexibly by staff commuting to work	Complete	The Flexi Season ticket was introduced nationally in June 2021. It offers 8 days of travel in 28 days, any time, between two stations. However, it cannot be used in conjunction with other ESCC discount offers, such as the Easit travel card.
10)	Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points are installed at the main office buildings, or at least County Hall, with a plan agreed by the end of March 2021.	In progress	In March 2021 Cabinet agreed for the Council to explore options for procuring EV charge points on the corporate estate and the highway network. An internal team has been established to take this forward, including looking at our own fleet and the car lease scheme, and a new post

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11)	11a) Smaller own fleet vehicles should be replaced by EVs in the short term when the leases expire. 11b) Review the car lease scheme to encourage staff to select low emission or zero emission vehicles.	In progress	of EV officer has been agreed and the recruitment has started. The Council is part of a network of transport authorities (KCC, BHCC, WSCC and SCC) that share information on their respective approaches to EVs. Partner organisations will be engaged via SPACES.
	11 c) The Council to consider specifying the early use of low emission vehicles in the procurement of major contracts (e.g. the Highways maintenance contract), where feasible	In progress	The Council is working with a few suppliers to gauge the ability of different markets to measure their greenhouse gas footprints and is working on requiring low carbon outcomes from high value contracts with large carbon footprints (e.g. from the new highways contract). This includes considering whether to specify the early use of low emission vehicles.
12)	The Council should keep the market for larger hydrogen powered vehicles under review, with a view to undertaking early pilot schemes and eventually phasing out the diesel-powered larger vehicles in its fleet in line with Government policy.	In progress	The Council is an active member of Hydrogen Sussex, which works with a range of partner organisations to understand and prepare for the emerging hydrogen economy. The Council submitted a joint bid for £12.8m to DfT's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas Scheme to help purchase 37 hydrogen buses with BHCC and Brighton & Hove Buses but was unsuccessful.
Carbon off-setting and renewables			
13)	The Council to keep opportunities for investing in natural habitats under review for inclusion in a carbon off-setting plan at the appropriate time when the science has been developed.	In progress	The Council hosts the Sussex Local Nature Partnership, which has developed a Natural Capital Investment Strategy, which identifies carbon storage and sequestration as a key area for natural capital investment. The LNP has secured funding from Natural England to map where in Rother, Wealden and Eastbourne carbon sequestration could take place, for instance through habitat management and/or tree planting. The Council is also leading a SELEP-funded project to better understand the potential scale of supply and demand in the voluntary carbon off-set market and to determine how it could encourage the development of the market.
14a)	The Council to develop a carbon off-setting plan which includes investment in woodland creation, natural habitats and renewable energy generation.	Not started	A plan will be developed once it's clear, for example from the action above, what the local market is able to deliver and at what cost, so that the costs, benefits and risks can be assessed with greater certainty.
14b)	Review the Property Asset Disposal and Investment Strategy to identify land availability and opportunities for carbon off-setting habitats and investment in the development of solar farms.	Not started	The Council has a database of land holdings already used to identify key sites for investment. This can be used to complete a systematic review of sites to determine whether they might be viable for investment in off-setting, though ESCC is not a large landowner. A set of criteria will need to be developed to sieve sites in line with Council priorities. In addition the Council's asset management plan 2020- 2025 will consider site availability and suitability for

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			solar farms. A business case will need to be formulated to understand the capital investment and ongoing management/expenditure requirements.
Communications and leadership			
15a)	Develop an interactive communication/information platform, which includes details on what the Council itself is doing on climate change and to discuss opportunities where residents may take an active role in lowering community carbon emissions.	Complete	A climate change communications plan was agreed by CMT in March 2021 and is being implemented (e.g. press releases, Yammer articles, staff newsletter, website updates, promotion of Solar Sussex Together to residents). This work is now part of business as usual.
15b)	The Council to use its convening power to co- ordinate the actions it is taking on climate change with its partners, and in particular with the District and Borough Councils in East Sussex.	In progress	The Council hosts the East Sussex Environment Board, which is one of the sub boards to Team East Sussex and leads on delivering the East Sussex Environment Strategy. The Strategy includes a commitment to develop a road map to net zero for the county, which is being developed with a range of partners, including through regular meetings with the District and Borough Councils.
Other issues			
16a)	Business case evaluation and procurement decisions should include an assessment of the carbon impact of the proposal.	In progress	Discussions have been had with other local authorities to see whether there are tried and tested examples of good practice that ESCC could learn from, including via South East 7. The outcome of this work will inform updated corporate report writing guidance to provide appropriate advice to report authors.
16b)	Reports that go to the Executive and Council should include an assessment or statement of the carbon emissions impact of the proposals/decision in the report where relevant and material.	In progress	As above

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17)	The Council lobbies Government at a national level via ADEPT and the South East 7 partnership, to amend the planning system and building regulations so that the carbon performance of new buildings, including school buildings, can be taken into account in planning decisions.	In progress	The Building Regulations are a separate regulatory framework to the planning system. The planning system allows local planning authorities to require energy efficiency standards that exceeds the minimum requirements of the Building Regulations where there are Local Plan policies in place to do so. Both the planning system and Building regulations are being reviewed by government. In October 2020 the Council responded to the Planning for the Future White Paper expressing the need for the planning reforms to complement climate change targets, and we continue to work with networks such as ADEPT to lobby government for change. New school project designs now reflect increased focus on climate change priorities and how this is informing the new 10 year capital programme.
18a)	ESCC to build on the existing Dutch Elm Disease Strategy to develop a Strategic Tree Policy and action plan to manage Ash Dieback, Dutch Elm Disease and other tree diseases/pests which includes a programme to replace lost trees where possible (subject to safety issues) to mitigate the impact on carbon absorption.	In progress	East Sussex Highways have a tree inspection policy which forms part of the current Highways contract. This is supported by a Tree Inspection Manual, which deals with how inspections and remedial work are prioritised on a risk-based approach. Schools and Property are creating a strategy via Orbis in conjunction with Surrey County Council. In May 2021, the Council successfully applied for £300,000 from Defra's Treescapes fund to replace highway trees lost to disease in Seaford.
18b)	Both County and District/Borough Planning teams should be encouraged to attend the master class training provided by the Forestry Commission on the retention and protection of woodlands and trees.	In progress	Discussions are being held with the Forestry Commission to determine what appropriate training they could deliver to planners. This will then be raised through the East Sussex Planning Liaison Group (attended by Heads of Planning), the Local Plan Managers Group and the development Management Forum.

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