

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BECOMING A CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL – ACTION PLAN			
	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR’S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE
	<i>Building Energy Use</i>		
1	<p>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).</p>	<p>Agreed. The updated Capital Strategy, to be presented as part of the RPPR reports to Cabinet and Full Council in early 2021, will reflect that Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations are becoming more relevant in capital investment decisions. ESG requirements will need to be supported within project business cases to be included in the Capital Programme. To ensure that the costs and benefits of any potential project is balanced with the ESG implications of carbon reduction initiatives, the following will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficiency measures at the start of any capital project and included in the whole project costs when establishing a business case. • 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. • The specific technology to be deployed (eg heat pumps etc) will be dependent on a range of factors including the age, type of building and its levels of insulation/heat retention. • 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. <p>Scheme Specific Funding, such as external grants and Section 106/CIL contributions to be considered and actively sought to fund projects. This will include lobbying of government departments, where appropriate, to provide funding for low carbon measures, such as the Department of Education when funding new schools and major improvements.</p>	From April 2021
2	<p>The Council should keep the use of hydrogen gas heating technology under review and ensure all</p>	<p>Agreed. The Scrutiny Review panel heard that, as of December 2020, 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</p>	On-going

	new or replacement boilers are capable of being 'hydrogen ready'.	hydrogen boilers. In the meantime, ESCC will continue to monitor the commercial availability of hydrogen ready boilers and associated costs.	
3	a) The Council 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.	Agreed. Please see the response to 1.	From April 2021
3	b) In developing energy efficiency projects, the Council should take a whole building approach, which is based on whole life costings.	Agreed. Please see the response to 1.	From April 2021
3	c) 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	<p>Agreed. The Council has identified 12 priority corporate sites on which there may be a business case for installing solar PV. It submitted a bid in November to the national £1bn decarbonisation fund to contribute to the cost of installing solar PV plus battery storage on 6 of these sites, which were those that met the funding criteria. A decision on funding is due in December.</p> <p>We will explore the feasibility of Solar panel canopies in the car parks at County Hall, and other measures, as part of the County Council's approach to workstyles and its approach to its office accommodation strategy and the use of buildings to support the Council's operations.</p>	On-going
4	a) The Council, in conjunction with maintained schools, publishes comparative data on energy efficiency (e.g. league tables and energy performance), sets a carbon reduction target and encourages engagement with pupils in learning projects and activities to reduce carbon emissions.	<p>Noted. 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.</p> <p>There's long been engagement with schools on energy reduction, for instance through the promotion of the national Salix funding that's managed by the energy team and workshops with schools to encourage energy efficiency.</p>	On-going
4	b) The Council consider through the RPPR process providing capital funding for a pilot project to	Agreed. In November the Council submitted a bid to the national £1bn decarbonisation fund to pay for a feasibility study into replacing the oil-fired boilers at Ninfield Primary	February 2021

	install heat pump technology in one of the County's maintained schools as a best practice case study.	school with heat pumps, solar PV and battery storage. The bid has been approved and the work has been commissioned. The feasibility study is due to be completed by mid-January, with the intention of submitting of bid to fund the capital costs of installing heat pumps through the final round of the national decarbonisation fund, should there be any funding remaining. This will act as a pilot site for ESCC.	
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.	Agreed. Please see the response to 1.	From April 2021
6	The Council reviews 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.	Agreed. Please see the response to 1.	From April 2021
<i>Street Lighting Energy Use</i>			
7	The Council: a) Explore the scope for further energy savings by reducing the amount of time street lights are on through ongoing maintenance and replacement programmes.	Agreed. The Council has just started an 18 month programme to replace the remaining 16,000 sodium lamps with very low energy LED lamps. This will reduce our 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.	On-going
	b) Explore the use of alternative technologies such as solar and wind turbines for less essential lit signs and other street furniture.	Noted. We have installed a number of solar powered signs in the past but they have not proved to be reliable. However, as the technology and reliability improves so we will continue to explore the use of these technologies for use across our lit network.	On-going
	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	1) Agreed. 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 and, with a change in lighting policy to enable	2022-23

		<p>greater roll out, the approach may provide carbon savings in future. Consequently, the use of intelligent lighting systems will be reviewed again in financial year 2022-23.</p> <p>2) Completed. In 2016 the County Hall campus lighting was upgraded. 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 & Commuting (including councillors) and Fleet Vehicles			
8	a) The Council 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.	Agreed. The County Council is considering a range of proposals, working with departments to understand their business needs in terms of how they use workspaces in the future. This is incorporated into the review of workstyles and future working requirements in conjunction with the consideration of the future accommodation needs. This is likely to include proposals to facilitate new ways of working that support cultural change, including adopting more flexible working patterns, reducing the need for business travel and exploiting the use of new technology to maximise remote working in all its forms.	May 2021.
8	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.	Agreed. Please see the response to 8 a).	May 2021
8	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.	Agreed. The Council's office hubs have hot-desking and drop-in centres. Staff have been more mobile with enhanced laptops allowing significantly more flexible. Many services have adapted their work styles and work patterns during 2020 and this will be reflected overall in lower office usage. The SPACES Board is working up opportunities for greater use of local public authority assets for increased hot-desking and collaboration space. SPACES has a focused workgroup setting out targets for this to reduce travelling time.	2021
8	d) The Council investigate the introduction of hybrid committee meetings where councillors can either attend remotely or in person.	Agreed. Current national regulations that allow councillors to attend formal meetings remotely will expire in May 2021. The Council recently agreed a motion calling on Government to change the rules to allow local authorities the flexibility to choose whether to hold virtual and/or physical meetings. The Council would be able to consider and respond to any permanent new provision for remote attendance if it is introduced. We are	May 2021

		currently exploring the technology and processes that would be required to hold hybrid meetings in the event that this is required under temporary Covid arrangements, or more generally, and we already have the technology and procedures in place to hold fully remote meetings.	
9	a) 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	Agreed. An officer working group has already been established with the task of updating the Staff Travel Plan to ensure it is fit for purpose. Considerations around incentivising travel modes other than by private car and the use of electric vehicles will be a key part of this work. Recommendations will be considered in Q4 of 2020-21.	Q4 2020-21
9	b) 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.	Noted. The Council hosts Transport for the South East, which is supporting the Rail Delivery Group in a bid for funding from the Department for Transport to develop a business case for a national rail back office Pay-as-You-Go ticketing system. Whilst this does not currently include buses there is a strong appetite from the Sub national Transport Boards for it to do so. Working through TfSE is likely to be more effective than ESCC lobbying in isolation.	On-going
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.	Agreed. The Council does not currently provide any charge points for electric vehicles. However, we recognise that there is a growing level of demand for EVs and that the greater provision of charging points is key to increasing the uptake of EVs. We are currently developing a strategic approach, including looking at how we might procure the installation of public charging points in a way that addresses the complex range of technical, legal, procurement and practical issues in the most effective manner. This includes looking at the installation of charging points at ESCC corporate hubs (eg. County Hall).	June 2021
11	a) Smaller own fleet vehicles should be replaced by EVs in the short term when the leases expire.	Noted. Officers will review with budget holders the replacement of ESCC own smaller fleet vehicles with EVs in the short term when leases expire. The replacement will be dependent on the financial impact to the budget holder and whether the replacement EV vehicles meet the needs of the service.	On-going
11	b) Review the car lease scheme to encourage staff to select low emission or zero emission vehicles.	Agreed. Officers will review the car lease scheme to encourage staff to select low emission or zero emission vehicles.	From June 2021

11	c) The Council considers specifying the early use of low emission vehicles in the procurement of major contracts (e.g. the Highways maintenance contract), where feasible.	Agreed. As outlined in the East Sussex Climate Emergency Plan, we will consider specifying the early use of low emission vehicles in the new procurement of all major transport contracts (those over £1m spend per annum) where feasible. Assessments will be made on service delivery and cost balanced with benefit.	From April 2021 onwards
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.	Agreed. Officers will keep the market for larger hydrogen powered vehicles under review, with a view to undertaking early pilot schemes. Council officers are part of a Sussex-wide network of organisations looking at hydrogen for heating and transport, including Southern Gas Networks, Brighton & Hove Buses and a range of local authorities.	On-going
<i>Carbon Off-Setting and Renewables</i>			
13	The Council keeps 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.	Agreed. 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. This can then be used as a toolkit by Local Planning Authorities and other stakeholders.	From 2021
14	a) The Council develops a carbon off-setting plan which includes investment in woodland creation, natural habitats and renewable energy generation.	Agreed. ESCC is developing a central database of all Council land holdings which will enable a more 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.	From 2021
14	b) The Property Asset Disposal and Investment Strategy is reviewed to identify land availability and opportunities for carbon off-setting habitats and investment in the development of solar farms.	Agreed. In addition to the response to 14 a), the Council's asset management plan 2020-2025 will consider land sites availability and suitability for solar farms. A business case will need to be formulated to understand the capital investment and ongoing management/expenditure requirements.	From 2021
<i>Communications and Leadership</i>			
15	a) The Council develops an interactive communication/information platform, which includes details on what the Council itself is doing on climate change and to discuss opportunities	Noted. The Council's climate emergency plan includes an action to develop a communications plan. This will be developed during Q4 of 2020-21.	Q4 2020-21

	where residents may take an active role in lowering community carbon emissions.		
15	b) The Council uses 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.	Agreed. The Council hosts the East Sussex Environment Board, which is one of the sub boards to Team East Sussex and lead on delivering the East Sussex Environment Strategy. The Strategy sets out key actions on climate change, including developing a road map to reduce emission from East Sussex at the same rate as for the Council. Council officers have been meeting regularly with District and Borough officers to develop a county-wide action plan.	On-going
<i>Other Issues</i>			
16	Corporate systems a) Business case evaluation and procurement decisions should include an assessment of the carbon impact of the proposal.	Noted. For business case evaluations and procurement tender decisions, an assessment of carbon impact will be integrated into the cost benefit decision making process. For Procurement decisions the focus will be on prioritising suppliers to give the greatest benefit – including transport and construction contracts above £1m p.a. in value. Enabling the supply chain to deliver additional benefits – such as utilising social value benefits to deliver eco driver training for transport providers	From April 2021
16	b) 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.	Noted. The recommendation recognises the need to have regard to the Council’s priority outcome ‘making the best use of resources in the short and long term’ in our decision making. Prior to implementation of this recommendation, work will be undertaken by officers to consider whether and how potential carbon emission impacts of decisions could be assessed, and to enable Directors to decide in what circumstances this should be reflected in their reports to the Executive and Council. The outcome of this work will inform updated corporate report writing guidance to provide appropriate advice to report authors. Progress will be reported to scrutiny through the monitoring reports in relation to this review.	From April 2021
17	Planning 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	Noted. 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 Buildings regulations are being reviewed by government. In the meantime, the Council works with networks such as ADEPT to lobby government for change.	On-going

	buildings, including school buildings, can be taken into account in planning decisions.		
18	Protecting trees a) ESCC 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.	Agreed. Please see the response to 13 and 14.	From 2021
18	b) 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.	Agreed. This will be raised through the East Sussex Planning Liaison Group (attended by Heads of Planning), the Local Plan Managers Group and the development Management Forum, thereby helping to ensure the buy-in for officers to attend this training.	