

## Appendix 1 – Progress against the Action Plan and Scrutiny Review recommendations

No.	Scrutiny Review recommendations 2021	Status	Progress update (June 2022)
<b>Building energy use</b>			
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.	Complete	During 2020 and 2021 the Council secured external funding to commission a strategic decarbonization of heat plan, based on 24 desktop studies of a range of different Council buildings, and 20 site-specific heat decarbonization feasibility studies. These are currently being reviewed to select which to prioritise and take forward with the Council's internal climate change fund and to bid for the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund when it re-opens in the autumn. In addition, a further bid for external funding to produce another 34 site specific heat decarbonization plans is being prepared. This will quantify the capital costs, carbon and cost savings, urgency and complexity of works to contribute to prioritising investment in heat decarbonization.
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's Heat and Buildings Strategy in November 2021 included a commitment for a decision in 2026 on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising heating. 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.	Complete	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 and a further £3m per year for 2023-25. 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. In addition, the Council is working up further bids to the government's Low Carbon Skills Fund in June and is likely to work up bids to the next round of the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding, which will open in autumn 2022.
3b)	In developing energy efficiency projects, the Council should take a whole building approach, which is based on whole life costings.	Complete	The strategic Decarbonization of Heat Plan, mentioned in 1) above, takes a whole building approach. The 2 decarbonisation of heat projects that the Council secured funding for in 2020 and 2021, in Ninfield and Herstmonceux Primary Schools, both take a whole building approach.

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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, which have been completed. The installation of solar panel canopies in the car parks at County Hall will be explored as part of the development of EV charge points during 2022. Note: each proposed 7kw charger would require an average of 35m2 of solar PV based on an average of 400w per panel (2m2). The main challenge is likely to be planning consent from the SDNPA.
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	Maintained schools are included within the Council's carbon footprint and the 13% per year carbon reduction target, and budget is being spent on decarbonizing the school estate. In addition, 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 supporting the Youth Cabinet to develop a school energy auditing tool in 2021. CSD has established a task and finish group to increase engagement with schools and young people to influence and shape new behaviours to reduce carbon emissions. This work aligns with DFE's Sustainability & Climate draft strategy published in November 2021.
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.	Complete	Funding from the national Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund was secured in 2021 to carry out a whole-building energy retrofit to Ninfield and Herstmonceux primary schools, including the installation of heat pumps. Lessons learned from the schemes are being collated and will inform further decarbonization of heating schemes in other Council buildings.
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.	Complete	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. The government's 'Sustainability and Climate Change Policy for the education and children's services systems' in April 2022 commits to: 1) all new school buildings delivered by DfE to be net zero in operation. 2) uplifting basic need grant-funding rates to help local authorities deliver school capital projects to these standards. 3) updating the existing Good Estate Management for Schools.
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.	Complete	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. Payback periods are now routinely considered, alongside other value for money metrics, when considering which carbon reduction projects to fund.

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<b>Street lighting energy use</b>			
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>	Complete	<p>a) The Council has now completed the main works in the 2021-22 project to upgrade the County's functional street lighting to LED. This is expected to save 600 tonnes of carbon per year. During the summer of 2022 heritage-style, decorative and roundabout lighting will be upgraded to LED. A feasibility study for the upgrade of the high-powered high-mast lighting along the A259 in Newhaven has been commissioned. The carbon-saving potential is likely to depend on the structural integrity of the high masts as the masts will be required to support the heavier LED units.</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>

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<b>Staff travel and commuting (including councillors) and fleet vehicles</b>			
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>	Complete	<p>1) The Council has now implemented hybrid working across all applicable roles and is developing additional collaboration spaces, supported by comprehensive Work Styles guidance, and ongoing staff communications. 2) Teams now routinely use video conferencing software to hold virtual and hybrid meetings, supported by a range of guidance on running hybrid meetings and making the best use of MS Teams. 3) To help embed cultural change, each team has created a Team Agreement, setting common standards for attendance, meeting formats, and information sharing/networking. We've also provided managers with guidance on conducting a 'return to work conversation' with colleagues, to address any concerns colleagues might have about hybrid working. Managers can also access training and guidance on supervising colleagues remotely and inducting new staff into hybrid working. This has been supported by a range of staff communications, including videos of senior managers talking about their experiences of hybrid working and returning to the office after the pandemic. We have also continued to develop and promote the wellbeing resources available to employees, to help ensure individual resilience as we adapt to new ways of working. The government's temporary Regulations to permit remote meetings for Members were not extended beyond May 2021, though Lead Member meetings are not subject to the same rules and so largely continue to be held on-line. In general, we have seen an increase in home working compared to pre-pandemic levels and expect this to be sustained on a long-term basis.</p>
9a)	<p>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.</p>	In progress	<p>A Ladder to Leadership team has been tasked with leading the development of a staff travel plan during 2022-23. In the meantime: 1) the salary sacrifice scheme has been improved to (Nick Earley). 2) the Easit scheme has been renewed for staff and Members to access</p>
9b)	<p>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</p>	Complete	<p>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.</p>
10)	<p>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.</p>	In progress	<p>An Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project Manager was recruited in February 2022 and an implementation plan to install up to 8 electric vehicle charge points at County Hall during 2022 is being progressed. Discussions are being held with the Energy Savings Trust to secure 60% funding towards the cost of charge points from the Government's On Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS).</p>

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11a/ 11b)	<p>11a) Smaller own fleet vehicles should be replaced by EVs in the short term when the leases expire.</p> <p>11b) Review the car lease scheme to encourage staff to select low emission or zero emission vehicles.</p>	In progress	<p>a) Leases and the business case for EVs for certain vehicles is being assessed by the Transport Hub.</p> <p>b) The corporate Climate Emergency Board has approved adopting an EV salary sacrifice scheme in principle, subject to further scoping work and approval by CMT.</p>
11c)	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 mix of suppliers on low emission vehicles. This includes offering support to home to school taxi services to purchase EVs through the LoCASE programme and requiring tenderers for the Highways contract to set out their plans to cut the carbon emissions from the service by an average of 13% per year, in line with ESCC's corporate target.
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	1) 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. 2) the Newhaven Town Deal includes £2.9m to deliver a hydrogen fuel hub at Brighton & Hove Buses' Newhaven depot, initially for B&H Buses to operate zero emission hydrogen fuel cell buses from the depot and, at a later stage, to enable other bus operators and operators of HGVs to access hydrogen re-fueling at commercial rates.

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<b>Carbon off-setting and renewables</b>			
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 natural capital carbon off-set market and to determine how it could encourage the development of, and make use 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.	In progress	A policy and plan is being worked up for Members to consider as part of the updated climate emergency plan, covering 2023-25, that will be brought to full Council in December 2022.
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.	In progress	The Council does not have significant amounts of suitable land either for developing off-setting habitats and/or solar farms. 5 sites were identified for potential Solar PV Farms, 4 on former landfill sites. Early input from UK Power Networks has indicated that current grid constraints and connection costs will restrict the potential at most sites. National Grid have currently limited new export capacity to under 1 MW until 2029 for the whole of the south east. This means that larger PV Farms of over 1MW would not get connection consent until after 2029. In addition, grid curtailment now applies to both new connections and any increases in capacity to existing connections. Curtailment is a dynamic grid response, which shuts down or limits export if supply exceeds demand, which has an impact on associated income from solar farms. The business case for investing in <1MW will be investigated.

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<b>Communications and leadership</b>			
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.	Complete	The Council hosts the East Sussex Environment Board, which is one of the sub boards to Team East Sussex, and which has a range of partners including representatives from 3 of the District and Borough Councils. The Board has produced both an Environment Strategy and a Climate Emergency Plan for the county.
<b>Other issues</b>			
16a)	Business case evaluation and procurement decisions should include an assessment of the carbon impact of the proposal.	In progress	Value for money criteria are being applied to the allocation of the Council's climate change budget (ie. Payback periods, lifetime carbon savings, operational cost savings). Research has been carried out as to how other Local Authorities are assessing the effect of their decisions on climate change, which will be used to inform how the Council will include climate change considerations into wider decision-making.
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.		East Sussex Highways now has a Tree inspection policy and Tree Inspection Manual. The Property and Estates Team is drawing up an Ash Die Back Policy stating what each department is doing. The tree replacement programme now includes a Tree Planting Framework whereby external funding is sought from programmes such as the Forestry Commission's Local Authority Tree Fund and Trees for Cities in the first instance. This is mainly to replace lost trees. The Community Tree Planting Scheme is currently being formalised, which aims to facilitate the planting trees on highways verges by suitable qualified and insured community groups
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.	Complete	On 17 March 2022 the Sussex Nature Partnership, hosted by ESCC, organized an on-line training session for all Local Authorities in Sussex on 'woodland and planning'. This had 54 attendees, including Officers from every district and borough council in East Sussex except for Hastings.



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