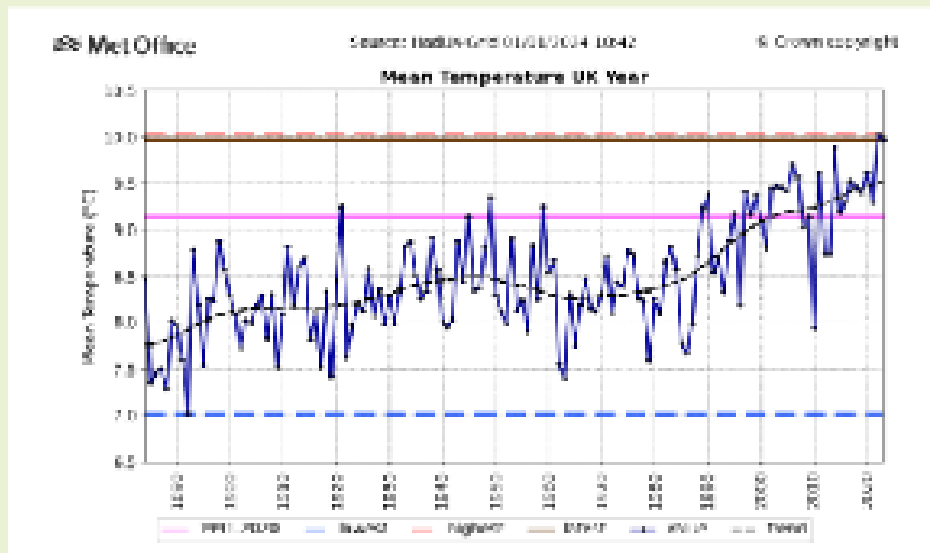


# Climate Change Action Plan **Annual Report** 2023-24



# Introduction

Our climate is changing, we have seen a rapid rise in greenhouse gas emissions and a trend towards increasing global average temperatures over the last century. In 2021 when our strategy was published the Met Office had reported that 2014, 2006, 2011, 2007 and 2017 had been the hottest years on record in the UK but in the 3 years since the Strategy was adopted average UK temperatures have risen further with the Met Office now reporting that 2020, 2022, and 2023 have been the hottest years on record. Increased annual storms and surface water flooding is now regularly experienced in the district.



Braintree District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 to build on and step up the work the Council had already been undertaking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. We published our Climate Change Strategy in 2021 following a public engagement exercise.

Our Climate Strategy set out the direction of travel for Braintree District Council to becoming carbon neutral as far as practicably possible by 2030 and to support the district with actions and projects to tackle Climate Change districtwide. The intention was to review and adapt our Climate Action Plan over time as the national and international agenda evolved.

Since the Council adopted the 2021 Climate Strategy we have published two Climate Action plans with actions across 7 key themes. Each Action plan has included over 70 actions that the Council is taking to tackle climate as an organisation or supporting climate actions in the district. Actions are not just targeting a reduction in carbon there are actions to increase climate awareness and encourage behaviour change, actions to mitigate the effects of climate change, increase biodiversity in and around the district and encourage the growth of green businesses.

This report provides some highlights of the progress made to date, reports our Key Performance Indicators, looks at some of our project case studies and updates on all the projects that were included in our 2023/2024 Climate Action Plan.



## Highlights of progress made so far: Climate Strategy since 2021

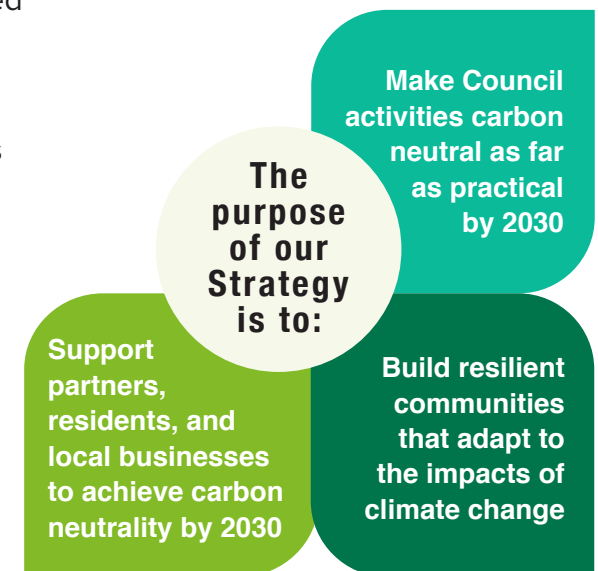
- A reduction in the organisational carbon emissions by 492 metric tonnes (8.5%) against the strategy's baseline year 2019-20
- 6% of the Council's energy use is now derived from renewable/green sources
- 16% of the Council's electricity usage is from our own solar pv on estate buildings
- £375,350 funding received from the Sport England Fund in 2023/2024 for the installation of two solar energy arrays and LED lighting at Witham Leisure Centre
- £647K of electricity offset from solar feed since the Council's climate emergency was declared in 2019
- 87% of the Council managed lighting is now LED
- All Council-managed car parks now have a minimum of 4 EV charging stations installed
- A district wide tree canopy survey has been undertaken which has mapped every tree over 3m in height across the entire district and supports a district tree strategy which is being developed
- Procurement of 14 electric light vehicles for the Council's fleet of operational vehicles to be delivered in late Autumn 2024/2025
- Award of £2.66M of funding for the Home Upgrade Grant 2 scheme to support energy efficiency measures for residents in off-gas areas (2023-2025)
- Securing funding to extend the Green Doctor Scheme for a further two years until 2026
- 61 domestic solar installations and 5 retrofit projects for residents in 2023/2024 via Solar Together
- 7,825 subscribers to the Council's environmental newsletter
- 17 Community Gardens funded through UK Shared Prosperity Funding since 2022
- Launch of the £100K Community Infrastructure Grant through UK Shared Prosperity Funding to support infrastructure projects which will demonstrate a 5% or more carbon reduction on current infrastructure
- Supported residents to access 205 subsidised water butts through Essex County Council
- The Council has been chosen to pilot in Essex (alongside Uttlesford) Essex County Council's green business accreditation scheme, "Great Start"
- 4,500 trees, 8,700 whips, 73,000 bulbs planted around the district
- Essex County Council's Essex Forest Initiative planted 33,844 trees in Braintree District in winter 2023/24, across 15 sites. 124 of these were urban standard trees and 33,720 were whips

# Climate Change Action Plan: April 2023 - March 2024

The Climate Change Action Plan builds upon many years of work already undertaken and reductions in emissions already achieved. It sets out our areas of focus in each of the work streams from the Climate Change Strategy to identify how we will deliver our objectives. The Action Plan will be a living document and we will revise our plans as the climate and environmental emergency develops, targets are met, funding becomes available and new technologies emerge.

The projects in this action plan reflect work undertaken for The Council itself and also in a supporting role for the district. Braintree District Council continues to work on projects that reduce our own carbon emissions and reduce our impact upon natural resources and the wider environment. The Council and Partners are also committed to adapting to the impacts of Climate Change - to protect and prepare our residents, communities and businesses. Projects at district level reflect the support we aim to give to partners and our communities to tackle climate change.

All projects are monitored against one or more outcomes and it is recognised that projects may have wider benefits beyond one single outcome.



# Witham Carbon Reduction Project

Leisure centres require high energy usage and recent price rises have led to increased running costs for the district's operator, Fusion. Reducing energy usage and costs, as well as reducing carbon emissions, is becoming a business need. These are also key targets for the Council estate in our climate action plan.

To alleviate the carbon burden of Witham Leisure Centre, Braintree District Council bid for and won £375,350 of grant funding from Sport England's Capital Swimming Pools Support Fund, to invest in LED lighting and a solar array installation.

Switching to LED lighting throughout the building, including in changing rooms, locker rooms, showers and toilets, gym, workout rooms and dance studios, two squash courts, staircases and all corridors will save the Council approximately 25.5 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

The solar array canopy will cover the central and top row area of the car park, so that there will be no loss of car parking space for leisure centre users. The infrastructure for the canopy will be funded by the Council, which has allocated money from its climate change reserve.

The combined electricity offset from the two arrays could be as high as £56,000 per year, with a carbon reduction that will equate to approximately 25 tonnes per year.

Works are expected to start in late 2024.





# Bradford Meadows Flood Alleviation Scheme

This project, which took place over several months in 2023/24 and culminated in the tree planting in March 2024, was the result of several agencies pooling resources and collaborating for positive change.

Ten new, relatively mature trees were planted in Bradford Meadows green space in Braintree town centre, to boost flood attenuation measures.

Bradford Meadows green space is surrounded by residential housing, where a flood risk had previously been identified. A flood attenuation basin and SuDS had been installed in the park several years earlier, mitigating some of this risk. These methods harness natural processes to address man-made problems, improving the look and feel of the area in addition to their practical uses.

Essex County Council's Capital Floods Team and Essex Forest Initiative selected the site for these additional flood prevention measures. Its proximity to houses made the risk of potential damage from flooding high, and the green space location ideal for tree planting. The Capital Floods Team accessed grant funding for the planting from the Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

Braintree District Council and Essex County Council officers worked together on the logistical operation, which required access by heavy machinery to the park.

The trees can soak up excess water during periods of extreme rainfall. Their species are three European Hornbeams, three European Hop-Hornbeams, two European Nettles and two Red Birch trees, chosen because of their resilience to climate change and adverse weather conditions.





# Community Gardens

Empowering residents to grow their own produce brings them closer to the land and creates a greater understanding of biodiversity. Gardening also has proven mental and physical health benefits.

The Council committed to giving over parcels of its land to communities for this purpose and received £37,705 from the Shared Prosperity Fund to make it happen.

It was then able to award fourteen new community gardens in the district. This is in addition to three projects which were delivered in 2022-23. The projects included a community orchard with local trees, a wetland area and a mindfulness garden with a seating area. All sites show a strong community value, champion biodiversity and aim to create havens for wildlife, foster vibrant ecosystems and transform neglected spaces into beautiful sanctuaries.

Great Maplestead Parish Council community garden is one such example. The Parish Council obtained £3,000 through the Community Gardens and Open Spaces fund in 2023, with which they have planned some seating, planted areas and raised beds. As part of the transformation, the project team also planted trees to provide shading and shelter, as well as to attract local wildlife.

In 2023/24, 14 community gardens were developed



The Council is directly responsible for reducing its own organisational climate impact – Table 1 below details the actions and targets that BDC directly controls.








Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target/Measurements	2023/2024	Trend	Comments
The Council will be carbon neutral as far as practical by 2030	Annual update on progress made towards target - reported one year in arrears	2789	↓	A reduction of 492 tonnes on the Strategy's 2019/2020 baseline figure 3,281 (2020/2021 annual carbon figures was distorted by the pandemic) In 2023/24, Braintree District Council reduced its carbon emissions 138 tonnes.
Percentage of Council energy derived from renewable/green sources	100% by 2030 – Annual update on progress made towards target	6% (16% electricity)	↔	6% of the Council's energy is now from non-fossil fuel energy sources. 16% of the electricity used was generated from the Council's solar PV panels on estate buildings. In 2023/2024 the Council bid for and was awarded grant funding to increase this percentage via Sport England funding. An additional solar array will be installed in 2024-25 with an anticipated generation of 25 tonnes (173,000 kw/hs) saving per annum.
Reduction in the use of water	Annual update on water usage by BDC – Baseline 2022 and target set for 2023/24	11,243	↑	The Council baselined the water usage of the organisation in 2022-23 as 10,759 litres. In 2023-24, the Council investigated measures to reduce water. However, the cost of investment required versus the litre reduction has resulted in projects not being cost effective at this time.
Percentage of staff trained on Climate Change	Target 100% by 2024 – Measured and reported annually	32%	↑	The headcount of employees at 31/03/24 was 501. The online learning course for the 350 desk-based staff went live in November 2023. Of these 350 staff, 160 completed the course as of end of year (46%). The frontline staff account for 151 members of staff. In 2023-24, a tailored climate change course for frontline operatives was developed. The frontline training was delayed due to technical difficulties and shall be delivered in full in 2024-25.
Percentage of BDC managed public lighting switched to LED	Target 100% - Measured and reported annually	87%	↑	A procurement exercise was due to be taken in 2023/2024 for LED lamppost replacements for BDC managed lampposts. The procurement was delayed as an audit of BDC managed lampposts was found to be required and this is now taking place in 2024-25. The procurement will include a phased LED replacement program. All other lighting is now LED.
No of EV charging points in Council car parks	Target – all car parks to have EV charging facilities – Measured and reported annually	64	↔	All BDC car parks now have between 4 and 8 EV charging points. Investigations are under way to install rapid charging points.
Percentage of low emissions vehicles in the BDC Fleet	Target 100% by 2030 – Measured and reported annually	0	↔	An external review of options in relation to vehicle replacements was completed in 2021/2022. A procurement for 14 electric vehicles has been undertaken in 2023/24. The vehicles will be delivered in Autumn 2024.



The Council also aims to support the District to achieve carbon neutrality. Table 2 includes the activity indicators that BDC will use to monitor the impact of the actions in the District category.

Overarching Activity Indicators	Activity Indicator Measurements	2023/ 2024	Trend	Comments
District Carbon Tonnage	Reported 2 years in arrears.	669Kt	↓	The figures for district carbon tonnage for 2023-24 are published by DESNZ. 2021/22 576Kt 2022/23 679Kt
Percentage of household waste recycled per annum	Target: 60%* (Reported Annually) (This target will be subject to review when the secondary legislation from the Environment Act is published)	48.86%	↑	The percentage increase in household waste recycled increased by 1.32%. 2022/23 47.54%
KG/HH Residual waste collected per year	Target: 468* (kg/hh/yr) Reported Annually (This target will be subject to review when the secondary legislation from the Environment Act is published)	420kg/HH	↓	The average residual waste collected per household in 2023-24 reduced by 11kg. 2020/21 471 kg/HH 2021/22 458 kg/HH 2022/23 431 kg/HH
Percentage of Licensed Taxis and Private Hire vehicle fleet currently fuelled by petrol/diesel alternatives	Target 100% by 2030	6	↑	Four taxi licences for electric vehicles were issued in 2023-24 and the vehicles will enter the fleet in early 2024-25; which equates to 4.5% of the taxi fleet. There are six electric private hire vehicles in the fleet. There are currently very limited numbers of wheelchair accessible alternate fuel vehicle models on the market.
Number of Parish Council owned/managed street lights switched to LED	Annual update report (Grant funding dependent)	48%	↑	An audit exercise was undertaken of parish owned street lighting in late 2023-24. 47% of parish councils responded, with a total of 375 streetlights registered. Of these, 48% have converted all streetlights to LED lamp heads; 16% have converted some streetlighting and 4% have not begun to convert streetlighting. 32% have no streetlighting at all.
Number of Household Energy Grants issued	Annual update report (Grant funding dependent)	495	↓	Green Doctor: 393; HUG2: 0; ECO 74; Handyman Service: 28 Central Government has amended the selection criteria for award and the number of grants approved has reduced. The Consortium of Local Authorities are lobbying Central Government to reconsider the selection criteria.

Overarching Activity Indicators	Activity Indicator Measurements	2023/ 2024	Trend	Comments
No of Neighbourhood Plans with climate included	Annual update report (Grant funding dependent)	0	↔	In 2023-24, there were no Neighbourhood Plans adopted. There are seven Neighbourhood Plans in total and other parishes are working on this.
No of planning permissions granted in accordance with the new Local Plan	Annual update of number	1204	↑	The New Local Plan was adopted in 2022/23.
No of contacts made with and advice given to listed building owners on energy saving measures	Annual update of number	Figure no longer reportable	—	Essex Design Guide for listed buildings is now hosted on an Essex County Council design guide website. Braintree's website now links directly to ECC's website. ECC website hits cannot provide Braintree-specific figures.
No of energy saving measures installed in Social Housing Stock	Annual update of number	Figure no longer reportable	—	Figures have been requested from the Registered Social Housing sector. Braintree District Council used to be provided with updates from the Social Decarbonisation Fund since no Registered Social Landlord applied for the fund in 2023/24, we can only get this figure from the registered housing sector direct.
No of on-street EV chargers installed for electric vehicles (ECC lead project)	Annual update of number	0	↔	Essex County Council have successfully secured bids from bid OZEV & LEVI for developing a programme of installations across the county. The Council have proposed several potential sites for on street charging points across the district, including within more rural locations.
Percentage of district with access to superfast broadband	Annual progress report	98.65%	↑	Braintree district is currently at 98.65% of premises able to access superfast broadband. Countywide service take-up is 76%. District uptake is currently at 30%.

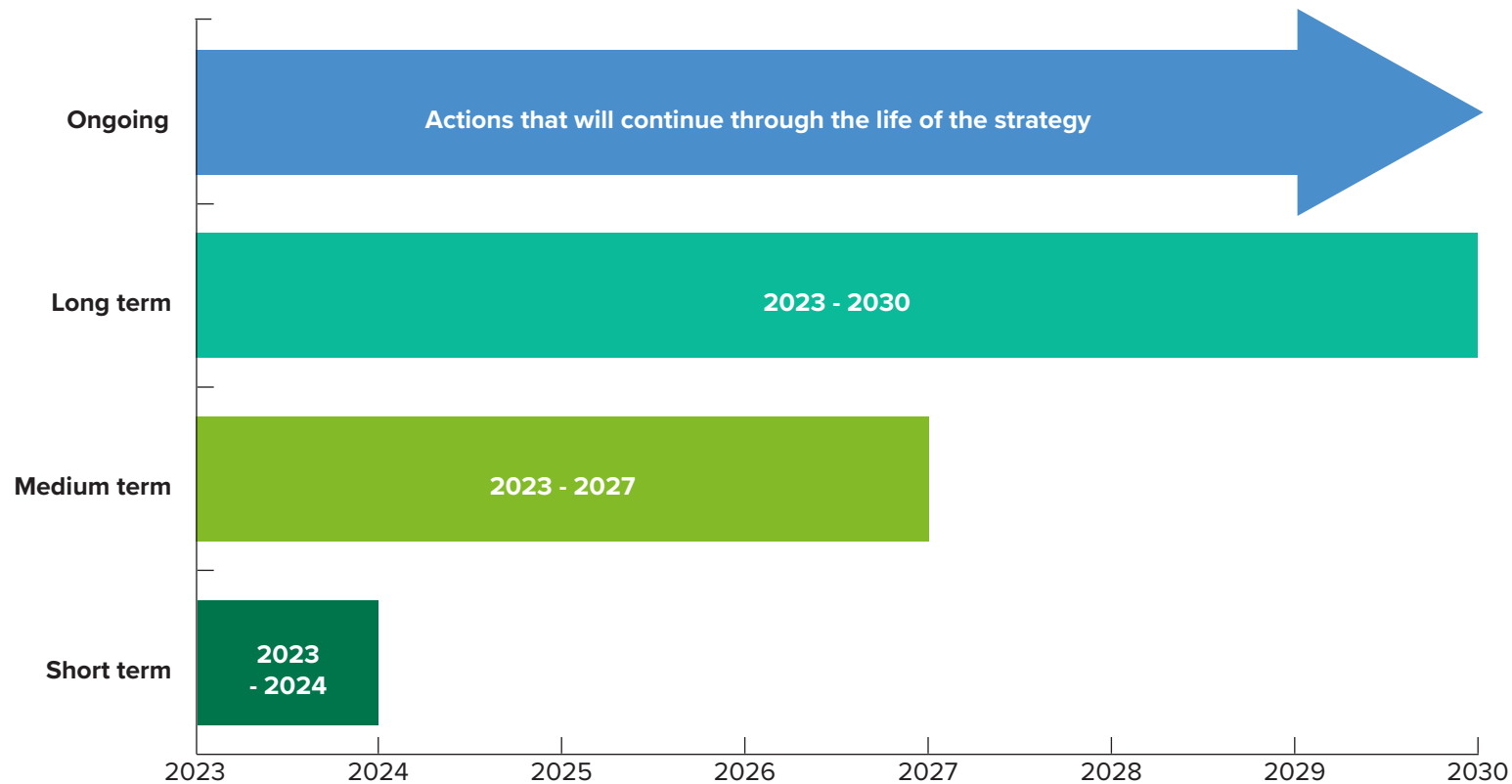
Overarching Activity Indicators	Activity Indicator Measurements	2023/ 2024	Trend	Comments
Percentage increase in the use of public transport	Total number of campaigns	25.5% (Public Buses Only)		Passenger journeys on local bus services per head in Essex rose from 18.0 in 2022 to 22.6 in 2023 (provided by Department for Transport). This figure is Essex-wide and no separate data for Braintree district is available. In the 2023/24 financial year, the Essex County Council DigiGo service transported 41,373 passengers, which exceeded expectations.
Number of water butts purchased	Progress report from ECC (Primary lead Essex County Council)	205		Approximately 1/3 of all subsidised water butts purchased through the Get Composting site in Essex were purchased through Braintree residents in 2023-24.
No of SMEs supported by ECC Green Skills/ECC Centre of Excellence/ECC Green Accreditation Scheme	Annual Figures provided by ECC (Primary lead organisation is ECC)	0		Braintree District Council are supporting Essex County Council as a pilot launch district for "A Great Start". The Accreditation Scheme will launch in June 2024.
No of projects implemented that will improve biodiversity in the district by 2030	Total number of projects (This will be a combined number from ECC, BDC and other partner organisations.)	23		As part of working to support Essex County Council with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Council are working to understand how we can report and monitor on biodiversity projects across the district in future in order to demonstrate more accurate data. We acknowledge that there will be numerous voluntary / private schemes occurring for which there is no data available.
No of businesses signed up to ECO heating or LoCASE	Target: number of Braintree business that have received LoCASE funding (or its successor). (Grant funding dependent)	Figure no longer reportable		These schemes have now closed.
No of businesses that have supported to develop Green Travel Plans	Target: 10 Business signed up each year	3		Essex County Council have supported an Industrial Estate in Witham and two schools with green travel planning. In 2024-25, the Council shall increase their promotion of this scheme to encourage more business to engage and create a Green Travel Plan.
Reduction in cuts to rural verges	(Target – one cut per year *) (*safety cuts will be performed if requested)	1		A three-year single cut of rural verges began in 2022 (with additional safety cuts where required). Essex County Council are in the process of conducting a long-term environmental evaluation of this initiative.



# Detailed Climate Change Action Plan end of year update:

## April 2023 - March 2024

The Action Plan will be a living document and we will revisit our plans as the climate and environmental emergency develops, targets are met, funding becomes available and new technologies emerge. Timescales for the actions in this update were based on the following:



# Outcomes of The Climate Actions



Outcome	Definition
<b>Carbon Reducer</b>	An action that results in a calculable carbon reduction
<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b>	An action that results in the diversification and/or protection of habitats, species or vegetation
<b>Developing the Green Economy</b>	An action that supports the development of a low carbon, resource efficient, socially inclusive, sustainable local economy
<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>	An action that protects against the impact of climate change on the built or natural environment
<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>	An action that engages with individuals or businesses to reduce their carbon and environmental footprint

# Seven Themes of The Climate Action Plan












# Resources

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Conserve our Natural Resources</b>							
Continue with campaigns to raise the profile of local food producers by promoting shop local and seasonal foods including plant-based substitutes	<b>Developing the Green Economy</b>  Increased awareness of produce that can be sourced locally and the benefits of buying seasonal produce and swapping to plant-based produce  Increased support for local businesses	Environment / Marketing & Communications	District	<p>The Council have continued with a Shop Local campaign encouraging people to shop locally and promoting local produce such as beer from Shalford Brewery and Bishop Nick and local meat from Bradwells Farm Shop. The Council have promoted the street market throughout the year which has local producers.</p> <p>In January the Council ran four reels on our Facebook and Instagram channels, each featuring an easy and cheap plant-based recipe, two of which were supplied by and filmed at The Natural Way - thereby both promoting plant-based eating and an independent local business. The feature included a free vegan book giveaway at the end of the month via The Natural Way on social media. The Council have continued with the Shop Local campaign, featuring Kelvedon based cafe EDON on our social media channels, with a focus on their very locally produced food.</p> <p>The Council also featured the vegan cookbook promotion from local vegan cafe, The Natural Way, in the environment newsletter.</p>	March 2030	CC/001	On track 
Create a learning and development programme for staff and members to increase their awareness on climate change and how they can reduce their own carbon emissions and contribute to those that can be achieved corporately	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Increase awareness of climate change issues  Improved consideration of climate change issues across all services, projects and policies	Environment	BDC	<p>The Climate Change Awareness course has been live since November 2023 on the Council's Learning &amp; Development platform. A screensaver has been added to staff computers and there are posters around Causeway House to encourage staff to complete the course. The course has been promoted through the CEO's regular blog and direct emails have been sent to managers asking for them to encourage staff to complete the course.</p> <p>The Learning &amp; Development training video on Climate Change for frontline staff shall be delivered in June 2024.</p> <p>The Council shall deliver Members Training in December 2024 and shall introduce a more in-depth Managers Training in 2024/25 in order to further embed Climate Change action across all service areas.</p>	March 2024	CC/003	Project deadline extended 




Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Review the Council's sustainable Procurement Policy to strengthen the procurement process ensuring environmental considerations are made when procuring goods and services	<p><b>Carbon Reducer</b></p> <p>Procurement specifications developed that supports carbon reduction and sustainability.</p> <p>Council is more aware of the environmental credentials of the contractors it works with.</p> <p>Encourage more businesses to consider climate change credentials.</p>	Finance	March 2026	A draft social value approach based on the Local Government Association Themes and Outcomes Measure (TOMs) has been reviewed by the Strategic Officer Group (representing all partners) in July. It was agreed by group that this approach should be developed for further consideration. Once resource had been put in place, work has progressed to create a time span for development and approval of a TOMs approach, social value policy created and Themes and Outcomes mapped for the 6 members of the Essex Procurement Partnership. Work is ongoing to consider how to effectively train staff on this approach. The above policy and TOMs will be shared for the next Strategic Officer Group, before consideration by Members. This approach, linking with our corporate objectives will pick up environmental, economic and social sustainability actions and embed these within our procurement process. Alongside this work a sourcing playbook has been developed to guide procurement staff on ensuring this TOMs based approach is embedded within procurement practice.	Medium Term	CC/005	On track 
Develop an internal Climate Change SharePoint communication site	<p><b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b></p> <p>Improved consideration of and collaboration with climate change issues across all services, projects and policies.</p> <p>Improved access to partnership opportunities, funding streams and data collection.</p>	Environment	BDC	<p>The Climate Change internal communication site (SharePoint) was launched in April 2023 for all staff to access. The site has general information to explain what Climate Change is as well as specific links through to articles and advice for staff (both for their own use and for wider sharing). All staff can easily access BDC's Climate Strategy and Climate Action Plan as well as ECC's Climate Action Annual Report.</p> <p>Pages have been built which include Waste Reduction; Staff Green Travel; Energy Efficiency and Celebrating Staff Actions. The site regularly shares news posts as well as informal minutes from Staff Eco Group meetings.</p>	March 2025	CC/074	Action complete 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Create and launch revised Climate Change pages to The Council's website	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Increase awareness of climate change issues  Improved access to partnership support.	IT / Environment	District	<p>The platform for this site has been created and planning is under way for how the content will be best presented for residents, businesses and organisations to have easy and comprehensive access to Council documents regarding Climate Change as well as support, advice and case studies.</p> <p>The current Climate Change pages on the Council's website have been regularly updated with case studies and information and this shall all be migrated to the new website in 2024-25.</p>	March 2025	CC/075	On track 
Identify opportunities across the Council's assets for water reduction.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b>  Reduction in the use of water	Environment	BDC	The Council has conducted an updated baseline water audit to understand how it uses water across the Estate. The Council has engaged with Essex County Council's recently published Water Strategy. The Council has also met with partners to discuss opportunities for water reduction across its Estate.	March 2027	CC/076	On track 
Work with partners to encourage residents and businesses to reduce their water use	<b>Carbon Reducer</b>  Reduction in the use of water	Environment & Economic Development & Planning	District	<p>The Council's spring edition of Contact magazine featured a two-page article on water reduction in the garden. The Council have continued to promote the subsidised water butt scheme through Essex County Council.</p> <p>Due to substantial rainfall over the autumn and winter months, messaging for this action has been carefully managed although the Council are aware that if there is a dry period over 2024, the long-term projection for water resource is still uncertain, especially in this region. The Council are engaging with Anglian Water to support their community engagement work (including roadshows and education) in summer 2024 and will continue to plan messaging for this action, monitoring the optimum time to release this.</p>	March 2030	CC/090	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Reduce Waste, Increase Recycling</b>							
Work with the Essex Recycling Forum and the Essex Waste Partnership on Countywide campaigns and initiatives to encourage people to reduce their waste and to maximise recycling.	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Reduction of total waste collected .  Reduction in tonnage of residual waste and increase in percentage of waste recycled .	Operations	District	<p>The Council have continued to support the food waste campaign run through Love Essex throughout 2023/24. Features have included meal planning to reduce waste purchasing and meals which utilise left over food.</p> <p>The Council have shared Love Essex's stories and initiatives and have now begun to feed our direct input through to Essex County Council on future monthly features.</p>	March 2030	CC/007	On track 
<p>Review the waste management service to identify future working models and respond to the outcomes of the Environment Bill, including impacts on kerbside collections.</p> <p>Phase 2: Develop a plan to support the Essex Waste Strategy and phase in changes arising from legislation e.g. Simpler Recycling initiatives.</p>	<b>Carbon Reducer</b>  A waste delivery model that underpins the Essex Waste Strategy and legislative changes.  Improved service delivery model implemented providing more sustainable ways of working.  Reduce residual waste and increase recycling  Ensure outcomes of the Environment Bill are understood and fed into the service review of the waste management service.	Operations	BDC	A discussion paper is being drafted that will provide options for consideration, taking into account the Ricardo consultancy work undertaken in phase one and also the updates from Defra regarding the legislative changes required. Alongside this, consideration will be given to the Waste Strategy for Essex and the aspirations set out in the strategy.	March 2027	OP/21/005	On track 





Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Reduce use of non-renewable resources</b>							
Investigate opportunities to reduce paper and printing use across internal and external communications.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in the use of carbon used by printing resources	Marketing & Communications	BDC	<p>In 2023-24, the Council audited the MFDs (multifunctional devices including printers and photocopiers) across the organisation and reduced the number significantly with a view to reducing paper and printing across the organisation. Council reporting is now sent electronically and Building Control processes are now electronic.</p> <p>In 2023-24, there were 1,163,000 “clicks” (sides of paper printed) and 60% of these were printed to be double-sided.</p>	March 2027	CC/077	On track 








# Energy Conservation



Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Reduce energy use and improve energy efficient infrastructure</b>							
Switch the Council's energy use to non-fossil fuel green energy tariffs.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions.	Finance / Operations	BDC	<p>The uplift in energy costs has previously made this action challenging to achieve. The energy tariffs will be reviewed in July and October 2024 which is the next opportunity to consider making changes to green energy tariffs.</p> <p>With improved national infrastructure for renewable energy sources, energy supply from renewable sources stands at circa 40% nationally at present.</p>	March 2027	CC/012	On track 
Increase energy efficiency and renewable technologies across Council equipment, assets and estates.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Finance / Environment	BDC	<p>The Council submitted an application for Sport England's Shared Prosperity Fund "Swimming Pool Support Fund" grant. The grant application was for £1m to support with energy efficiency which included new pool covers at all three leisure centres, a solar canopy in the car park at Witham Leisure Centre and LED lighting across all four sites. The Council successfully achieved £64k for LED lighting replacement internally at Witham Leisure Centre with an anticipated saving of 25.5 tonnes of carbon annually.</p> <p>The Council also secured £311,000 for solar photovoltaic panels to be added to a solar canopy at the car park of Witham Leisure Centre and the Council shall fund the infrastructure for this.</p> <p>The Council are exploring the financial opportunities of large-scale renewable energy projects with partners.</p>	March 2030	CC/016	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Complete a baseline audit of all meters (water, electric and gas) across the entire BDC property portfolio to investigate opportunities of resource efficiency.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment / Asset Management	BDC	<p>The Council have actively been auditing gas, electricity and water meters across the Estate and this shall continue into the year ahead.</p> <p>The Council have identified which meters are analogue and shall require replacing with AMR (Automatic Meter Recognition) meters and shall schedule this works to be completed by for when they shall no longer be functional.</p>	March 2027	CC/078	On track 
Commission street lighting repair contract to included LED replacement (including Halstead Public Gardens)	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment	BDC	<p>The Council is conducting a full asset audit of streetlights within the district with the support of the Asset Management Team. The asset audit has highlighted that land transferred to BDC via Section 106 agreements also includes some lampposts which should be incorporated into the appendices for this tender. This information is currently being correlated by Asset Management.</p> <p>EFG have supplied detailed unmetered supply information - this has requested in queries in payments for EDF for lampposts that are not on the current owned/managed list. These are being identified and physically visited.</p> <p>Specification for the tender has been drafted. Once the results of the asset audit are received, the Tender process will begin.</p> <p>As part of this process, the Council also contacted town and parish councils to ascertain how many of their own streetlights have been converted to LED lamp heads. The Council successfully supported Rayne Parish Council to attain pre-used LED lamp heads for their streetlighting and have made several further introductions to Essex Highways for this purpose.</p>	March 2025	ES/23/009/K	On track 





Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Conduct an energy efficiency audit of all BDC buildings and investigate additional opportunities for renewable energy installations	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment / Asset Management	BDC	The Council has now completed audits for all leisure centres.	March 2027	CC/084	On track 
<b>Increase the proportion of energy derived from renewable sources</b>							
Consider use of robust certified carbon credit schemes to offset any residual organisation emissions.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduce Carbon Impact of organisation.	Environment	BDC	In preparation for the potential requirement (if approved) to offset, investigation, evaluation and feasibility of various schemes is beginning to be undertaken.  The Council is committed to the Climate Strategy and the use of carbon offsetting shall be considered as a last resort.	March 2030	CC/018	On track 
Increase renewable energy and fuel security for the Council and across the district by developing opportunities for renewable energy schemes with public/private sector partners	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment	BDC	The Council has been investigating opportunities for cross-authority partnership working with Essex County Council and neighbouring authorities through the North Essex Climate Partnership for large-scale renewable energy projects. This is still in the early stages of development.	March 2030	CC/086	On track 




Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Offer advice to parish councils and community groups wishing to invest in solar	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment	District	<p>The Council partnered with Essex County Council to support Witham Town Council's Community Energy event in January 2024.</p> <p>The Council supported White Colne Village Hall (£42,986) and Sailing Millenium Hall (£16,500) with applications for solar panels through the Rural Prosperity Fund, although funding and contracting will fall in 2024-25. Other village hall improvements have been received and will be supported to upgrade their facilities.</p> <p>Early work was completed for the Community Infrastructure Grant which was launched on 1st March 2024 (ES/23/007/C)</p>	March 2030	CC/087	On track 
Investigate introducing solar canopies across the car park at The Plaza.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment	BDC	<p>A feasibility study for the introduction of a solar canopy was completed. Following a successful bid to the Sport England Swimming Pool Fund for a solar canopy at Witham Leisure Centre's car park, this project shall be pursued instead of a solar canopy at The Plaza. The solar canopy at Witham Leisure Centre shall offer a larger array and thus generate a higher level of renewable energy for the Council.</p>	March 2030	CC/088	Action complete 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Improve energy efficiency of existing housing stock</b>							
Continue to work with partners to address the complex challenge of fuel poverty through targeted campaigns and signposting to grant funding and areas of support	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> People in fuel poverty have access to affordable, low carbon warmth. Improved energy efficiency in homes and reduced costs for residents. Reduction in CO2 emissions	Environment	District	<p>The Council is working with various partners across the Cost of Living Partnership to address matters of fuel poverty. The Council have allocated £1m to support the Cost of Living response. A variety of initiatives are outlined as specific projects (CC/080 CC/081 CC/082 and CC/085) and these have been promoted across media channels and through the Don't Wait for Winter booklet which continues to be circulated at community events and is available at various locations for collection.</p> <p>The revised Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) grant funding allocation has been reduced to £2.466m and has now been launched, accompanied by promotion of the scheme across media channels. Advice and signposting were given via media channels on energy saving with a link to cost savings and a full page article on the link with carbon emissions and cost savings was published in the Within Reach Magazine.</p> <p>The Green Doctor Service has received two further years of funding (until March 2026) and this has been widely promoted across media channels.</p> <p>The Don't Wait for Winter and Ease the Squeeze booklets continue to be circulated at community events and is available at various locations for collection.</p>	March 2030	CC/019	On track 
Continue with campaigns providing information to residents on saving energy measures to help reduce emissions, including promotion of retrofit schemes for homeowners	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> District emissions reduced. Campaigns successfully delivered. Increase in residents sign posted to grants.	Environment	District	Advice and signposting for energy saving measures have been promoted throughout the year. Individual measures are outlined in CC/080 CC/081 CC/082 and CC/085.	March 2030	CC/020	On track 








## Built Environment




Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Reduce the carbon impact and improve biodiversity of new developments							
Review and evaluate the potential of an offset fund (106 agreements) or allowable solutions mechanism for developers to pay into when a certain high level of energy efficiency of buildings is not able to be met in the development and use this money for carbon saving projects	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduced CO2 impact from new developments	Environment / Planning	BDC	The Council are currently focusing on ensuring developers are meeting their renewables and carbon targets onsite.	March 2030	CC/028	On track 
Introduce the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain Legislation (for major applications Nov 23; for minor applications by Apr 24)	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b> Increase biodiversity. Decrease the impact of construction on local nature sites.	Planning	District	<p>The mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation was delayed by central government and was introduced to larger sites in February 2024. It will be implemented on smaller sites in April 2024.</p> <p>The Council are part of an Essex-wide BNG Working Group and officers have undertaken work to incorporate the new BNG requirements within planning procedures.</p> <p>Initial draft planning guidance was approved by the Local Plan Committee on 2nd November 2023.</p> <p>Four sites within the district are working towards being registered on the national offsite register to provide BNG credits.</p>	March 2025	CC/101	Action complete 





Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Reduce household water consumption and maximise installation of sustainable drainage systems, water reuse and grey water harvesting technologies</b>							
Work with ECC to ensure that all new development sites have sufficient "green/blue" infrastructure to mitigate flooding through the Sustainable Urban Drainage System Strategies submitted at Planning	<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>  Reduced risk of flooding in new developments.	Planning	District	The Local Plan policies were scrutinised by inspectors to ensure the required amounts of green and blue infrastructure. Inspectors considered these policies sufficient and these are being applied in new developments	March 2026	CC/029	Action complete 
<b>Reduce energy use in existing households by retrofitting energy efficiency measures</b>							
Work with registered housing providers and registered landlords to progressively increase the energy efficiency of social housing stock	<b>Carbon Reducer</b>  Reduces CO2 emissions from homes.  Reduced cost of energy for residents.	Environment	District	On 20th November 2023, a Healthy Winter Housing session took place chaired by Strategic Housing. All Registered Providers were invited to attend. The agenda covered sharing best practices on supporting residents during winter months when facing economic challenges and offering advice and support to collaborate and the align climate strategies, with special emphasis on discussing biodiversity and climate action plans. Support for winter leaflets were shared with the group.	March 2030	CC/031	On track 
Deliver the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 Scheme in off gas areas to improve energy efficiency	<b>Carbon Reducer</b>  Reduction in CO2 emissions  Reduced cost of energy consumption	Environment/ / Marketing & Communications	District	<p>The HUG2 scheme has now launched and will run until March 2025 with an allocated budget of £2.66m for energy efficiency works. 900 targeted letters have been sent to eligible residents in off-gas areas. The original benchmark for eligibility was for households with a maximum household income of £31,000 and this has now been increased to £36,000.</p> <p>Referrals are actively being sent through to the Managing Agent Warmworks. 41 Applications have been made on the portal, since the launch of the scheme.</p>	March 2027	CC/079	On track 






Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Promote The Energy Company Obligation Scheme (ECO4) and ECO Flex scheme offering energy efficiency measures	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment	District	The Council submitted a Statement of Intent for the ECO Flex scheme for approval by OFGEM. The scheme is open to residents living in energy inefficient properties, with EPC ratings of D or below, living on a low income and/or vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home. Funding is for a variety of measures including insulation or heating improvements. The Council is exploring a partnership with Essex County Council working with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to deliver the scheme across Essex.	March 2030	CC/080	On track 
Work in partnership with iChoosr to deliver the Essex Energy Switching Scheme by holding auctions	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment	District	<p>The Energy Switching Scheme has been promoted through social media channels and other publications. Two auctions took place in 2023. The summer auction in June received 1,320 registrations and the winter auction in October received 1,002 registrations. Due to the continuing volatility and price fluctuations in the global energy market, iChoosr did not hold an auction in autumn 2023. Unfortunately, energy suppliers could not offer any fixed tariffs.</p> <p>A spring energy switch auction launched on 9th January 2024. Data by 8th February shows that there were 999 registrations for the January's Energy Switch with 49 accepted so far. Although the savings for residents have been quite low, at approximately £50 saving on annual energy bills, this does still offer residents reassurance to know their energy tariff is fixed and priced below the OFGEM Price Cap during this ongoing Cost of Living Crisis.</p>	March 2030	CC/081	On track 
In partnership with Groundworks, deliver the extended Green Doctor Service, advising residents on energy efficiency	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment/ / Marketing & Communications	District	<p>The Council has secured funding through Groundwork for the delivery of the Green Doctor Service for a further two years. 124 measures have been provided in 2023-24.</p> <p>The support includes draught proofing, reflective radiator panels, LED light bulbs, hot water bottles and water saving devices. Support with dealing with issues with utility companies and advice on using heating control effectively.</p>	March 2025	CC/082	On track 




Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Deliver Solar Together scheme to support the installation of solar energy in residential and business premises	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions. Reduced cost of energy consumption.	Environment/ / Marketing & Communications	District	<p>The Solar Together scheme has been widely promoted across media channels in partnership with Essex County Council as funding applications have been active. The Council continues to look for case studies for successful applicants to support further engagement with the scheme.</p> <p>Braintree district had 769 registrations (723 Solar Panels and 46 battery storage). As of 2nd May, there were 119 acceptances for solar and 10 for battery storage.</p>	March 2025	CC/085	On track 
Support the Community with grants from community infrastructure projects to reduce carbon emissions funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduces CO2 emissions from community buildings. Reduced cost of energy for community groups.	Environment	District	<p>The Community Infrastructure Grant was launched on 1st March 2024. The grant has been promoted through the regular Supporting Communities webinar both pre and post launch and emails have been sent to every town and parish council to advise of the launch and offer additional support as possible. The grant has also been promoted through various media channels including the town and parish council e-newsletter and the environmental e-newsletter to target other community groups.</p>	March 2027	CC/091 now ES/23/ 007/C	On track 



Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Grow electric vehicle network and infrastructure areas</b>							
Continue to research and evaluate ultra-low emission alternatives for the Council's fleet of vehicles	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Identify opportunities to reduce the impact of the Council's impact on emissions	Operations	BDC	<p>On 18 July 2024, Management Board approved progression to Invitation to Tender for 34 vehicles in the 2023/24 Vehicle Replacement programme and infrastructure works to accommodate the first tranche of electric vehicles.</p> <p>The Council have scheduled the replacement of 14 current vehicles which are due for replacement with replacement electric vehicles which are due for delivery in September 2024.</p> <p>An analysis of the Council's fleet is under way which reflects the carbon emissions of each vehicle and the cost uplift for replacing these with vehicles not powered by diesel or petrol.</p>	March 2026	OP/20/005	On track 
Support ECC to continue to build up the on-street charging infrastructure across our District for electric vehicles	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Improved infrastructure and accessibility for electric vehicle charging	Environment	District	<p>The Council submitted six potential sites for on street charging through Essex County Council's LEVI funding. Essex County Council have provisionally identified Rickstones Road in Witham and Church Street in Coggeshall as sites for on-street electric vehicle charging points.</p> <p>The Council supported ECC with parish council consultations.</p>	March 2026	CC/033	On track 
Install electric rapid charging points in the Council's car parks and continue to install additional chargers in BDC assets	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Improved infrastructure and accessibility for electric vehicle charging	Environment	BDC	The contract with BP Pulse has been drafted and is awaiting legal sign off for replacing current 22kw charging points for 50kw charging points.	March 2027	CC/092	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Complete a feasibility study for installing rapid EV charging points in all the taxi ranks in the district	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Improved infrastructure and accessibility for electric vehicle charging	Environment	District	The feasibility study for rapid electric vehicle charging points at the bus park to support taxi charging at the rank on Manor Street has been completed.  The Council are currently in discussion with ECC to take forward a joint pilot project.	March 2025	CC/093	Action complete 
Explore the opportunities around an EV salary sacrifice leasing scheme for staff.	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Improved infrastructure and accessibility for electric vehicles	Human Resources	BDC	It has been agreed that Epping, Colchester and Braintree will work together and they have identified a provider of an EV salary sacrifice scheme. There have been some queries raised regarding processing the scheme which are being responded to by the provider.	March 2025	CC/094	On track 
Investigate working in partnership with DigiGo to improve EV charging infrastructure for the electric bus network	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Improved infrastructure and accessibility for electric vehicle charging	Environment	District	The Council's Asset Management Team are continuing to explore this opportunity with DigiGo.	March 2025	CC/095	On track 
Investigate an e-scooter scheme	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions Improvement in air quality	Economic Development	District	The Council held an Inception Meeting where zone area and parking points were agreed. The Council undertook Stakeholder engagement.  The scheme was launched on 29th October 2023 and the trial is confirmed until May 2024.  Regular meetings with TIER and ECC are taking place to discuss any initial issues and review statistics.	March 2025	CC/100	Action complete 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Increase cycling and walking in the District</b>							
Continue to work with LiveWell partners to encourage people to get active and walk more	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase active travel Reduce car journeys Reduce CO2 emissions from travel	Housing & Communities	District	<p>Active Braintree Strategic Group takes place every month to discuss funding opportunities and partnership events and actions. The second Livewell Strategy Stakeholder Event took place on the 29th February, which engaged with physical activity partners around the refresh of the LiveWell strategy.</p> <p>The Council receive reports for Finding Your Feet at the beginning of each month which details new Active Rewards referrals.</p> <p>Fusion also delivers many programmes to encourage physical activity, including Witham Sporting Memories, Active Rewards and Safer Streets Autumn Activity Programme.</p>	March 2030	CC/035	On track 
Produce an LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) for Witham and environs	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase active travel Reduce car journeys Reduce CO2 emissions from travel	Economic Development	District	<p>The consultancy firm WSP was procured. The Council held an Inception Meeting and gathering of data exercise. A Draft Plan for Cycling and Walking Network Plans has been drafted and stakeholder engagement has been undertaken. There has been a route auditing exercise undertaken by WSP with route prioritisation. The consultation has launched.</p>	March 2025	ED/23/005/C	On track 
Engage with ECC on Braintree LCWIPs (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase active travel Reduce car journeys Reduce CO2 emissions from travel	Economic Development	District	<p>An inception meeting was held and data has been gathered for the project which included stakeholder engagement and consultation.</p> <p>The contractors WSP have completed route auditing and a route prioritisation exercise.</p> <p>A draft for Cycling and Walking Network Plans has been created.</p> <p>The Council shall now review the responses of the consultation, following which a report and amendments will be undertaken. The Council will then have the opportunity to adopt the Braintree LCWIP.</p>	March 2025	CC/097	On track 






Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Partner with ECC on the proposal for a County wide LCWIPs (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan)	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase active travel Reduce car journeys Reduce CO2 emissions from travel	Economic Development	District	Initial Stakeholder engagement to gather information on potential clusters for the County Wide LCWIP took place in November and December 2023.  Next steps will be to collate information and produce a network for consultation. Consultation is expected to be in Summer 2024.	March 2025	CC/098	On track 
<b>Reduce energy use in existing households by retrofitting energy efficiency measures</b>							
Continue with campaigns to reduce engine idling targeting specific high traffic areas	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase active travel Reduce car journeys Reduce CO2 emissions from travel	Marketing & Communications	District	A digital toolkit for schools has been created in preparation for a planned launch to schools on 20th May (Clean Air Day), when it will go live on the Council's website.  A decision has been taken to make this a pledge-based project, using number of pledges received to measure impact.  The Council have linked with Essex County Council's Sustainable Transport team and tied in their offer of support to schools in creating Green Travel Plans and resources shall be added for this alongside the digital anti-idling toolkit on The Council's website.	March 2030	CC/038	On track 
Work with Essex County Council to improve the quality and availability of low carbon public transport	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Increase in use of more sustainable travel options Reduces CO2 emissions from public transport	Environment	District	The Council are exploring the opportunity of discounted green train fares with Trainline.  The Council continues to support Essex County Council's DigiGo on-demand electric minibus service which is housed at The Plaza in Great Notley.	March 2026	CC/041	Action complete 




Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Review the Council's Driver and Vehicle Standards and Policies to create a greener fleet of taxis in the District	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Reduction in CO2 emissions from taxi fleet and pollution Reduction in fuel costs from taxi fleet	Environment	District	<p>A Committee report was presented on 25th January which had an option to issue 8 taxi licences and an option to allocate 4 to Electric vehicles. This was agreed at the committee meeting and a set of questions have been written for distribution to the trade in order to understand the level of interest in electric vehicles.</p> <p>Investigations are underway for rapid charging points at or near taxi ranks. The 4 charging points at the White Horse Lane Car park, Witham and 4 at Station Approach car park, Braintree, which are close by to the ranks, have been identified as a potential site for the trade to use at present.</p>	March 2026	CC/041	On track 
Engage with staff to support the Staff Green Travel Plan	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase active travel Reduce car journeys Reduce CO2 emissions from travel	Environment	BDC	The work undertaken for this project has now been used as the basis of an article for the Business Rates booklet due to be published in spring 2024. The information shared on the Climate Change internal communication site has been used and adapted to support businesses across the district with creating their own Green Travel Plans as well as providing general support on active travel to their staff.	March 2025	CC/099	On track 




# Business and the Green Economy


Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Developing the Green Economy</b>							
Work with Essex County Council and other service providers to identify opportunities to develop low carbon skills, education, training and employment opportunities and support ECC Centre of Excellence.	<p><b>Developing the Green Economy</b></p> <p>Increase employability of our residents in the green economy and advanced manufacturing to help improve the productivity in the production of goods and services that support the sustainable agenda</p> <p>Attract new business in the green economy and encourage green sector companies to cluster in the North Essex local economy</p> <p>Increase overall awareness of climate change issues and how to tackle them</p>	Economic Development	BDC	Through UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding, the Council has been able to organise a Green Business Expo to be hosted on 20th June, which will include attendance and information provided by local suppliers including in some cases funding attached to implement innovation within businesses to move them towards Net Zero, and green skills training across the college curriculums in vocational areas including add-ons for specific industries for eg. repair and maintenance of electric cars and ground source heat pumps. In addition, Essex County Council (ECC) will be present to promote the various initiatives that Braintree district businesses can benefit from, some of which is funded to help them move towards Net Zero and ACL will have information on their funded Retrofit training and other green skills available to businesses. A tender is also out, funded by UKSPF for a Green Skills delivery training programme, to skill up those unemployed and upskill and retrain those already in employment to be able to access job roles requiring green skills.	March 2026	ED/21/009/C	Action complete ✓



Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Work with partners to maximise the impact that that I-Construct brings to the construction sector and its supply chain, championing modern design and construction methods	<b>Developing the Green Economy</b> Reduced carbon from construction process and new developments Increased sustainability in design of new buildings Develop our green economy	Planning / Economic Development	BDC	The I-Construct project has now come to an end. HGP have requested an extension to stay at the I-Construct building whilst the programme is finalised. HGP are producing a summary of outcomes report and will share this in due course.	March 2030	ED/21/009C	Action complete 
Work with landowners, DEFRA and ECC to encourage sustainable land stewardship practices on land across the District, including rewilding and tree planting.	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b> Increase awareness and consideration of Climate Change issues for those developing Neighbourhood Plans	Environment	District	As a supporting authority to Essex County Council, the Council has attended the regular Local Nature Recovery Strategy meetings hosted by Essex County Council and provided information and feedback to ECC towards the draft strategy. The Council is due to meet with Essex County Council in Quarter 1 2024-25 to discuss the pre-public consultation for this. The Council have supported ECC with promoting webinars for communities, farmers and landowners including a workshop and farm walks.	March 2030	CC/045	On track 
<b>Encourage businesses to reduce energy use</b>							
Continue to encourage businesses to switch to ECO heating and reduce energy use	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Increase in the number of referrals to support and take up of funding. Reduction in energy use	Economic Growth / Environment	District	The regular Green Business feature has covered many elements of energy saving to date. In February, the Council launched the Lean2Green decarbonisation business support package which has been funded by Essex County Council and offers initial carbon reduction advice to up to 20 businesses in the district. The scheme has been promoted through the Council's own communication channels and there has also been wider coverage from external press.	March 2030	CC/048	On track 



Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Continue to promote carbon footprint tools to businesses	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Improvements identified and implemented by businesses to reduce carbon impact	Economic Development / Environment	District	<p>Early scoping work has begun to the Council's new galaxy website for Climate Change and opportunities for signposting businesses to carbon foot printing tools (as well as other Climate related tools) has been identified as useful content.</p> <p>The Business e-newsletter issued to its 5,080 subscribers / included two green stories: the Essex Green skills summit and a carbon cutting app story.</p> <p>The Council now signpost businesses to the Essex County Council Carbon Cutting application which is undertaking further development for business use into the year ahead.</p>	March 2030	CC/049	On track 
Provide support to businesses across the District on the development and implementation of green travel plans	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Increase in number of businesses implementing a green travel plan  Reduction in CO2 emissions from travel	Economic Development	District	<p>A two-page article on Staff Green Travel was published in the Business Rates newsletter in spring 2024. The article promotes alternatives to vehicle transport to businesses as well as providing links through to Essex County Council's Transport Team for writing a Green Travel Plan.</p> <p>The Council signposts businesses to Essex County Council's Green Travel Team as requests are received.</p>	March 2030	CC/050	On track 
Introduce a Climate Change/Green Environmental Accreditation Scheme or Business Award scheme to recognise and showcase initiatives that can be adopted as best practice and to encourage businesses to become carbon neutral.	<b>Developing the Green Economy</b>  Increase awareness of opportunities to become carbon neutral  Increased sharing and recognition of best practice across businesses	Economic Growth / Environment	District	<p>The Council has been chosen to pilot Essex County Council's Green Business Accreditation Scheme "Great Start". Many businesses have been identified to present to ECC for accreditation and the Council have offered our video case studies and other information ready to support their launch.</p> <p>The Council plan to use the launch of this scheme as an opportunity to support wider communications and information sharing to businesses in the district wishing to improve sustainability or to wider promote their current achievements.</p>	March 2026	CC/051	On track 







Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Encourage businesses to build resilience</b>							
Collaborate with the voluntary sector and business sector across Essex to share learning, data, best practice and, to look at joint initiatives to tackle climate change	<p><b>Developing the Green Economy</b></p> <p>Successfully sharing knowledge and resources to increase our opportunities to collaborate for grant funding</p> <p>Reduction in carbon impact of businesses and voluntary sector organisations</p>	Economic Development	BDC	<p>As part of Essex County Council's Great Start project which the Council is piloting, businesses shall be signposted to the program of learning and development for businesses wishing to increase their sustainable practices. The project shall also highlight excellence in Braintree business and these businesses shall be promoted and awarded a kite mark by ECC for their environmental practices in order to not only recognise their achievements but to inspire and support others.</p> <p>The Council plan to host a Green Business Expo in June 2024 which shall showcase sustainable best practice in the district and invite local businesses to learn more about sustainability and Climate Change.</p> <p>The Council have been awarded up to twenty business places for the Lean2Green business support package funded through Essex County Council. The project shall support businesses to create a decarbonisation plan.</p> <p>The Council supported Essex County Council with their new Climate Change Business Pack which is due to launch in May 2024.</p>	March 2030	CC/052	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Improve biodiversity and green spaces</b>							
Continue to deliver campaigns to support a reduction in littering and fly-tipping	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b> Reduction in fly-tips Reduction in littering Cleaner District	Operations / Marketing & Communications	District	<p>The Council has been appealing to members of the public through the campaign SEE-IT REPORT-IT to encourage them to send in dash-cam footage, pictures or any information they can share for both fly tipping and car littering to help our investigations catch the culprits.</p> <p>The use of digital communications channels including social media and e-newsletters as well as media releases are being used to inform the public of this call to action. The Council also promoted a successful prosecution for fly tipping in order to deter others, whereby a £8,000 fine was incurred.</p> <p>BBC Essex featured a live interview with Cllr. Tom Cunningham on Sadie's breakfast show helped raise awareness of the issues of fly-tipping across Essex and how local authorities are tackling offences.</p> <p>An increase in fines for fly tipping has been approved by Cabinet as of Monday 5 February. A press release and digital coms via the Council's newsletters have been released to inform public of increase in fines for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). The FPN for littering is now £200 (upon conviction in court a fine of up to £2,500); the FPN for fly tipping is now £1000 (upon conviction in court is an unlimited fine and/or a custodial sentence of up to 5 years) and the FPN for householder duty of care (giving waste to an unlicensed waste carrier) is now £600 (upon conviction in court is an unlimited fine).</p>	March 2030	CC/053	On track 



Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Plant wildflower areas across the District, including mixture of ornamental and native wildflowers and areas which are left with minimal maintenance to increase bio-diversity.	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b>  Increase biodiversity  Improve attractiveness of District	Operations	District	In winter 2023/24 to spring 2024/25, the Council planted 370 native species whips on open space in Johnson Close and Brendon Drive, Halstead. Some rewilding areas were reinstated to the previous maintenance regime at the request of ward members/parish councils and with approval of the portfolio holder. Replacement of summer / winter bedding with sustainable planting has been completed in all areas (Braintree / Witham / Halstead).	December 2025	CC/056	On track 
Work with ECC and Housing Associations to increase biodiversity by reviewing maintenance regimes, refine grass cutting, consider more sustainable planting schemes consistent with the highest biodiversity standards and promote rewilding/ naturalisation of areas.	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b>  Increase biodiversity  Improve attractiveness of District	Environment	District	Two projects have been funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund for community gardens on land owned and managed by Registered Social Landlords.  Increased co-operation with RSLs regarding increasing biodiversity is now part of the business as usual of the Registered Social Landlord forum.	March 2027	CC/058	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Explore opportunities to use council owned land to develop community orchards and community gardens (to grow veg or fruit)	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b> Increase biodiversity Improve attractiveness of District Increase opportunities for communities to grow fruit and veg Increase community engagement in enhancement of local areas	Environment	BDC	The Council conducted a Tree Canopy Survey which identified all trees of 3 metres or higher as well as areas of low and higher tree cover.  The Tree Canopy Survey shall support the update of the current Council Tree Strategy (CC/102 CC/103).	March 2026	CC/059	Action complete 
Deliver grants to community organisations to bring underused spaces back into beneficial use to include community gardens and orchards, funded through Shared Prosperity Funding	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b> Increase biodiversity Improve attractiveness of District Increase opportunities for communities to grow fruit and veg Increase community engagement in enhancement of local areas	Housing & Communities	District	Through the Central Government Shared Prosperity Fund, the Council successfully awarded £35,790 to 14 community projects to bring underused gardens/green spaces in to use for the benefit of the wider community. Increasing access to green spaces, volunteering opportunities, trees planted, water resource management. Additional benefits include tackling social isolation, meeting places and producing fruit and vegetable for sale in the local community shop.  This is in addition to three projects which were funded in 2022-23.	March 2027	CS/23/006/K	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
With the support of ECC, produce soil carbon and biodiversity potential maps for the district	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b> Increase soil quality Increase carbon sequestration Increase richer habitat creation	Planning & Environment	District	This work is part of Essex County Council's baseline mapping for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (CC/105) and it is hoped that this information shall be made available in due course.	March 2027	CC/104	On track 
As a supporting authority, support Essex County Council with the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b> Increase biodiversity Increase richer habitats Improve attractiveness of District	Planning	District	<p>Officers have attended the regular, monthly Local Nature Recovery Strategy meetings hosted by Essex County Council.</p> <p>As a Supporting Authority, the Council shall have a one to one meeting with ECC in May 2024 to discuss the pre-public consultation for the LNRS Strategy. There shall be a countywide virtual Members briefing on the week beginning 10th June.</p> <p>A Staff Eco Group meeting has been scheduled for an Officer from Essex County Council to present the draft LNRS to staff in May 2024 in order for officers to understand the implications and obligations of the Council in the strategy's delivery.</p>	March 2027	CC/105	On track 
<b>Increase tree and shrub planting</b>							
Use the findings of the tree canopy survey to inform the future Tree Strategy	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b> Increase tree canopy cover Increase carbon sequestration Improve attractiveness of District	Planning	District	The Landscape Services Team have been working on a full update to the tree stock which the Council owns and manages to understand the health of the trees. As this is completed, it shall form part of the basis of an updated Tree Strategy which shall also take the Tree Canopy Survey as a key guidance document for the project.	March 2027	CC/102	On track 



Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Use the findings of the tree canopy survey to 1) inform tree planting projects 2) assist ECC with their sustainable stewardship in the Climate Focus Area 3) protect existing tree canopy 4) use the baseline data to support partnership groups such as water companies and the North Essex Farm Cluster with their environmental stewardship projects	<b>Biodiversity increaser</b>  Increase tree canopy cover  Increase carbon sequestration  Improve attractiveness of District  Increase partnership opportunities	Planning	District	The Tree Canopy Survey recommendations have been used to inform the tree planting project completed at Bradford Meadows through the Essex Forest Initiative. The trees will form an addition to an already established flood attenuation basin and can soak up excess water during periods of extreme rainfall. The tree species are three European Hornbeams, three European Hop-Hornbeams, two European Nettles and two Red Birch trees, chosen because of their resilience to climate change and adverse weather.	March 2027	CC/103	On track 









Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Improve water quality, flood resilience and habitat</b>							
Work with the Environment Agency/Anglia/Essex Suffolk on the management of watercourses to enhance their flow and storage capacity and deliver wider biodiversity benefits	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b>  Improve water quality  Improve biodiversity  Reduce flooding	Environment	District	<p>The Council are now active members of the Essex Rivers Hub group and attend regular meetings alongside partners. The Council supported the Essex &amp; Suffolk Rivers Hub with a supporting statement towards a “Big Give” application which they have successfully achieved. Essex &amp; Suffolk Rivers Trust have advised that they can be the umbrella organisation moving forwards for liaison between BDC and relevant partners in specific project and funding opportunities.</p> <p>The Council are liaising with The Environment Agency regarding erosion near Straits Mill Bridge (off Convent Lane) in Braintree. Several years ago, we did a project with Essex Wildlife Trust to restore the riverbank in this and several other areas that had suffered with erosion with dogs entering the river. A local volunteering group have reached out to BDC to request support with the site. BDC are scheduling a meeting with The EA in early 2024 to discuss options for dealing with the erosion.</p> <p>BDC supported the Essex &amp; Suffolk Rivers Hub with a supporting statement towards a “Big Give” application which they have successfully achieved. Essex &amp; Suffolk Rivers Trust have advised that they can be the umbrella organisation moving forwards for liaison between BDC and relevant partners in specific project and funding opportunities.</p>	March 2026	CC/063	On track 
Work with Partners to support raising the profile of maintenance / caring for waterways bisecting the district with residents	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b>  Species protection  Access to baseline data to develop improved water quality  Improved public engagement for waterway	Environment Marketing & Comms	District	<p>The Council has attended regular meetings of the Essex Rivers Hub with partners which include Essex County Council, Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Essex &amp; Suffolk Water and the North Essex Farm Cluster.</p> <p>The meetings have worked to develop citizen science projects and river restoration projects are scheduled to be delivered in 2024-25.</p>	March 2030	CC/106	On track 





# Adapting to Climate Change


Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Support communities to improve resilience</b>							
Continue to provide advice for residents on how to reduce health risks during severe weather events such as heatwaves/ extreme cold	<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>  Increased accessible information available to residents on health risks from climate change  Increased resilience of communities to climate change	Environment	District	The district experienced the effects of major storms over the autumn / winter of 2023-24: Storm Babet, Storm Ciaran, Storm Isha and Storm Jocelyn. The effects of these included flooding, thunderstorms and heavy winds. Signposting was made to businesses and residents through the Emergency Planning E-newsletter as well as across media channels and on the Council's website.  Throughout the summer of 2023, the Beat the Heat campaign was active, giving resilience advice for heatwaves across various media channels and on the Council's website.	March 2030	CC/064	On track 
Work with Town and Parish Councils to develop their emergency plans, ensuring the plans reflect the changing risks of their communities	<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>  Increase in number of Parish and Town Council with Emergency plans developed.  Successful collaboration on climate emergency related areas of work  Increased resilience to climate change impacts in our communities	Environment	District	The Council continues to work with parishes and the wider community in developing societal resilience in line with Central Government guidance.  34 of the 52 town and parish councils have completed and submitted their emergency plans to the Council.	March 2030	CC/065	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Support communities to improve resilience</b>							
Support registered social landlords in developing a Climate Strategy and delivering Climate Action Plans	<b>Carbon Reducer</b> Increase opportunities for climate change actions across the district	Environment	District	On 20th November 2023, a Healthy Winter Housing session took place chaired by Strategic Housing. All Registered Providers were invited to attend, the agenda covered sharing best practices on supporting residents during winter months when facing economic challenges and offering advice and support to collaborate and the align climate strategies, with special emphasis on discussing biodiversity and climate action plans. Support for winter leaflets were shared with the group.	March 2027	CC/089	On track 
Work with town and parish councils to advise and support with advising on adapting to Climate Change; declaring a Climate Emergency and writing a Climate Change Action Plan	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase opportunities for climate change actions across the district	Environment	BDC	The Council continues to engage with town and parish councils both on a one to one basis and through regular wider meetings such as the Supporting Communities webinar.  The Council have engaged with every town and parish council to advise of both the Community Infrastructure Grant and the offering by Essex County Council for free, pre-used LED streetlight heads. This has resulted in ongoing dialogue and support with many councils.  The Council has supported Halstead Town Council and Witham Town Council with individual projects, including the Halstead Town Council Community Energy event in January 2024.	March 2030	CC/109	On track 
Promote and celebrate actions taken by residents, organisations and businesses in addressing Climate Change	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b> Increase opportunities for climate change actions across the district	Marketing & Communications	District	The Environment Newsletter has been published 2-3 times a month as an average and engagement is on an upward trend. In April 2023, the newsletter has 6,668 subscribers (51% open rate) and by February 2024, the newsletter had 7,748 subscribers (57% open rate).  Climate Change case studies and stories have been published across all available media channels including Contact Magazine, wider electronic newsletters and the Business Rates magazine as well as on the Climate Change pages of the Council's website.  A full report on the stories shared is recorded in a monthly Climate Change Engagement and Communications report and stories have included many businesses, schools, residents and community groups.	March 2030	MC/23/003/C	On track 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Work with the members of the new Youth Panel to give a platform for young people in the district on Climate Change matters	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Increase opportunities for climate change actions across the district	Housing & Communities	District	<p>There have been numerous attempts to work with schools across the district to establish a youth panel, however it became apparent that there was already a multi schools council in place which has been operating for several years. Schools we engaged with felt that they did not have the capacity to resource another panel and it was therefore decided that we would utilise the existing multi schools council as the forum for us as a council to engage with.</p> <p>The Council are currently working with them to develop a framework as to how this will operate. We will also continue to work with schools on specific projects including an Eco Event in April 2024.</p>	March 2025	CC/108	Action complete 
<b>Improve flood alleviation for communities that flood</b>							
Work with Essex County Council and other partners to manage climate change-related flood risks and mitigate the number of homes and businesses across the District that are exposed to the risk of flooding	<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>  Reduction in flood risk  Increased resilience in communities to impacts of climate change	Environment	District	<p>Work continues with partners on the management of watercourses across the district, including continued discussions with Essex &amp; Suffolk Rivers Trust and the Essex Rivers Hub.</p> <p>Environment Agency advice is that opening up rivers for the purposes of flood mitigation is no longer the main option and partners are investigating working on watercourse management which shall explore nature based solutions to flood mitigation.</p> <p>Essex County Council are doing extensive work on this and their Water Strategy was published in March 2024 to coincide with their Climate Summit focused on water management.</p>	March 2030	CC/066	On track 
Lobby Government to increase the funding available for flood risk management to meet the growing need for action especially around surface water flooding	<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>  Reduction in flood risk  Increased resilience in communities to impacts of climate change	Environment	District	Government funding of the Environment Agency for flood defence has reduced. Ongoing lobbying for EA infrastructure project funding has become business as usual via the Essex Flood Partnership	March 2030	CC/067	Action complete 

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
Work with partners to open up main rivers and create wetlands, natural flood defences and urban drainage, as supported by the Local Plan and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document	<b>Biodiversity Increaser</b>  Improve water quality Improve biodiversity Reduce flooding	Planning	District	<p>Work continues with partners on the management of watercourses across the district, including continued discussions with Essex &amp; Suffolk Rivers Trust.</p> <p>Environment Agency advice is that opening up rivers for the purposes of flood mitigation is no longer the main option and thus this project is no longer suitable. Further projects within the Climate Action Plan are investigating working with partners on watercourse management which shall explore nature based solutions to flood mitigation.</p> <p>Essex County Council are doing extensive work on this and their Water Strategy was published in March 2024 to coincide with their Climate Summit focused on water management.</p>	March 2030	CC/068	On track 
<b>Prevent the impacts of climate change disproportionately harming the most vulnerable</b>							
Monitor and seek to mitigate emerging risks and their impact on vulnerable people in the community with ERF partners	<b>Climate Effect Mitigation</b>  Increased resilience of communities to climate change impacts	Environment	District	This is monitored monthly basis by the ERF Risk and Planning Group of which the Council is an active member.	March 2030	CC/073	On track 

# Delivery and Monitoring

Action	Outcome	Lead Service	BDC or District	Progress Made	Projected Completion Date	Internal Project Code	Status
<b>Support communities to improve resilience</b>							
Ensure relevant internal strategies and policy documents are reviewed and amended to embed the work of the Council in its commitment to tackling climate change	<b>Climate Behaviour Change Influencer</b>  Increase opportunities for climate change actions across The Council  All strategies and policies are reviewed and updated to take climate change impacts into account	Environment	BDC	The Council continue to develop and adapt internal policy documents to incorporate Climate Change more fully. In 2023-24, this included an update to Service Area Business Plans to reflect projects which align to The Council's Climate Strategy. This work continues.	March 2026		On track 



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