

NET ZERO 2030 UPDATE - OCTOBER 2021

Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 12 October 2021

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For Information

Also considered by:

N/A

Key Decision: No

This reports support the Key Aim of The Council's commitment to Net Zero 2030.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer(s): Helen French, Ext. 7357; Margaret Carr, Ext. 7341; Naiomi Sargant, Ext. 7122

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

To note this update report for information.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council has committed to working towards achieving Net Zero emissions by 2030 on Council assets and services.
- 2 It has also been agreed that the Council will be a "community leader" and encourage low carbon measures across the District through education, best practice, incentives, policy and opportunities. This includes working collaboratively with Kent County Council (KCC), Parish and Town Councils, Local Interest Groups and the Local Government Association.

Net Zero 2030 Action Progress Update

- 3 Actions for 2021-22 were agreed by Cabinet in February 2021. This report provides a mid-year update on progress. Appendix A includes a short commentary on each of the actions and this report provides a more detailed summary of a selection of the ongoing projects for information.
- 4 We have made good progress on achieving the Net Zero 2030 actions. The majority of actions will remain ongoing until 2030, with steps towards achieving net zero carbon emissions.

Net Zero 2030 Communications

- 5 The Council have committed to helping local communities to reduce the carbon emissions of the District. We have been using our various communication channels to help achieve this aim, as set out in Appendix A.
- 6 As part of this we have held a number of events to encourage communities to engage with the Net Zero agenda and to make more environmentally friendly choices at home.
- 7 One of the most important, but also challenging, aspects to reducing carbon emissions is influencing positive behavioural change. Good communication is essential in working with and inspiring communities.

Sevenoaks Wildlife Event - Summer 2021

- 8 Sevenoaks Wildlife Event took place in July/August 2021, in partnership with the North West Kent Countryside Partnership. The event sought to increase residents awareness of local biodiversity and provide engaging DIY activities for families to do at home.
- 9 Together with the North West Kent Countryside Partnership, we created five 'Wildlife at home' videos which were filmed in the Sevenoaks Environmental Park.
- 10 The videos showed families how to encourage wildlife in their gardens. This included bird and butterfly feeders, mini ponds, insect houses and much more. There was also a video about sustainability and reusing household materials in the garden.



- 11 Visit the [Sevenoaks District Council YouTube page](#) to watch all the videos.



135

13 comments 42 shares

- 12 Between 26 July and 13 August, we set up and promoted eco-trails around the District. They took place at Bradbourne Lakes, Farningham Woods, Hollybush Recreation Ground, Oxenhill Shaw and Shoreham Woods and included fun facts and quizzes along the way. The trails were self-guided and encouraged families to enjoy local nature sites.

- 13 We also asked participants to take photographs and tag us in them on Facebook. Anyone who did this was entered into a prize draw to win one of five eco-hampers.
- 14 To promote the trails we had an article in In Shape and several social media posts, one of which was boosted and reached over 7,200 people.

Zero Waste Week - September 2021

- 15 Zero Waste Week took place between 6 and 10 September 2021, and to celebrate we created several social media posts to encourage residents to think about what they waste and what they can do to waste less.
- 16 This included a video of Cllr Fleming talking about what we are doing as a Council to achieve Net Zero 2030 and simple tips for residents.
- 17 In addition, we posted messages about reducing food waste, composting and cutting down on single-use plastics.



- 18 We also wanted to encourage Council staff to think about what they waste. Civil Enforcement Officer, Janine Otto, contacted the Net Zero team as she has created a website about becoming more sustainable.

- 19 She agreed to participate in a video from her allotment in Otford that we sent to all staff. In

the video, she talks about the steps she's taken to be less wasteful and more environmentally friendly.

- 20 We wanted to get staffs ideas about what we can do in the working environment to be less wasteful. To encourage staff, we created a competition where everyone who gave us an idea would be entered into a prize draw to win some eco-goodies.



Air Quality and Net Zero Carbon Emissions

- 21 We have been working closely with Officers from Environmental Health on the development of the new Air Quality Action Plan. This strategic document will seek to improve air quality across the District and within our designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), through the implementation of measures and actions which will reduce pollution or human exposure to pollution.
- 22 The recent Air Quality Technical Review identified vehicle emissions as a key contributor of poor air quality in the district. Transport remains the largest carbon emitting sector in the UK and accounts for 63% of total carbon emissions in Sevenoaks District. By reducing vehicle emissions, we will improve air quality and also reduce carbon emissions from transport.
- 23 As the two are closely aligned, we will continue to work collaboratively to identify and deliver measures to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality including:
 - encouraging sustainable and active travel such as cycling and walking
 - improving the electric vehicle charging network and encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles
 - promoting behavioural change to encourage more efficient travel
 - encouraging the use of public transport as an alternative to private vehicles.

Climate Change Network

- 24 Officers from the council have joined the Kent Climate Change Network. This is a public sector, technical officer group that facilitates collaboration and networking across the county on Net Zero action plans, climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability. Members of the network are climate change and sustainability specialists from Kent County Council, Medway Council, District and Borough Councils, NHS, and blue light services.
- 25 Although the Network has been running since 2009, the recent focus on the urgency to reduce emissions, with many councils declaring a climate emergency and setting out a commitment to become Net Zero within a decade or more, has meant a renewed focus for the Network on how we can work together and share good practice, innovation and ideas.
- 26 The Network has also established sub groups looking at communications and procurement, this latter group looking at how emissions can be calculated and reduced when commissioning goods and services, and has co-ordinated a response to the Governments Environment Audit Committees consultation on the role of local government in reaching Net Zero. The response emphasised the significant influence local authorities have on an areas carbon emissions, their capacity to join activity up holistically and efficiently and called for clear direction or guidance from Government with regards to our role, with clear targets, a consistent methodology to calculate emissions, and a mandatory mechanism to report progress in a way that allows benchmarking

across England. Finally the response called for funding and resources in order to achieve this.

- 27 The Network meets regularly and promotes the exchange of good practice, co-ordination of activity, showcasing ideas and innovations, and providing mutual support.

Engaging with local communities and businesses

- 28 Officers gave a presentation at the Town and Parish Forum in July 2021, setting out the council's ambitions and how communities can reduce their own emissions. A community carbon calculator tool for town and parish areas has been added to the net zero webpages, alongside a carbon footprint calculator for individuals. We encourage communities to use these tools to see how they are currently performing and to help identify areas where improvements can be made.
- 29 Officers were invited to give a presentation at the Sevenoaks Chamber of Commerce Business Show in September 2021. This was an excellent opportunity to engage with local small and medium businesses, to set out what the council is doing and discuss ways that businesses can reduce carbon emissions.

Next Steps

- 30 Officers will continue to make progress to achieve the Net Zero 2030 actions. We will also continue to identify new opportunities and projects to deliver the Net Zero 2030 commitment.
- 31 Regular update reports on the Net Zero 2030 work will be provided for members via the Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee.

Other options Considered and/or rejected

Not Applicable

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The Council have made a commitment to Net Zero 2030.

Key Implications

Financial

Funding for the Net Zero 2030 commitment will be met from existing budgets.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

No legal implications have been identified.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

The Council have committed to Net Zero 2030 and have identified actions to help achieve this goal. We are currently making good progress to achieve the actions within the agreed timescales.

Appendices

Appendix A - Net Zero Actions 2021/22 Progress Update

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services