

## **Council continues to lead from the front on climate change**

Wiltshire Council has provided an update on its committed efforts to tackle the climate emergency locally, with a vast range of projects either in place or in the pipeline to respond to the global issue of our time.

The Wiltshire Climate Strategy was approved in February 2022 and since then the council has published its delivery plans, which set out how the organisation will become carbon neutral by 2030, and the actions it can take either on its own alone or in partnership with others, to lead the transition to a carbon neutral county.

The council's strategy is split into the themes of transport, housing and the built environment, natural environment, energy, green economy waste, and carbon neutral council – with lots of progress made in each:

### **Transport**

- The council has carried out a tender process for provision and replacement of electric vehicle charging points at towns with a population of 10,000 or more.
- It will also be rolling out a grant to support town and parish councils to install electric vehicle charging points in their local area. A well-attended webinar was recently held to provide town and parishes more information.
- To encourage active travel, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are being developed to improve cycling and walking opportunities throughout the county – working closely with town councils.
- To ensure air quality throughout the county can be monitored as effectively as possible, old monitoring stations will be replaced using community infrastructure funding.
- The council has recently completed cycling and walking schemes on Hilperton Road in Trowbridge and on the B3108 Winsley Road to make the routes safer and easier for children to walk or cycle to school. It has also completed traffic-free routes between Hilperton and Melksham via Semington and on Easton Lane between Chippenham and Corsham to encourage more people to leave their cars at home.
- People being encouraged to use public transport – flexible on demand service being developed for the Pewsey Vale area, and concessionary bus passes can be temporarily used all day Monday to Sunday, including bank holidays.

### **Housing and the built environment**

- The council's Housing Energy Efficiency Programme will retrofit 5,000 council homes by 2030, with assessment carried out on the first 800. The aim is to reduce the amount of CO2 by 15,000 tonnes which in the process will make the properties more energy efficient and help save residents money.
- The council has also tendered a three-year contract to find a Modern Method of Construction (MMC) delivery partner. MMC is a process which focuses on off-site construction techniques, such as mass production and factory assembly, as alternatives to traditional building. This project will deliver 1,000 new affordable zero carbon homes.

### **Natural environment**

- The council hosted a Natural Environment Summit for Wiltshire, which brought together key groups and organisations to discuss opportunities to make meaningful long-term improvements to local biodiversity.

- A Wiltshire Community Environmental Toolkit was developed in partnership with Natural England to allow communities to take the lead in defining and restoring biodiversity in their local areas.
- Work took place to trial rewilding and wildflower areas across rural road verges and more urban grassy areas and parklands, to increase biodiversity and improve the natural environment.
- The £27m Salisbury River Park transformational scheme aims to reduce flood risk to over 350 homes and businesses in Salisbury. It will also create 2 hectares of enhanced riverside habitat for the benefit of wildlife and more than 600 trees will be planted.

## Energy

- To give residents the opportunity to bulk-bid for solar panel technology to help drive down the price, the council worked with Swindon Borough Council and iChoosr to offer the Solar Together Wiltshire scheme. More than 1,000 residents have paid a deposit to install solar photovoltaic panels and/or battery storage.

## Green economy

- The council worked with John of Gaunt School in Trowbridge to bring climate science education and green jobs to life for the next generation through a project called “Embedding Careers into the Maths Curriculum”.
- A draft Green Skills Action plan for Wiltshire and Swindon is being developed and aims to ensure demand for upskilling existing employees in sustainable practices is supported by suitable opportunities.

## Waste

- The introduction of a new collections rounds for household residual waste has resulted in a more energy efficient service and less emissions – a review will take place later in 2022 on the efficiency of garden waste rounds.
- The council and its waste contractor have participated in demonstrations and trials of electric waste collection vehicles to inform future service design.
- Diverting sorted black bag waste collected at the household recycling centres (HRCs) to an energy from waste facility is estimated to have the potential to save more than 10,500 tonnes of CO2e per annum. Based on this and other data, the council is developing proposals to reduce the amount of HRC waste that is sent to landfill.
- A paint re-use trial is taking place at the Amesbury and Salisbury HRCs, which will help the council avoid the expensive treatment costs that disposing of it can incur. It is intended to introduce this scheme at other sites.
- 94.8% of the material collected for recycling, reuse and composting by Wiltshire Council was managed within the UK, reducing the ‘waste miles’ travelled
- The council diverted 80.9% of the waste it managed from landfill (2021/22).
- Subsidised by the council, between August 2021 and June 2022, 749 Green Johanna composting units were purchased by Wiltshire residents – estimated to have collectively diverted over 187 tonnes of food and garden waste from the residual household waste bins, which saves carbon emissions from collection and treatment.

## Carbon neutral council

- Through its developing fleet strategy, the council has ordered 10 electric pool cars, 15 electric vans, and a further 17 electric vans are going through the procurement process.
- The council's Property Carbon Reduction Programme has so far delivered 50 completed projects with 17 more currently awarded and underway. These range from LED lighting upgrades to PV solar panel installations to the removal of oil fuelled heating and other carbon saving works. This represents a total capital commitment of £3.5m and is so far estimated to save 1,500 tonnes of CO2 per year.
- The £12m project to convert the council's streetlighting to energy efficient LED lighting is complete for all standard streetlights in Wiltshire. Any remaining units are heritage and special units. The project is predicted to be complete by the end of March 2023. The equivalent of around 1,770 tonnes of CO2 will be saved each year.
- Thanks to sustained investment in solar photovoltaic technology over time, in 2021/22 the council generated over 550,000 kWh renewable electricity at its own buildings.
- Independent consultants the Anthesis Group found that the council is in a very strong position to meet its carbon neutral commitment by 2030.

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Cllr Richard Clewer, leader of Wiltshire Council was recently appointed as Co-President of the UK100 and he is also Chair of the Countryside Climate Network, demonstrating that the council and the county is in a strong position to influence on a national platform.

Cllr Clewer said: "Our update report, which summarises just some of the activities and progress of our recent carbon work, is more than 20 pages long, and this demonstrates the breadth of what we're doing and trying to achieve as a council.

"There's much more work and no doubt some further challenges ahead but we're determined to lead from the front, and we hope this will help further galvanise people, communities, partners and organisations to do as much as they can to tackle this issue.

"As stated in our Business Plan, we want Wiltshire to be a place where we are on the path to carbon neutral, and we take a responsibility for the environment. This work is strongly underpinned by our Climate and Natural Environment strategies and they give us a clear direction to head.

"We know there are other very challenging issues dominating the national agenda at the moment, rightly so, but the climate emergency must also remain a focus and it's at the heart of everything we do as an organisation."

Wiltshire Council provided an update on how it is responding to the Climate Emergency at its Cabinet meeting on 11 October and will also report to Full Council on 18 October.

The full agenda can be found at [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 11 October 2022, 10.00 am | Wiltshire Council](#)

## Wiltshire Council's climate work in numbers:

- **£27m** Salisbury River Park project
- **£12m** project to convert the council's streetlights to energy efficient LED is complete for all standard streetlights in the county
- **£1m** invested a year between 2021-2025 to support activity on Wiltshire high streets with additional environment benefits

- **550,000 kWh** renewable electricity generated at the council's own buildings in 2021/22
- **£300,000** bid with Swindon Borough Council to the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund to support the facilitation of tree planting in the county
- **10,000** registrations across Wiltshire and Swindon for solar group buying scheme Solar Together Wiltshire with **1,000** of those (from Wiltshire) paying a deposit to confirm installation commitment
- **5,000** council homes to be retrofitted by 2030
- **£2,500** grants available for town and parishes for electric vehicle charging points
- **80.9%** of the waste managed by Wiltshire Council diverted from landfill in 2021/22
- **50** projects completed on its buildings as part of the council's Property Carbon Reduction programme – estimated to save **1,500 tonnes** of CO2 per year
- **42** council electric vehicles ordered or being procured
- **33** people from across Wiltshire have been recruited to take part in a Climate and Environment Forum to be held online two to four times a year

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