

Scrutiny Bulletin: Monday 11 July 2022

Title of Update: Delivery of City Council Net Zero

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1. What is the update about?

The bi-annual update provides details of the progress made by the Net Zero & Business Team in relation to the delivery of a Net Zero for the City Council. This includes all emissions arising from ECC's direct and indirect activities.

2. Background

A new Net Zero team was fully established in March 2022 with a focus on producing a delivery plan to reduce carbon emissions and to achieve net zero within our own organisation. The team of four reports to the Service Lead Net Zero & Business, and consists of two existing permanent posts and two temporary new posts.

3. Current position

The team work to date includes the following activities:

A Corporate Carbon Footprint Report

A sector assessment of all emissions arising from the City Council's direct and indirect activities was completed with the support of the Centre for Energy and Environment. The report was finalised in May 2022, involved an in-depth assessment of all the City Council's activities and will be reported to Strategic Scrutiny in September and Executive/Council in November.

Net Zero Action Plan

Carbon reduction measures provided in the above report, existing renewables and energy saving programme, and other initiatives have been drawn together to provide a Net Zero Action Plan. The Action Plan sets out opportunities, actions required, and targets to reduce carbon across all City Council operations. Measures included are big and small, some highly aggressive but importantly a prioritisation of actions needed and a clear tool for tracking progress and challenges faced.

City Council Net Zero Risk Register

A new Net Zero Risk Register has been developed to show all risks associated with working towards net zero for the City Council. The Net Zero Risk Register is an evolving document and will be updated following receipt of the City Council's Carbon Footprint Report.

This document will be reported to Audit & Governance every 6 months, as well as Strategic Scrutiny with updates on reducing City Council carbon emissions.

Current Projects

City Council Net Zero Champions – Carbon literacy training is underway and Champions have been forthcoming from every service.

Green Accord – work is under way for the re-launch of the sustainable accreditation scheme operated by the City Council. The sustainability tool allows businesses to demonstrate green working practices and will help reduce scope 3 carbon emissions.

Water Lane Smart Grid and Storage Project – The project includes 1.2 MW solar and 1MW battery Store at Water Lane with a Private Wire connection, providing a renewable supply to support electrification of the council's fleet at Exton Road. In addition the project includes a battery store at the Matford Centre and John Lewis Car Park, and a solar PV installation with small battery at the Riverside Leisure Centre. The battery installations will soon be commissioned with the solar farm and EV Charging to follow in August, and finally the Riverside after the road replacement is complete in October.

Decarbonisation Study – Studies are currently on-going to seek funding to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating in existing council buildings including our leisure and museum assets.

4. Future position

The work of the team will be reported in the next Bulletin update and will include:

- Annual Council Carbon Footprint Report for monitoring and reporting purposes
- Updated Net Zero Action Plan
- Current project updates

Future updates will form part of reports to Strategic Scrutiny, with the first to take place this September, when the City Council's Carbon Footprint report will be published. This will be the final update through Scrutiny Bulletin.

5. Are there any other options?

No.

6. Conclusion

In July 2019 the Council's declared a Climate Emergency and a road map for a Net Zero Exeter by 2030 has recently been approved, to address challenges such as cleaner air, renewable energy and improved transport systems.

The work of the newly formed Net Zero & Business team is an essential role, assisting the City Council to achieve net zero with as little reliance on offsets as possible.