

**Teignbridge District Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1)
15th November 2021
Part I**

**Climate and Ecological Emergency Task and Finish Group final
report**

Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the Task and Finish group's findings and of the progress the Council is making.

Financial Implications

Please see paragraph 4.1 of the report.
Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer & Head of Corporate Services
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Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.
Paul Woodhead, Interim Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
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Risk Assessment

Please see paragraph 4.3 of the report.
David Eaton, Environmental Protection Manager
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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

Please see paragraph 4.4 of the report.
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Report Author

Councillor Huw Cox on behalf of the Task and Finish Group (Councillors C Jenks, A Swain, S Parker Khan, B Thorne and A Foden)

Executive Member

Councillor Jackie Hook, for Climate Change, Coastal Protection and Flooding

Appendices

Appendix 1 Terms of reference

Committee
Date of meeting

Background Papers

[Agenda for Full Council on Thursday, 18th April, 2019, 10.00 am - Teignbridge District Council](#)

[Agenda for Full Council on Wednesday, 30th September, 2020, 10.00 am - Teignbridge District Council](#)

1. Background

1.1 In April 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to do what is within our powers, to make Teignbridge District carbon neutral by 2025, taking into account both production and consumption emissions. In September 2020 the Council declared an ecological emergency committing to working with partners to take collaborative actions to aid the recovery of nature, promoting the work of the Council, reviewing the Green infrastructure strategy and finalising our Tree Strategy.

1.2 This committee at its meeting on the 9th February 2021 established a task and finish group to look at how Town and Parish Councils and community groups could work with the council to support the council's climate change agenda. The terms of reference of the group are set out in Appendix 1.

1.3 The group was tasked with the following work: (a) Establish how Town & Parish Councils, community groups and other public and voluntary organisations might better work with the District Council to support the Council's Climate Change agenda, with particular emphasis being given to ecology and biodiversity; and (b) Report back to the O&S Committee(1): (i) on its findings, including potential funding opportunities; and (ii) advice for Town & Parish Councils and community groups on actions they might wish to take with support from the District Council

1.4 Various organisations and TDC officers were consulted to get an overview on how and what the Council were doing and the situation in Teignbridge district as a whole.

2. Ecology overview

2.1 Within TDC work on improving ecology is progressing well. Open spaces have been planting trees, creating wild flower areas, reducing grass cutting, planting more shrubs and reducing use of bedding plants. The rangers do a great job working on the various TDC sites they maintain.

In the Teignbridge area as a whole there are many voluntary groups and organisations working on ecological issues.

2.2 Within TDC and throughout the district there are a lot of positive steps being taken. The council is progressing well and there are many voluntary groups and organisations working hard on ecological projects. TDC have run, in collaboration with ACT, an ecological forum which brought together interested parties and was well attended. The Rangers team presented to the forum and this be available via our website.

3. Climate Overview

3.1 TDC have set a target for net zero 2025 which is optimistic. A climate officer has been appointed. At the moment prioritising decarbonisation projects that attract funding is a priority. Within planning national guidelines and the current local plan are being followed. TDC investments are ethical.

3.2 TDC are progressing well with their decarbonisation plans. The new local plan should provide a better framework for planning to use to improve carbon reduction in developments. Climate and ecology should be given a higher priority in planning. There is scope for more work to be done on cultural and behavioural change within the council and in the wider Teignbridge area, for example, home working, car share, online meetings etc. Training on climate and ecological issues for officers, members and employees would be desirable. ACT have expertise and experience in this and would be willing to work with TDC on facilitating this. TDC's procurement processes should be examined to ensure climate and ecological issues are prioritised.

4. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

4.1 Financial

Whilst additional proposals have been identified by the group no additional potential funding sources have been identified. There is a climate change revenue budget specifically identified for small projects that can be delivered by officers. Any other projects identified will need to be scoped out by officers and an appropriate budget will need to be found.

4.2 Legal

The Council has signed a declaration on both the Climate and Ecological emergency. The proposals set out will assist in the Council meeting those obligations.

4.3 Risks

There are no significant risks to the Council implementing the conclusions of the Task and Finish group. There is a potential risk if members prioritises work which has implications for the delivery of existing projects.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

The conclusions of the Task and Finish group align with the Councils declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency. Many of the actions are already in progress and others will be investigated by officers. All actions will have a positive environmental and climate impact.

5. Conclusion

The outcomes of the group are set out below with progress that the Council is making on each item.

Ecology

Publicise/promote ACT wildlife warden's scheme.

Officers held a 'Wild about Teignbridge' workshop on the 14th October 2021 which promoted the work of ACT wildlife wardens. This has been recorded and will be made available to all members and residents of Teignbridge. The greenspaces team also highlight wildlife warden's work through social media

Publicise/promote Wild About Devon [Devon Local Nature Partnership]

Officers held a 'Wild about Teignbridge' workshop on the 14th October. Mike Waller DCC/ DLNP ecologist gave a presentation about his project 'Wild about Devon. This has been recorded and will be made available to all members and residents of Teignbridge

Have a section on TDC website signposting to relevant ecological groups.

There are specific pages on the Greenspaces area of the website and officers are reviewing this to improve the signposting to other groups.

Teignbridge Rangers to present to O+S 1 about their work.

At the 'Wild about Teignbridge' workshop on the 14th October the senior ranger did a presentation on their work. This has been recorded and will be made available to all members and residents of Teignbridge.

Climate

Publicise/promote ACT website particularly T+P resources pack.

The Council's website includes a link to the ACT website and the Town and Parish Council resources pack.

Publicise/promote ACT climate volunteer scheme as it develops

This is a future action that the council will work with ACT to achieve.

Provide climate training for officers, members and employees

Officers have been working with members of ACT developing a questionnaire which explores staff perceptions and behaviours towards climate change in the workplace and at home. The results and analysis will then inform any training that is required.

Examine procurement processes to improve climate and ecological priorities

The Council has a responsible procurement strategy which sets out the approach to sustainability. The Council also has a guidance document to support suppliers so they can consider this when tendering for works or services.

Host a climate change forum similar to the planned ecology forum

At present officers focus is on the delivery of the key major projects that will reduce the carbon footprint of the authority. Officers will discuss this proposal with ACT to understand what the desired outcomes are.

Make climate and ecology more of a priority in considering planning applications.

Applications are assessed against current policy requirements and specialist advice is sought from the Climate Change Officer. The emerging local plan will contain policies that enhance the requirements that developers will be required to meet.

Examine other council's responses to climate emergency and use best practises discovered.

Officers are part of a number of Devon wide and regional partnerships where best practice is discussed. These are carefully considered and where appropriate implemented.