

## Climate Change Steering Group: Environment Projects Summary

Updated 10/10/2022

Strategic Priorities:  
 1 – Becoming a Smart digital district. 2 – Green Economy. 3 – Air quality & sustainable transport. 4 – Sustainable waste management.  
 5 – Sustainable Energy. 6 - Protecting & enhancing bio-diversity. 7 – Construction & existing buildings. 8 – Environmentally friendly council

### PROPOSALS TO DISCHARGE:

- Electric Community Bus Service
- Repair Swap Shop / Café

### Projects added since last circulated are highlighted in bold.

#### 1. Ongoing / planned Projects

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Tier 1 Immediate Action	Establish a Green page on the Council website to highlight accomplishments & proposed projects	Corporate									x	<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer/Green Team.</u> At 10/10/22: Climate Emergency web page has been re-designed to link to all RDC pages that contribute to the Environment Strategy. Additional pages are being drafted, including RDC baseline emissions, summary of RDC climate achievements each year and additional advice / guidance for residents and businesses.
	Evaluate & reduce Council staff travel emissions	Corporate			x						x	<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer/Green Team</u>  On 11/10/22 the 10 week SusTrans Active Steps cycling programme was completed. This involved guided bike rides, maintenance and advice sessions for cyclists to encourage staff commuting by bicycle.  The cycle to work scheme is due to be re-launched imminently - awaiting date for a site visit.  Team Charters are being produced to outline WFH strategies. This was due to be discussed at the Manager's Forum in July 2022, but this was postponed until September. Request has been submitted to HR that environmental impact of commuting is included as a factor for consideration in each Team Charter.

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											<p>A Green Team sub-group has been convened to devise the best way to measure baseline commuting emissions – most likely through staff survey</p> <p><u>Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager.</u> On 28 March 2022 Council approved procurement of a provider to complete feasibility studies to install charging points at nil capital cost to the Council. Installations to be completed in at least 3 car parks by May 2023.</p> <p>At 04/10/22: The site surveys have been completed and we are now progressing feasibility studies. In order to progress as quickly as possible, we have prioritised De La Warr, Bedford Place, Rye car park and Mount Street (Battle) car parks. EB Charging will establish costings and seek infrastructure capability from UKPN. Once the feasibility studies are complete, RDC/EB Charging will be able to apply for funding for the equipment and install.</p> <p>Further meeting booked 21/10/22. EB Charging are aiming to get Phase 1 charge points installed by Christmas, however there are risks; some or all sites will not prove economically viable for EB Charging to invest / delays due to UKPN infrastructure / not meeting funding criteria / legal requirements.</p>
	Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Car Parks	District			x						<p><u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> Project not yet started but expected to be considered for CIL funding in second round of 2022.</p> <p>10/10/22: Procurement of an electric bus for lease to the Community Bus service now been specifically included in Bexhill Town Council's Environment Strategy.</p>
	Electric community bus service	District			x						<p><u>Lead: Project Manager – Highways Funding and Development (ESCC).</u> RDC submitted a bid to UTCF for tree planting on roadside verges at 31 locations in Bexhill. ESCC have taken over working with Trees for Cities to progress this project and planting is due to take place in winter of 2022/23.</p> <p>At June 2022, ESCC confirmed 14 proposed sites will not be planted on due to lack of funding. However, Trees for Cities have applied for the next round of the UTCF and included the remaining sites within this bid. This will give them more time to seek the additional match funding needed for the project.</p> <p>At August 2022, Trees for Cities updated that the scanning of locations for confirmed viability will commence on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022, with planting immediately thereafter.</p>
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Street Tree Project, Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF)	Partnership							x		<p><u>Lead: Project Manager – Highways Funding and Development (ESCC).</u> RDC submitted a bid to UTCF for tree planting on roadside verges at 31 locations in Bexhill. ESCC have taken over working with Trees for Cities to progress this project and planting is due to take place in winter of 2022/23.</p> <p>At June 2022, ESCC confirmed 14 proposed sites will not be planted on due to lack of funding. However, Trees for Cities have applied for the next round of the UTCF and included the remaining sites within this bid. This will give them more time to seek the additional match funding needed for the project.</p> <p>At August 2022, Trees for Cities updated that the scanning of locations for confirmed viability will commence on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022, with planting immediately thereafter.</p>

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	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Green Recovery Challenge fund project								x			<u>Lead: Parks Technical Officer:</u> Trees for Cities secured funding of £143,000 to increase tree cover in Bexhill. As of 28/07/22, 3 sites have been shortlisted (Bexhill Downs, Sidley Rec. and Southlands Open Space) with an additional 3 'back-up' sites in case any are unfeasible. First phase consultation at Southlands Open Space was due to take place on 29/07/22, with remaining two sites to follow shortly. A Celebration Event took place at DLWP on 02/10/22. Planting is due to take place Autumn – Winter 2022-23.	
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Working with BEG								x			The Council continue to work with Bexhill Environmental Group on tree and hedge planting proposals for Winter 2022 – 23. An additional 2000 trees are to be planted at Bexhill Down in Nov 2022.	
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Complete I-Tree Eco study report and develop subsequent strategy to protect and enhance tree cover in Bexhill	Corporate								x			<u>Lead: Parks Technical Officer / Environment Strategy Officer.</u> The Bexhill i-Tree Eco study began in February 2021 and a report was drafted in April 2022 by Treeconomics. Report was reviewed by the Parks Technical Officer and returned for finalisation in June 2022. The development of a strategic Urban Forest Master Plan, as recommended within the draft report, will be considered with the Environment Strategy Officer who started end of September 2022.
	Roll out of "One Digital"	Corporate										x	<u>Lead: Corporate Business Analyst:</u> One Digital, which includes a switch to Council Tax e-billing and electronic communications RE benefits, is almost ready to go live. Discussions on whether this should be implemented as an opt in or opt out are ongoing. Designed as a cost saving measure, however, the footprint of paper use in current Council Tax system has been estimated at 1.88 tCO2e per year. At 10/10/22: The briefing to Members scheduled for 19/10/22 has been delayed due to technical issues with the system delaying launch, as soon as they are resolved, launch date / briefing will be confirmed.
Tier 2  Short Term  (Complete within 2 years, by 2024)	Reduce Village Hall carbon emissions & install EVCPs: Village Halls Energy Project	Partnership						x		x		<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> Project was signed off by full Council on 07/09/22. Awaiting sign off by legal so we can invite quotes for Phase 1 (net zero plans for each hall and prioritisation report). Target completion date for Phase 1 is March 2023.	
	Ensuring the new Local Plan (2019-39) includes policies that demand higher bio-diversity net gain measures than required by National Planning Policy.	Corporate								x	x	x	<u>Lead: Planning Policy Manager.</u> The existing Local Plan came into effect in 2014. The emerging plan, which was hoped to be drafted by late 2022 and adopted in 2024, sets out our response to the climate emergency with a vision of 'Green to the Core', as presented to the CCSG by the Planning Policy Manager on 12/05/22. <a href="#">Position Statement April 2022.</a>  Public consultation was due to take place in Summer 2022, however now postponed until early 2023. Consultation with Parish/Town Councils due to take place Autumn 2022.  In October 2022 RDC commissioned a report to outline the Net Zero Evidence

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											base in Rother to shape the new local plan. First draft expected in December 2022
	Plant more wildflower areas on green spaces	Corporate / District							x		Lead: Parks Development Officer. At 10/10/2022: From May 2023 seasonal bedding to be replaced with Herbaceous perennials, shrubs, hedges or pine trees at Bexhill Cemetery Garden of Remembrance, Polegrove Bowls Club, DLWP Car Park, East Parade and Lanes Gardens.
	Real time display on Town Hall to show solar power generated	Corporate					x			x	To be progressed in line with Town Hall Renaissance programme.
	Meet the Target page on the Council website for Tree Coverage	Corporate								x	Lead: Environment Project Officer. At August 2022 previous progress was made available to the current EPO. To be progressed with Environment Strategy Officer on appointment.
	Electric bike hire	Corporate / District			x						
	Encourage Biodiversity audits by Parish Councils	District / Partnership							x		
	Charging points for electric bikes	District			x						
	Rother Carbon Reduction Award for businesses	District		x							Lead: Environment Strategy Officer: Not yet started. This could build upon the pledges made on the Bexhill Unwrapped webpage: <a href="http://Bexhill-on-Sea(mytownunwrapped.co.uk)">Bexhill-on-Sea (mytownunwrapped.co.uk)</a>
	Air quality measurement kit for cyclists	District			x						What's the purpose? Lots of data already exists. Mobile unit of this size may not be accurate. In air quality management areas there may be more data available for cyclists to avoid area
	Install Air quality monitors throughout the district	District			x						Lead: Environment Project Officer. At 10/10/2022, meeting scheduled on 13/10/22 with Environmental Health to discuss air quality measures in Rother.  Continuous analysers cost £20k plus each. We have around a dozen tubes (£7 each plus officer time to collect / send off), as per the annual Air Quality Status report. £5 500 for portable monitors.  Sussex air want a real time quality monitoring system for Sussex – possible DEFRA grant to provide these across Sussex to give real time monitoring,
	Increase the proportion of waste that is recycled by Rother residents.	District				x					Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager. The UK Environment Bill obtained Royal Assent in Nov 21 and we await secondary legislation regarding food waste collections and the deposit return scheme. Until these are implemented - perhaps 2025 - a realistic target for recycling percentage remains at approx. 50%. ESCC compiled an update on the UK Environmental Bill in September 2022, stating next update from government expected Spring 2023.

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											ESO and EPO to visit Energy Recovery Facility (Newhaven) and the In Vessel Composting facility (Lewes) in Nov 2022.
	incentivising Parish and Town Councils to adopt Climate Emergency Policies	Partnership			x				x	x	<u>Lead: Environment Strategy Officer:</u> Hurst Green were the first Parish Council to declare a Climate emergency in July 2022. They have called on RDC to support PCs with a framework template. To be progressed once ESO is in post. Bexhill Town Council declared a Climate and Nature emergency in June 2021 and in October 2022 drafted a Climate Action Plan. Crowhurst PC and Battle TC also have declared Climate Emergencies. ESO / EPO top collate a package of resources to support Parish / Town Councils with Net Zero ambitions.
Tier 3	Solar panels on leisure facilities & other Council buildings	Corporate						x		x	<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> As of August 2022, previous reports and surveys detailing solar feasibility at RDC sites have been collated and will be reviewed. A memorandum of co-operation is being drafted between RDC and Energise Sussex Coast.
Medium Term	Pollinator and pesticide policy review	Corporate							x		Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.
(Complete up to 5 Years, by 2027)	Supply composters	District				x					<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> As of August 2022, RDC website has a composting page which links to resources, including ESCC guidance with link to a provider. The UK Environment Bill obtained Royal Assent in Nov 21 and we await secondary legislation that will introduce food waste collections.
	Verges campaign	District							x		
	Incentivise drivers to go electric	Partnership			x						
Tier 4	Green Asset Management Plan	Corporate							x	x	<u>Lead: Corporate Programme and Projects Officer:</u> Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.
	Develop a plan to ensure all Rother District Council assets are carbon neutral	Corporate								x	<u>Lead: Economic Development Manager:</u> Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.
	Heat pumps on new housing and retrospectively	Corporate/ District / Partnership							x		x

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											East Sussex Housing Group (ESHOG) have formed a Climate Sub-group to discuss joint bids for retro-fit grant applications for housing stock. First meeting was held 03/10/22.
	Improve signage on waste bins at bring sites	District				x					(Bring sites at Rye Leisure Centre and Ravenside Retail Centre have been closed in 2022.)
	Repair swap shop	District / Partnership		x		x					Repair Café features in Bexhill Town Council Climate Action Plan.
	Re-usable Nappy Scheme	District / Partnership				x					<u>Lead: Environment Strategy Officer.</u> Initiatives at WDC and LBC reviewed in August 2022 - these require significant resources and funding respectively. ESO due to meet with local Nappy Library company 04/11/22 to discuss promoting re-usable nappy use in Rother.
	Become a veg first District	District							x		
	Increase use of public transport and active travel	Partnership		x	x						
	Pedestrianise streets in Town Centres	Partnership		x	x						
	De-carbonise Waste Fleet	Partnership			x	x					<u>Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager.</u> The Joint Waste Members and Officer working group held an inception meeting in July 2022 to discuss TOR and see which direction Cllrs wanted to proceed. Lead Cllrs were in agreement to proceed with switch to HVO instead of diesel as is practicable. The team will work with our consultants Hester to progress this, with next report expected Jan 2023.
Total No. of projects covering each priority											

## 2. Completed Projects Summary

Project/Objective	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Developing a Net Zero Evidence Base to support the Local Plan	Corporate / District									x	(Expected by Jan 2023.)
Reducing RDC Staff Travel Emissions	Corporate			x						x	In August 2022 RDC signed up to Active Travel Charity SusTrans' 10 week Active Steps Programme, loaning bikes to staff and providing support sessions including guided bike rides, maintenance sessions and route planning advice.
Reduce, Re-use and Recycle Grants Scheme	Corporate/ District				x						In September 2022, £15 000 was ringfenced from the 2023/24 Community Grants Scheme for Reduce, Re-use and Recycle Grants, available to Parish and Town Councils or Community Groups. Grants are limited to £1000 and may be used for eligible projects or activities including workshops, practical equipment, education and awareness raising.

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Village Halls Energy Project	Partnership					x		x		In July 2022 £500k of funding from the CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund was awarded to the Village Halls Energy Project. The project aims to reduce the carbon emission of Village and Community Halls across Rother. The project is scheduled to be completed by 2024.
RDC Staff Green Team established	Corporate								x	In May 2022 the Green Team was established, made up of a cross-section of RDC employees to identify and tackle issues to bring us towards our carbon neutral target.
100% renewable energy contracts adopted	Corporate					x			x	In May 2022 the Council procured 100% renewable energy contracts, due to come into force September / October 2022.
UK Green Building Council	Corporate							x	x	In May 2022, RDC joined the UK Green Building Council, gaining access to advice, information and training on all matters relating to net zero/low carbon development, climate resilience and nature-based solutions, and further expressing our intent to achieve carbon net-zero by 2030.
Switch to waterless urinals	District							x	x	In April 2022 waterless urinals were installed at Town Hall and Devonshire Road Public Conveniences.
Eco-Tips added to My Alerts	Corporate								x	Implemented April 2022, the weekly My Alerts email sent to Rother residents includes tips on how to become more environmentally friendly. As of May 2022, the weekly Eco-Tip is also published on the internal staff notice board.
Rural Superfast Broadband Scheme	Partnership	x								This project aimed to support 4 community applications for superfast Broadband, and this was achieved in March 2022. Openreach have advised they are not accepting new schemes.
Encouraging green cultural development & events in Rother	District / Partnership								x	A workshop with a focus on hosting events with the Environment and Sustainability in mind was commissioned by Rother District Council's Regeneration Team in January 2022, as part of a wider range of free workshops delivered between April 2021 and March 2022 for local community events promoters. The team have also added a section to the Rother Events Grant application form requiring details of how each applicant intends to make their event Eco-Friendly.
Carbon literacy training for Council staff & members.	Corporate								x	Two rounds of carbon literacy training were completed at the Council in 2021 and 2022, attended by a total of 17 members and 24 officers. It is anticipated that further training will be scheduled.
Planting of wildflower areas	Corporate / District						x			Flower towers at Marina Gardens have been replaced with an annual meadow mix for Summer 2022.
Introduction of CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund	Corporate								x	As set out in the Corporate Plan, a new process for distributing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was approved in March 2022, reserving a proportion of funds for projects that directly address the climate emergency or those which have a distinctive environmental benefit, as long as they meet the base criteria for CIL.
Increase tree cover in Bexhill	District / Partnership								x	Bexhill Environment Group completed hedgerow planting at Broad Oak Park Dec 2021 plus tree planting on Bexhill Down.  Tree planting was completed at Sidley Recreation Ground in Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 as part of the Bexhill BMX and Skate Park project.  As part of the Trees For Cities Forgotten Places Project, the environmental education charity Field Studies Council is helping Rother residents connect with nature and improve their knowledge and skills to plant, protect and promote urban trees. On 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 Field Studies Council offered free places on spring tree identification and care training courses to residents of Bexhill and the surrounding urban areas.

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Environmental Clause in all new contracts	Corporate									x	As set out in the Corporate Plan, from 2021 carbon reduction clauses are now included in all new Council contracts and included in Neighbourhood Services officer appraisal targets.
Swap shop for office moves	Corporate									x	Following a suggestion made via the staff digital suggestion box, an online swap shop was created in July 2021, where staff can post to either offer or request office equipment from colleagues. This is helping us to reduce our consumption through ordering less equipment and saving equipment from being disposed of when it could in fact be useful to others.
Virtual mailroom	Corporate									x	Adopted in May 2021 as a cost saving measure, we now outsource the printing and posting of our mail to an external provider through a digital system. This removes another barrier to staff working from home, negating the need to travel into the office in order to send post, as well as reducing the number of printers needed within the organisation, consumption of ink and paper etc. We continue to work with the provider to improve their practices by, for example, switching away from envelopes containing plastic windows.
Maintenance Tracker Developed	Corporate									x	In early 2021, a digital maintenance tracking system was developed, superseding a manual paper-based system. Digitising the system allows for photos be uploaded alongside a maintenance issue being reported, so the team can assess what materials will be required to fix the issue without a preliminary site visit. The system has improved efficiency of the team and reduced travel emissions.
Council's Paperless Pledge & Digital Image Processing	Corporate									x	<p>In November 2020 the Climate Change Steering Group made a pledge to go paperless – only receiving printed material if specifically required for issues such as health or poor eyesight. By May 2021 all committees were given an option to go paperless.</p> <p>The Council's Customer Services Team also committed to the pledge and reduced their annual use of A4 sheets from 60,000 to 10,000 and their use of A3 sheets from 500 to zero in the first year. Where there are still printing requirements, black &amp; white and double-sided printing is used by default to help reduce ink and paper consumption. Much of this progress was made by introducing a process of scanning documents produced by residents and emailing them to the correct department, rather than making copies.</p> <p>In 2021 RDC began a 12 month roll out of switching from a paper-based process for annual leave requests to an electronic system. This has saved 250 pieces of card annually.</p>
Staff digital suggestion box	Corporate									x	Implemented November 2020 for any staff suggestions for improvements, including those that have an environmental benefit.
Increase in working from home and on-line meetings	Corporate			x						x	As a result of the constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, RDC has seen a dramatic increase in staff working from home and continues to support staff to do so through the provision of technology solutions and plans to adopt an agile working policy. Carbon emissions are therefore reduced through less miles travelled by staff to attend the office.
Solar panels on Council owned buildings	Corporate					x		x	x		Solar arrays were installed at Bexhill Town Hall and Bexhill museum in Feb 2019. More council buildings are due to be reviewed for further solar arrays to be installed.
Corporate Plan 2020 - 2027	Corporate									x	Climate Emergency was included as a priority objective in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2027.
Environment Strategy Published	Corporate									x	In September 2020 the Council published the Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030, setting out 8 priorities: 1 – Becoming a Smart digital district. 2 – Green Economy. 3 – Air quality & sustainable



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										transport. 4 – Sustainable waste management. 5 – Sustainable Energy. 6 - Protecting & enhancing biodiversity. 7 – Construction & existing buildings. 8 – Environmentally friendly council
Climate emergency Declared	Corporate								x	Rother District Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019, with the ambitious target of being carbon, and other noxious gas, neutral by 2030.