

## Climate Change Steering Group: Environment Projects Summary

Updated October 2023

Strategic Priorities (Environment Strategy 2020):  
 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 AMEND / DISCHARGE: None

**Updates 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	Evaluate & reduce Council staff travel emissions	Corporate			x							<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer/Green Team</u>  18/09/23: Building on the work completed in 2022/23, the Green Team have set Reducing Staff Travel Emissions as one of their priorities for 2023/24. Objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a report on the staff commuter survey findings to SMT and then the wider organisation (completed).</li> <li>• Promote the benefits of active travel, public transport and low emission vehicles, providing information on local provision and costs. (Comms planned WC 25/09/2023)</li> <li>• Explore adopting staff benefit packages that support active travel, public transport, and low-emission vehicles.</li> <li>• Ensure Team Agreements support effective working from home or office processes that take into account the environmental impact of travel.</li> </ul>
	Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Car Parks	District			x							<u>Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager.</u> On 28/03/22 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. By November 2022 feasibility had been completed in 9 car parks, with 7 approved by the DNO.  Full costings were received on 04/04/23, however, although it has been announced ORCS funding has been extended for 2023/24, they are yet to open for applications. We are therefore ready to submit the funding application as soon as details are released by OLEV.

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											18/09/23: ORCS funding still yet to be released. Enquiries are underway to explore 100% supplier funded models that do not rely on funding.	
	Electrification of Community bus service	District			x						<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> Project suggested for application to CIL Climate emergency Bonus Fund.	
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill	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 took over working with Trees for Cities to progress this project.</p> <p>18/09/23: Over 200 trees were planted on Bexhill streets in Spring 2023: <a href="#">New Street Trees for Bexhill   Trees for Cities</a> confirms the locations and species. Around 100 more street trees are due to be planted in Autumn / Winter 2023.</p> <p>Bexhill has also been recognised as a Tree City of the World.</p> <p><b>Applications have been submitted to the Coronation Living Heritage Fund, for 'Micro Woods' in urban areas and a grants scheme for community orchards.</b></p>	
	Biodiversity Audit	Corporate							x		<p><u>Lead: Environment Strategy Officer</u></p> <p>Provider has been secured to undertake a biodiversity audit on 23 rural RDC sites - verbal update to CCSG by Environment Strategy Officer at March 2023 meeting.</p> <p>18/09/23: Site audits complete, reports with findings and recommendations due by Nov 2023.</p>	
Tier 2 Short Term (Complete within 2 years, by 2024)	Reduce Village Hall carbon emissions & install EVCPs: Village Halls Energy Project	Partnership						x		x	<p><u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> This project was signed off by full Council on 07/09/22 having secured £500k funding from CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund.</p> <p>Phase 1 was completed in June 2023 with bespoke Net Zero Plans issued to 39 participating halls.</p> <p><b>Pre-grant funding offers have been made to 34 halls for measures that would save an expected 2250+ Tonnes of CO2e over the next circa. 25 years.</b></p>	
	Ensuring the new Local Plan (2019-39) includes policies that demand higher biodiversity net	Corporate							x	x	x	<p><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.</p>

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	gain measures than required by National Planning Policy.											<p>RDC have committed to liaising with town and parish councils before we formally consult. Due to elections in May 2023, the public consultation is now anticipated in June/July 2023.</p> <p>August 2023: The latest update on the New Local Plan is available here: <a href="#">Local Plan Review – Update August 2023</a>.</p>
	Plant more wildflower areas on green spaces	Corporate / District							x			<p><u>Lead: Parks Development Officer.</u> From May 2023 seasonal bedding is 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.</p> <p><b>Further planting to prolong the aesthetics of the Marina Gardens wildflower meadows whilst retaining or enhancing opportunities for biodiversity have been agreed.</b></p>
	Real time display on Town Hall to show solar power generated	Corporate						x			x	To be progressed in line with Town Hall Renaissance programme, if pursued.
	Meet the Target page on the Council website for Tree Coverage	Corporate									x	<p><u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> At August 2022 previous progress was made available to the current EPO. To be progressed with Environment Strategy Officer.</p> <p>18/09/23: Project page for Trees has been added to RDC website: <a href="#">Trees – Rother District Council</a></p>
	Electric bike hire	Corporate / District			x						x	
	Rother Carbon Reduction Award for businesses	District		x								
	Increase the proportion of waste that is recycled by Rother residents.	District				x						<p><u>Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager.</u> 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%.</p> <p>Members and Officers visited the Energy Recovery Facility (Newhaven) and the In Vessel Composting facility (Lewes) in Nov 2022.</p>

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											Environment Strategy Officer attended Strandliners “Love our Rother” Event in Rye on 18/02/23.
	incentivise Parish and Town Councils to adopt Climate Emergency Policies and Encourage Biodiversity audits	Partnership			x				x	x	<p><u>Lead: Environment Strategy Officer:</u></p> <p>Environment Strategy Officer contacted all P&amp;TCs offering to assist with Climate Emergency declarations. She has since attended meetings of Sedlescombe, Salehurst and Robertsbridge, Ashburnham and Penhurst, East Guldeford and Brede PCs to provide information and also supported Brightling, Icklesham and Udimore PCs, as well as Brightling Village Environmental Group.</p> <p>ESO gave Keynote presentation at RALC meeting on 12/04/23, and was invited to attend future meetings as a regular feature to encourage and support Parish and Town Councils with their Climate Emergency declarations and Action Plans.</p> <p>By September 2023, ESO has attended three Battle TC Climate and Ecology Committee meetings. Battle TC have identified key action areas to reduce emissions as a Council and use their influence to reduce emissions in the Parish. BTC have started to calculate their operational emissions using the LGA accounting tool with support from EPO.</p> <p><b>16/10/23 8 town and parish councils have now declared a climate emergency and at least 3 more are considering making a declaration having received support from RDC Environment Strategy Officer.</b></p>
Tier 3 Medium Term (Complete up to 5 Years, by 2027)	Solar panels on leisure facilities & other Council buildings	Corporate						x		x	<p><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.</p> <p>Following temporary closure of Rye swimming pool in November 2022, RDC officers working with Freedom Leisure and ESCC to review solar and heat pump options. Until decisions are made regarding RDC / Freedom Leisure involvement in operating the pool beyond 2026, unlikely any commitments to de-carbonisation can be made.</p>
	Pollinator and pesticide policy review	Corporate						x			Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities.

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	Supply composters	District				x					<p><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, expected 2023.</p> <p>20/03/23: Environment Bill introduction of food waste collections now expected 2025.</p>
	Verges campaign	District						x			
	Incentivise drivers to go electric	Partnership			x						
Tier 4 Longer Term (Complete by 2030)	Green Asset Management Plan	Corporate						x		x	<p><u>Lead: Corporate Programme and Projects Officer:</u></p> <p>18/09/23: Conversations are underway to define “Green Asset management” and how this may align with the strategic asset management plan due to be developed.</p>
	Develop a plan to ensure all Rother District Council assets are carbon neutral	Corporate								x	<p><u>Lead: Economic Development Manager:</u> Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.</p> <p>Where tenants of Council properties are responsible for heating systems, there is limited influence we can have to make them de-carbonise.</p> <p>18/09/2023: Environment Strategy is undergoing a refresh, due to be published by end of 2023, including decarbonisation strategy.</p> <p>Boilers at Amherst Rd and Town Hall required emergency replacement in September 2023, and efficient condensing gas boilers have been installed. This is expected to make significant savings to carbon emissions.</p>
	Low carbon energy / Heat pumps on new housing and retrospectively	Corporate/ District / Partnership						x		x	<p><u>Lead: Planning Policy Manager.</u> Renewables feature heavily in the Emerging Local Plan, expected to be drafted by end of 2023.</p> <p>East Sussex Housing Group (ESHOG) have formed a Climate Sub-group in October 2022 to discuss joint bids for retro-fit grant applications for housing stock.</p> <p>The HUG2 funding application made jointly with EBC/LDC for off-gas low-income housing was not accepted.</p> <p>18/09/23: Solar Together Spring 2023 saw a record 566 registrations by Rother residents. 115 households have since paid for installations with 23 completed to date.</p>

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	Promote Repair swap shop/s	District / Partnership		x		x					Repair Café features in Bexhill Town Council Climate Action Plan. 18/09/23: Robertsbridge Repair Café promoted in 08/09/23 EcoTip
	Promote re-usable Nappy Scheme/s	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. 27.01.23 ESO met with WDC Officer responsible for the re-usable nappy scheme. WDC are reviewing if this is a service - issues relating to Officer capacity.
	Become a veg first District	District						x			
	Increase use of public transport and active travel	Partnership		x	x						18/09/23: Flexi bus and Govt £2 bus fare cap have been promoted via RDC comms channels.
	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 decarbonising the waste fleet. Lead Cllrs agreed to explore a switch to HVO from diesel. Consultants were employed to progress this, with a report in Jan 2023 outlining the significant costs that would be involved.  <b>At a senior and strategic level, discussions have started across the Joint Waste Partnership regarding potentially extending the current contract from 2026, for up to 7 years (up to 2033). Any switch to HVO is to be negotiated within contract extension discussions, as the best the time to agree a way forward and negotiate best value for money with the provider.</b>

## 2. Completed Projects / Achievements: 2023/24

Project/Achievement	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Bexhill: Tree City of the world	District / Partnership			x				x			Bexhill has been recognised as a <a href="#">Tree City of the World</a> .

Project/Achievement	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary	
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Carbon Literacy Training for RDC Officers	Corporate									x	<p>On 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023, the Environment Strategy Officer and Projects Officer (Environment) delivered Carbon Literacy Training to 8 Council Officers. This is the first course that was delivered in house, and brings the total number of officers to have completed this training to 30.</p> <p>CMT have since approved a programme to roll out Carbon Literacy training to all staff, and adopt it into the induction package as mandatory training for new starters.</p>
Phase 1 of the Village Halls Energy Project completed	District / Partnership					x				x	<p>Phase 1 was completed in June 2023 with bespoke Decarbonisation Plans issued to 39 participating halls.</p>