

---

**REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 27 SEPTEMBER 2022****PORTFOLIO: CLIMATE & ECONOMY****REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT****SUBJECT: SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY UPDATE****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 To note the progress being made to deliver and finalise the draft Sustainability Strategy.

**2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Wider consultation and engagement should be undertaken before the finalisation of the Sustainability Strategy, as its delivery will require the support of key partners and residents.

**3 SALIENT INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In March 2022 the Executive approved that wider consultation and engagement be undertaken before a final version of the Sustainability Strategy is presented for consideration by Council.
- 3.2 The consultation brings together and highlights the different sustainability themes that are most environmentally influential in the district. These themes have been identified using data on the district's largest carbon emitters. These themes are: transport, air quality, the built environment, waste, energy, and behavioural changes. Each theme will have a number of actions that will contribute towards the overall performance of the strategy and its objectives.
- 3.3 Progress on developing the draft strategy is outlined in the table below.

**Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement****Rochford District Businesses**

- 3.4 The Council and its partners aim to support and encourage businesses to commit to achieving carbon neutrality. To that effect a new stakeholder group is being established - the Rochford Environmental Business Alliance, whereby organisations are encouraged to sign-up to a new Environmental Pledge.
- 3.5 A consultation questionnaire specifically for businesses relating to sustainability has been promoted within the District and will assist in informing the finalised strategy.

### Rochford District Communities and Residents

- 3.6 Early stakeholder workshops are being held to establish the Rochford Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (RCCSP) consisting of the parish/town councils and representatives of relevant organisations. The RCCSP will be a strategic group which acts as the lead organisation for partners to collaborate and identify joint work programmes on environmental, climate change and wider sustainability issues. It should be noted that the group may adopt a shorter acronym and name for convenience.
- 3.7 Alongside these engagement workshops sits a wider public consultation questionnaire focusing on changes that people can make to contribute towards carbon neutrality. These two pieces of work will then inform the longer-term strategy.
- 3.8 The Council is already undertaking and planning a range of actions which contribute towards achieving carbon neutrality. While much of this need not be subject to consultation, it is important that the Council communicates what it is doing to promote examples of good practice to its residents and other organisations, in addition to reinforcing its commitment to becoming carbon neutral.

**Table 1 – Consultation & Engagement Progress Summary**

Project Name	Description	Progress	Next Steps
<b>Rochford Environmental Business Alliance</b>	business to business network to promote a low-carbon economy	Branding & Website developed & in place; Soft Launch of REBA at the Business Breakfast in June 2022; Creation of support seminars and workshops delivered by COLBEA on-going at present.	Review of REBA purpose in line with Kent Low-Carbon Business Network by November 2022
<b>Sustainability Training</b>	E-learning resource on sustainability for staff	Draft e-learning training has been developed	Review content on reflection of Carbon Literacy training for Senior Management; Pilot trial needs to needs be established by October 2022.
<b>Carbon Literacy Project</b>	Carbon Literacy Training for Leadership	Training booked for Senior Leadership Team and key Members	Training to held on 20 September

<b>Rochford Consultation</b>	Consultation on Sustainability Strategy	Digital Questionnaire designed and set up; Ensure promotion of consultation survey	Close of Consultation Survey 18 September 22;  Workshops with key stakeholders – 14 September .
<b>Sustainability Strategy</b>	Implementation of Sustainability Strategy	pending outcome of consultation	Presentation to Full Council – October/November
<b>LAD2/ Sustainable Warmth</b>	Scheme to enable low income households with retrofitting to improve EPC	Established contact and arrange meeting with County Co-ordinator	Ensure all tasks are complete according to plan, including social media and mailouts – on-going; Check funding is being used as per application – on-going.
<b>Tree Planting</b>	Supporting the delivery of tree planting.	Tree planting sites have been identified for this winter; Trees and Volunteers secured through Essex Forest Initiative.	Deliver tree planting on 6 sites through this winter 22/23.
<b>Fleet Decarbonisation Plan</b>	Creation and implementation of plan	Developing bid with Energy Saving Trust and Council Officers for plan creation	Energy Saving Trust to produce Fleet Decarbonisation Plan by April 2023
<b>Rochford Carbon Neutral Plan</b>	Creation and implementation of plan	carbon footprint for Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions from the council Identified	Verify scope 1 and 2 emissions, baseline year & produce standardised methodology for performance reporting by October '22; Identify and implement strategies to reduce carbon emissions which will achieve target of carbon neutrality by 2040 – April 2023.
<b>EV Charging Plan</b>	Create and implement an EV Strategy for Rochford	Initial meeting held with Energy Saving Trust and support for EV strategy agreed in principle	Liaise with Essex CC Officers to understand Essex EV plan – September 22; Work with EST to create own strategy – March 2023
<b>Climate Change Audit</b>	Work with external auditors to provide data etc for audit		Provide data on carbon emissions

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The conclusion of the current engagement and consultation process will be presented to Council in October. An alternative would be to continue to concentrate on delivering the existing Carbon Neutral Action Plan, although this would not fully address the wider aspirations reflected in the Carbon Neutral Member Working Group recommendations which informed the Executive decision made in March.

**5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Consulting on a wider reaching and ambitious Sustainability Strategy will raise expectations of the Council's commitment to addressing climate change, which will need to be adequately resourced to achieve.
- 5.2 The establishment of the REBA and RCCSP will also require a resource commitment to promote and manage. Failure to follow through on supporting these groups would result in a risk to the Council's reputation.

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The planned consultation and engagement will be undertaken within the allocated £20,000 budget agreed by Executive in March 2022. However, it is anticipated that a commitment to adequately resource any recommendations arising from a new Sustainability Strategy will be requested when it is present to Council for approval in autumn 2022.

**7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

LT Lead Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Director of Environment**

---

**Background Papers:-**

None.

For further information please contact Marcus Hotten, Director of Environment on:-

Phone: 01702 318117

Email: [Marcus.hotten@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:Marcus.hotten@rochford.gov.uk)

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.