



Committee report

Committee	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date	6 SEPTEMBER 2022
Title	RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENHANCING THE BIOSPHERE
Report of	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

SUMMARY

1. This report sets out the monitoring the actions being taken regarding the delivery of the key activities identified in the Corporate Plan relating to responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

BACKGROUND

2. The councils corporate plan set out a key Aim to Respond to climate change and enhance the biosphere.
3. In 2019 the council declared a climate emergency and committed to working towards achieving a net-zero carbon status for the Isle of Wight by 2030. Following further work the climate change strategy, which came into effect in 2021, revised these targets to be net-carbon zero as a council by 2030, across the school estate by 2035 and as an Island by 2040. An action plan has been introduced to guide the work needed to achieve these targets.
4. Over and above this, going forward the corporate plan commits that every decision taken will have and show regard to the need to reduce the council's and the Island's carbon footprint. We will need to both support and exploit our position as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to lever in funding and support for the work we must do, including achieving our net zero aspirations.
5. The corporate Plan sets out that will work closely with town, parish, and community councils to support them in helping to deliver our aspirations and we will challenge the utility companies and our partners to support us in making the Island a sustainable place to live and work.

6. In so doing we will look to also address issues of fuel poverty and health inequalities by making homes more energy efficient and by creating new opportunities for local people to make better use of the landscape to support their health and wellbeing. As such, every decision we take will not only need to have regard to our climate change strategy but must also have regard to supporting, sustaining, and enhancing our biosphere status.
7. The council recognises that the Isle of Wight is only a small area and as such can only have so much impact on the wider global issues associated with climate change. However, as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve it is particularly important to reduce the impacts of climate change and preserve the natural environment in any way possible.
8. This strategy sets out separate the net zero target dates for the council's operations and the wider island area. The council should commit to net zero by 2030 in the council's own operations with a maximum of 15% of the baseline emissions offset. A target of no later than 2040 should be set to meet net zero across the entire Island, and ideally sooner than 2040, with no more than 15% of baseline emissions offset by this date. Both target dates must primarily focus on reducing emissions to minimise the amount of offsetting required.
9. The Climate and Environment Strategy sets out the key target dates for achieving net carbon zero and actions that the council will undertake in its own operations and to enable the business and residential community to adapt to a changing climate and meet net carbon zero.
 - i. The council will aim to meet net zero in its own operations by 2030, with no more than 15% offset taking place through planting schemes on council-owned land;
 - ii. Schools across the Isle of Wight are expected to aim to meet net zero in their operations by 2035 with no more than 15% offset taking place through planting schemes on school- and council-owned land;
 - iii. The whole of the Isle of Wight will aim to meet net zero in emissions across the area by 2040, with no more than 15% offset taking place on privately-owned land and in the marine environment.

Governance Structure for monitoring and delivering:

10. Delivering the actions in the climate strategy requires the community to take ownership of actions that are beyond the councils ability to influence or control. further the IW Biosphere reserve recognition is not a function of the council and needs to be driven autonomously by the community of the Island and supported by the council by considering both Climate adaption and the UNESCO Biosphere in the deliver y of our services.
11. The balance of what the council can directly deliver versus what we can influence and what we can support, inspire and enable has lead to the development of a twinned streamed governance structure (see fig 1 below).

12. The council's Corporate Management Team are responsible for monitoring performance of actions in the Corporate Strategy and Directorate plans and for reporting progress to the corporate scrutiny committee, the Cabinet and Full Council.
13. The actions and performance measures committed to in the corporate plan that support and enhance the Biosphere will for part of the council's quarterly performance reporting and may form part of a tighter review at the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration.

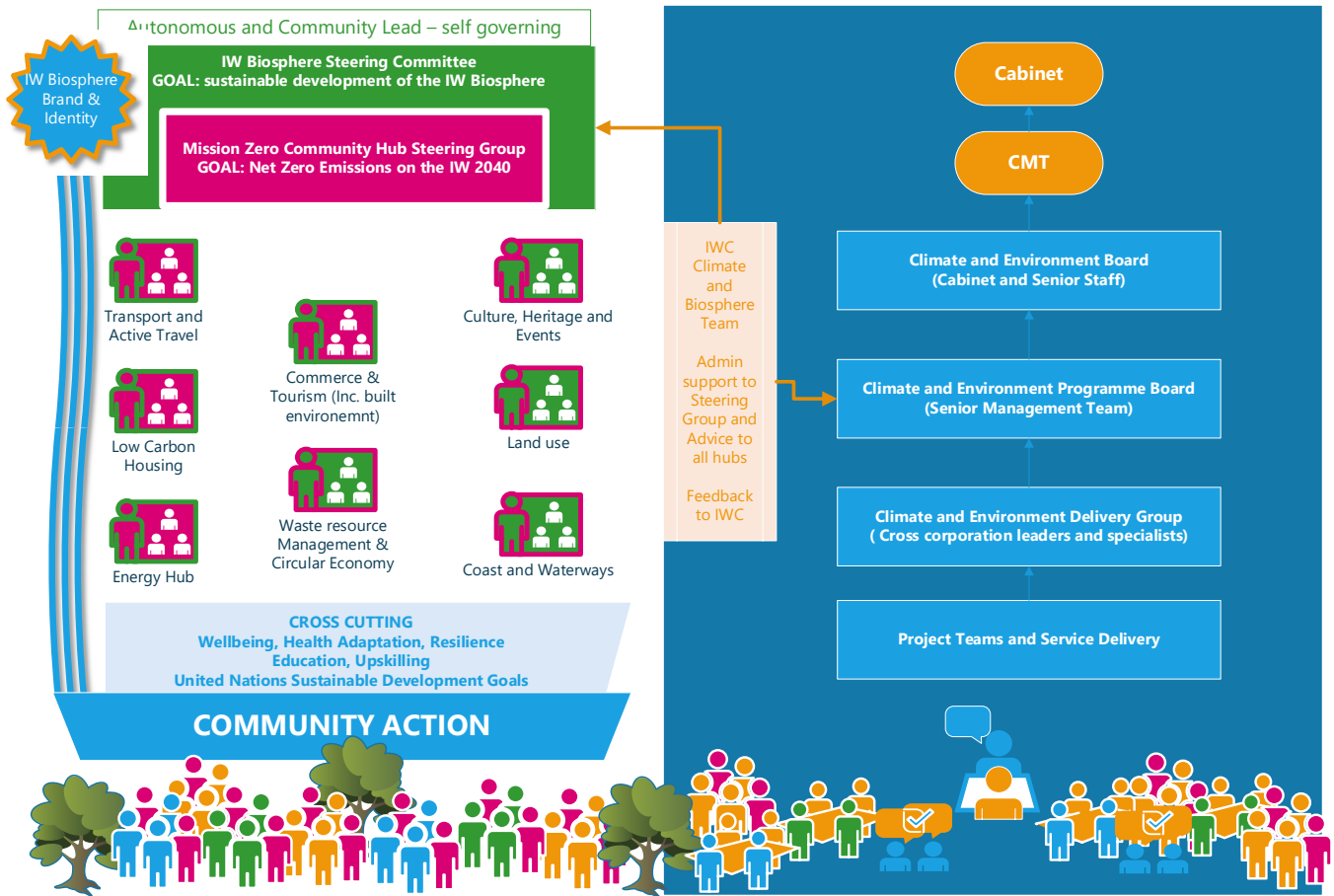


Figure 1: Governance Structure

14. The Mission Zero Hubs are well underway in development, with some already applying for grants funding and others still in their infancy. The First Mission Zero Community Hub Steering Meeting will take place at the same time as the first IW Biosphere Steering Meeting to ensure synergies between these activities are taken advantage of.

Commitments and Progress Against Climate and IW Biosphere Reserve Actions

15. Actions From 09 September 2021 Cabinet Report titled: Climate and Environment Strategy

In September 2021 the Cabinet approved the Climate Change and Environment Strategy and the following associated actions:

Commitments / Actions	Progress
(a) <i>The aim to meet the target dates, as set out in the Strategy, to be net-carbon zero as a council by 2030, across the school estate by 2035 and as an Island by 2040;</i>	Commitment made and driving all further actions. Mission Zero - Climate and Environment Strategy is adopted and published
(b) <i>The commitment to:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the required staff resources to manage the co-ordination and the delivery of the Action Plan (through the 2021/22 budget process).</i> 	<p>The council agreed the 2022/2023 budget in February 2022, the following posts were advertised and appointed to by April 1 2022:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Climate Change Delivery Manager</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Climate Change and Biosphere Co-ordinator</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the resources already committed within existing council service plans and budgets; and</i> 	<p>The Officers Climate and Environment Programme Board meets monthly to discuss projects and service delivery within current budgets and service plans with a focus on ways to deliver Mission Zero 2030 (IWC).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>business cases, applications for grants and other external funding for future projects to fulfil other council and community led actions.</i> 	<p>The council has been successful in achieving external funding:</p> <p>Public sector decarbonisation fund</p> <p>IWC was awarded a total of £2,546,093 under Phase 1 to carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low carbon skills fund: project development (£10,000) to develop • Low carbon skills fund: project delivery (£100,000) • Low carbon skills fund: heat decarbonisation plan (£20,000) • Full grant: works at 10 sites, outlined below (£2,416,093) <p>And Phase 3 saw the council awarded an additional total of £701,767 (and will also use up to £600,000 of council funds) under Phase 3a to install Air source Heat pumps, upgrade heating system, install LED lighting and upgrade windows at county hall.</p>

Investigating a new community enterprise to kickstart whole house retrofits through provision of retrofit assessments and designs

The Mission Zero Buildings Hub is considering how the market for whole house retrofit can be rapidly expanded. This requires action to stimulate demand from householders and prepare the supply chain for the massive task ahead if the existing housing stock is to achieve the net zero target. Whilst at an early stage, it's likely that a CIC will be established to provide Retrofit Assessments, Design and Co-ordination, directing low-income households to ECO4 for fully funded solutions and providing the basis for the able-to-pay market to commission the works. The project is likely to require seed funding for early stage working capital.

Partner in BEIS "Digital Twin" programme to explore energy system solutions

As the demonstration site for the BEIS national Digital Twin programme, the council has identified the Island's energy system and emergency planning as the areas of focus. This will provide a unique source of data and experimental environment through which to identify energy system solutions.

Working with gas network operator (SGN) on feasibility of hydrogen gas grid to replace existing fossil fuel system

This work will conclude soon and will look at the business case for conversion of the gas grid to hydrogen. The study is focused on the Isle of Wight where the network is in large part prepared for hydrogen injection, offering the possibility of conversion in the early 2030s. The study will help inform the extent to which the zero-carbon heating solution is gas or electric. Other areas will benefit from understanding the pathway for gas heating and whether they should plan for fully electric heating.

Working with waste contractor on potential to attach heat network to waste to energy plant

A study has identified the viable opportunity to utilise waste heat from the waste to energy plant to supply the hospital, businesses and new housing developments within 2 miles of the site. It will be considered further once the plant is fully operational.

Working with passenger transport operators (bus and ferries) to understand decarbonisation pathways and what local infrastructure is required

There is a single bus operator on the Island and three cross-Solent ferry operators. The council has recently discussed decarbonisation pathways with each operator and is investigating support for shore power and local hydrogen production to speed up the transition. Because of the high demand from transport operators, the effects on the whole energy system need to be fully considered. Government support for infrastructure and rapid R&D will speed up decarbonisation.

Private sector partner providing EV chargepoint facilities

The council is working with Chargepoint Operator, Joju, on the roll out of public chargepoints on streets and in council car parks. A large proportion are fully funded by Joju. We are consulting on an EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy and, once we have determined how many additional chargepoints we'll need over the coming years, will be identifying private sector partners to support delivery. National guidance for on-street chargepoint installations would remove uncertainty.

(c) *A full Strategy review and update for publication every two years;*

Due September 2023

(d) *The Action Plan is reviewed as and when required and in*

Action Plan is reviewed each Month at the Officers Programme Board and the Climate and Environment Board.

<i>the first instance within the next nine months.</i>	
(e) <i>The delegation to commence the projects within the Action Plan, subject to available resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Heritage and Waste.</i>	To deliver this delegation a new set of governance has been developed that supports the delivery of Climate and Environment Action through the work of the council and supports the development of the Mission Zero Community Hub (MZCH) – an autonomous body supported by the Neighbourhoods Directorate, Environment & Waste team.

Actions from the January 2022 Cabinet Report titled: Supporting the IW Biosphere

The council will undertake the following actions following the agreement of this Framework to be reported to the Policy and Scrutiny Copmmittee for Nighbourhoods and regeneration in Q3 of 2022.

Outcome	Action	Status
The Biosphere is considered in all council decision making	Update corporate templates for decision making to include the requirement to consider the IW UNESCO Biosphere	Complete Nov 2021 – all reports are now supported by the Environment and Waste team reviewing the section in impact on the Climate and supporting the IW Biosphere Reservice
	Introduce a new climate and environment impact assessment screening tool for corporate decisions by April 2022.	The team has worked with he Business Intelligence team to investigate the decision wheel introduced by Cornwall County Council other methodologies utilising a risk assessment matrix approach. The launch of this is delayed to November 2022 due to complexity.
The development of the IW Biosphere is overseen by a Steering Committee	Appoint the IW UNECSO Biosphere Steering Committee	The Structure of the Mission Zero Hubs and its relationship with the Biosphere Steering groups has been established along with draft terms and conditions. Advertisement for volunteers to sit on the Biosphere steering committee are live, with he inaugural meeting due Nov 2022.
	Draft and agree Terms of Reference for the IW Biosphere Steering group	Complete to be reviewed and voted on by the first committee.

	Co-ordinate and schedule Steering Committee meetings	The first Steering Committee meeting will agree the frequency of meetings that will then be scheduled.
The IW Biosphere is supported and enhanced by the work of the council	Directorate Plan templates, Service Plan Templates are updated to consider Climate and Environment Actions as well as actions that support the biosphere	Complete April 2022
	Review the UN sustainable development aims and set out a guidance document for Directors setting out aims regard to the Biosphere so that Directorates can indicate which of the 17 Sustainable development goals are supported	In progress, development of this work has supported Directors in identifying how the work they deliver meet the 17 sustainable development goals and this is now also reported against corporate actions in the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report (QPMR)
	Progress against actions that support the IW Biosphere are fed back to the steering group	TBA

The 2021-2024 Corporate Plan

Corporate Plan Aspiration	Key Activities	Progress
Support and enhance our Biosphere and AONB areas. Support the active management and development of Biosphere status and	Annually increase the number of trees planted and maintained from April 2022 in accordance with a new tree management and planting plan to increase biodiversity,	Working on Tree Strategy outline. Links in to Offsetting and Countryside Stewardship

<p>secure Dark Sky status.</p>	<p>green corridors and off set carbon impacts.</p>	<p>IWC Countryside Stewardship Agreement is up for renewal. We are working on this for 2023 renewal with a 10-year agreement.</p> <p>Rights of Way £200,000 funding</p> <p>Tree Grants: extended all sites from 1 agreement for 1 year while putting together longer-term application.</p> <p>2 sites handed over to Gift To Nature for Countryside Stewardship</p> <p>Eventually many countryside sites will go to Gift To Nature but this will be gradual. May not be able to hand over all sites – depends on what Natural England say</p>
	<p>Agree short term (from July 2022) and long term (from June 2023) environmental stewardship agreements (including tree planting) with Natural England (LM lead)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still need to focus primarily on emissions reductions over offsetting – this should be last resort. • Examining options for land and marine environment. Looking for more land to work on further tree schemes as some smaller scale tree planting has taken place recently. • Application to Woodland Creation Acceleration Fund submitted – waiting to hear back before deciding next steps

	Update corporate templates for decision making to include the requirement to consider the IW UNESCO Biosphere	Complete
	One part of the Island will have a Dark Sky Space designation by March 2024 following the completion of a positive business case and with secured funds by March 2022.	New streetlight lighting programme with warmer tone being rolled out across the proposed area. In dialogue with the Arizona Dark Skies team to refine the application.
	Directorate Plan templates, Service Plan Templates are updated to consider Climate and Environment Actions as well as actions that support the biosphere	Complete
	Progress against actions that support the IW Biosphere are fed back to the steering group	TBA
	Appoint the IW UNESCO Biosphere Steering Committee	Underway – detriment are live currently
The development of the IW Biosphere is overseen by a Steering Committee	Draft and agree Terms of Reference for the IW Biosphere Steering group	Complete
	Co-ordinate and schedule Steering Committee meetings	
	Secure commitment from all stakeholders to improve grid connectivity to the mainland and a roadmap for its achievement.	Working closely with network operator (SSEN) to identify net zero grid solution This is work being led by Regen (a clean energy consultancy) and commissioned by SSEN (the network operator) to identify the most cost-effective grid solution to allow the continued expansion of renewable energy generation. It will consider both traditional

reinforcement (new and upgraded wires) and smart grid solutions (storage and demand response) with a view to seeking approval from Ofgem for the necessary investment in 2023. Ofgem is required to approve the recommended net zero network investment.


Investigating council-owned site for large battery storage project

The council-owned Kingston Marine Park is well located for battery storage, being adjacent to the primary substation in East Cowes. Initial investigations for a 30MW scheme, including grid connection costs, are underway with a view to putting the opportunity out to the market if it looks viable. The battery storage project would only require part of the site and would provide resilience to other businesses co-locating there. The project would benefit from a new regulatory framework for battery storage in generation-constrained areas.

Exploring solutions for third party funding of zero carbon energy infrastructure in new developments

A report, produced for the Island by the South West Energy Hub, looks at how third-party finance could be leveraged to pay for the zero carbon energy

		infrastructure in new commercial and residential developments. This overcomes developer concerns about the cost of zero carbon developments and allows the energy company to recover its investment through supply contracts with all site users. It is being considered as an option for Ryde Business Park Extension (Nicholson Road).
Promote the increased use of renewable energy in all sectors	Commence capacity planning study for the Island in relation to renewable energy by end of February 2022 including a heat network options analysis for the Forest Road Energy Recovery Facility.	Works is underway alongside the above
	Update and submit Strategic Outline Case for transformation fund to recruit a full time Energy Manager	Final raft going to the Climate and Environment Board in October
	Increase the capacity in the local supply chain to deliver low carbon and retrofit works as well as the tidal energy industry by December 2022.	Business case commissioned to set out achievable viable options for retrofit.
	We will hold discussions with Southern Water and SSE for clarity around meeting infrastructure and capacity needs for the Island by November 2021.	Underway
We will initiate a strategic infrastructure and capacity review of all key utility services.	We will make joint representations with other local authorities at a regional level to ensure SW meet effective capacity and infrastructure requirements and take more responsibility for impacts on the Island's road network.	IWC a member of the Hampshire Climate Officers Group Is a Board Member at the national Man and the Biosphere Committee – annual meeting in Oct 2022

	Publish and Promote the Climate and Environment Strategy and fully launch 'Mission Zero' by Aug 2022.	Complete
Embed both the Biosphere and the Climate Change Strategy into policy, including the Island Plan; advanced by appropriate Action Plans. All council decisions are to have regard to the Biosphere and the Climate Change Strategy	Introduce Climate Change training modules to all staff, councillors and other stakeholders by August 2022 through the e-learning Hub.	A climate change module has been available for all staff in the e-learning hub since March 2022
	<p>Introduce carbon literate Climate Ambassadors to support decision making; undertake and complete Carbon Literacy Training by April 2023</p> <p>Pathway to Platinum Carbon Literate Organisation</p>	<p>The council has rolled out Carbon Literacy Training to officers and members and has now been recognised as a carbon literate origination.</p> <p>We will continue to follow the pathway to Platinum Status set out by the Carbon Literacy Programme</p> 
	Publish a policy Matrix detailing how the Climate and Environment Strategy, the Island Plan, the Local Transport Plan and the Biosphere Plan are aligned and mutually supportive of each other by July 2022 and together form the means to guide the maintenance and use of the Biosphere. This work will be supported and overseen by a Biosphere Steering Committee drawn from all relevant sectors of the	Policy Matrix is complete but awaiting the adoption of the Island Planning Strategy to be adopted to enable finalisation and publishing

	Island, including representatives of the Environment, Business, Art and Culture and Wellbeing.	
	<p>Develop an internal communications plan outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How council roles relate to C&E Strategy · Progress made towards net zero · Team and individual actions that can help · Track internal engagement with comms campaign <p>Assess whether an externally sourced programme such as Jump would be more effective in the long-term than an internal comms campaign</p>	In progress with the communication and engagement team.

16. Council Projects Currently Contributing to the above:

Project in development
Fleet strategy – replace ICE vehicles with EVs / supporting infrastructure
E-cargo bikes
Action from Fleet Strategy above
Staff EV charging facilities in office car parks
Grey fleet incentives
Carbon Offset Council Services
Energy Strategy - Council Estate -
Procurement
Mission Zero Community Hubs

Working with other anchor orgs.
Planning Strategy – items TBC
Building regs
Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
EV support facilities – garages on Island/develop local repairs and servicing industry
Local economy development
Utilities Capacity Study - Energy, Water, Gas,
Energy Strategy – Island
Waste and Recycling - Energy from Waste Plant Completion
Flooding & Coastal Defence Programme and Shoreline Management Plan 3,
Coastal Defence Programme (IWC/EA)
Flood Risk Strategy
Open Spaces and estate management
Countryside Stewardship (IWC sites renewal – 2023)
Countryside Stewardship - private land ownership
Private offset planting/rewilding
Carbon Credits Feasibility Study
Event management

Local Transport Plan 4
Active travel – e-scooter trial / bike share scheme
Energy – Home heating and insulation.
Adult services
Schools Energy Strategy
Schools activities and projects

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