

Three Rivers District Council

**CMT - Committee Report
Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan
Bi-annual Update**

Date: 18/08/24

Climate Change Leisure and Housing Committee

PART I

Climate and Sustainability Action Plan Bi-annual Update October 2024 (ADE)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the council's performance against the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2024 -2027, adopted by the Council on 12 December 2023, and it's associated Action Plan (Appendix 1).

2 Background

- 2.1 Recognising the crucial role that Local Authorities play in delivering on national and international climate mitigation and adaptation policies and targets this council declared a climate emergency in May 2019.
- 2.2 A Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan for its implementation was first produced in 2021 and in implementing that and subsequent strategies the council has undertaken a wide range of projects and initiatives to lead the Council to net-zero carbon by 2030, and support the district in being net-zero carbon by 2045.
- 2.3 The Action Plan 2024-2027 that was adopted in March 2024 has two sections, one for addressing council emissions and another for district wide emissions.

3. Council Emissions

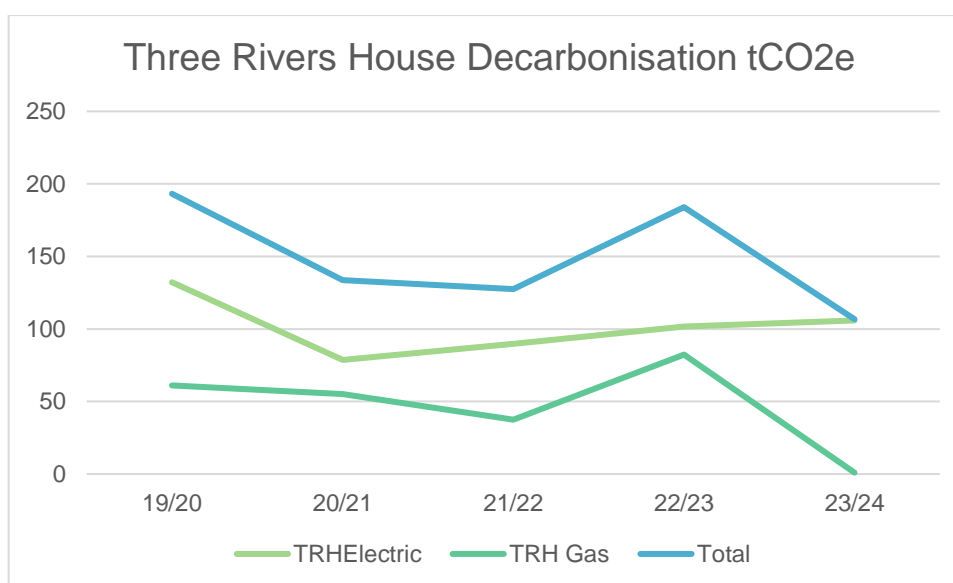
- 3.1 The Council scope 1,2 and 3 emissions over the last 6 years are shown in Figure 1.

Year	Tonnes CO2e	% Reduction from 2018/19
April 2018-March 2019 (BASELINE)	2,227	
April 2019-March 2020	2,390	+7%
April 2020-March 2021	2,153	-3%
April 2021-March 2022	2,113	-5%
April 2022-March 2023	2,100	-6%
April 2023-March 2024	2,159	-3%

- 3.2 Annual council emissions, whilst decreasing slowly remain fairly consistent. Significant interventions will be required to reduce them. The national grid is forecast to achieve net zero status by 2035¹
- 3.3 In 2019-20 The council's core buildings emitted approximately 942 tCO₂e per annum, with the council fleet emitting approximately 850t CO₂e / annum². Electrification of the fleet remains challenging as neither the technology nor the finance makes this a practical option in the near term. Given these challenges, the principal opportunity for council decarbonisation is to reduce the emissions of the core council buildings and the current action plan is reflective of that situation.
- 3.4 The council's first decarbonisation project on Three Rivers House, resulted in a server room upgrade and replacement of the gas boiler with an air source heat pump. This work has reduced the carbon emitted by 26t CO₂e compared to the average for 2020 – 2020 and is detailed as Figure 2.

Figure 2

Tonnes CO ₂ e	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
TRH Electric	132	79	90	102	106
TRH Gas	61	55	38	82	1
Total	193	134	127	184	107



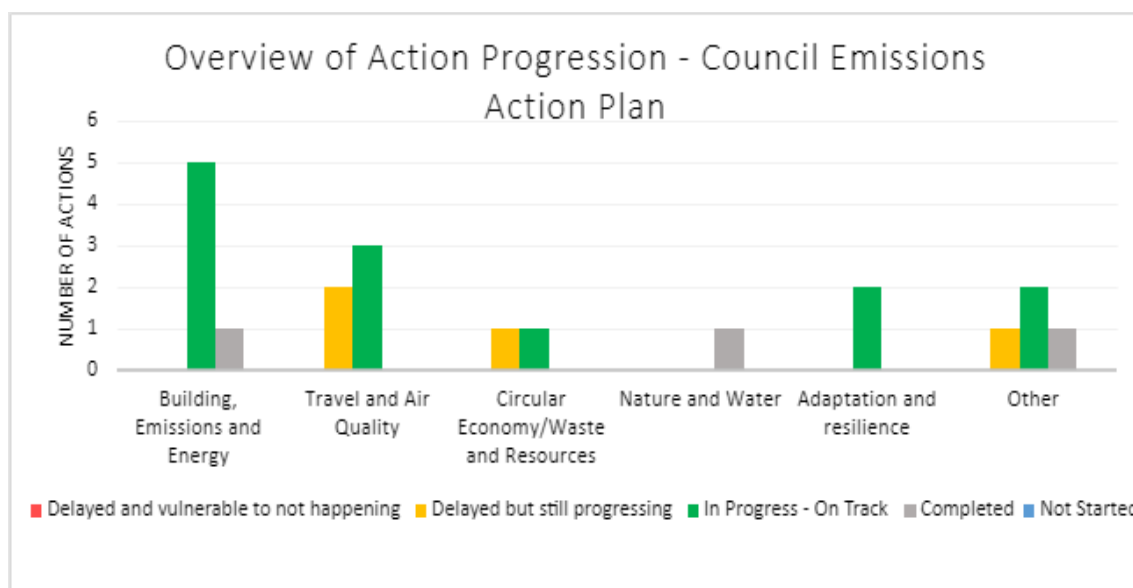
- 3.5 Work has commenced on establishing a practical, ethical, and viable carbon offsetting/insetting strategy. Officers are working with Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and the University of Hertfordshire to ensure the principles that are proposed will be universal across the county and most likely the wider Southeast region.

¹ [Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/white-papers/energy-white-paper)

3.6 The Councils progress against the identified action plan for the delivery of the strategy can be seen in the Climate Action Plan at Appendix 1. A RAG summary is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Council Emissions Action Progress	Building, Emissions and Energy	Travel and Air Quality	Circular Economy /Waste and Resources	Nature and Water	Adaptation and resilience	Other	Total
Delayed and vulnerable to not happening	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delayed but still progressing	0	2	1	0	0	1	4
In Progress - On Track	6	3	1	0	2	2	14
Completed	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Not Started	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retired	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total							21



3.7 For the council, 3 new actions have been added to the action plan; two connected to William Penn Leisure Centre (installing solar panels on the roof and producing a Heat Decarbonisation Plan for the whole site (Rows 6&7 Appendix 1)) and a third related to work taking place on carbon offsetting. 14 of the 21 actions are in progress and on-track, 3 have been completed, and 4 have been delayed but are still happening.

3.8 The highlights of the first 6 months of the year are:

3.8.1 A total of £242,750 of external funding has been secured to support decarbonisation projects in relation to the council building estate:

- Grand Union Community Energy (GUCE), with support from TRDC, have secured £40k of Community Energy Funding to investigate the feasibility of installing solar canopies on 7 council car parks using community funding.
- TRDC officers secured £49,950 Public Sector Decarbonisation Skills Fund to establish a Heat Decarbonisation Plan for William Penn Leisure Centre.
- TRDC officers secured £152,800 from [Sports England to install a 159kwp Solar](#) Photovoltaic system on William Penn Leisure Centre which will save 28t CO2e per annum and will be installed by the end

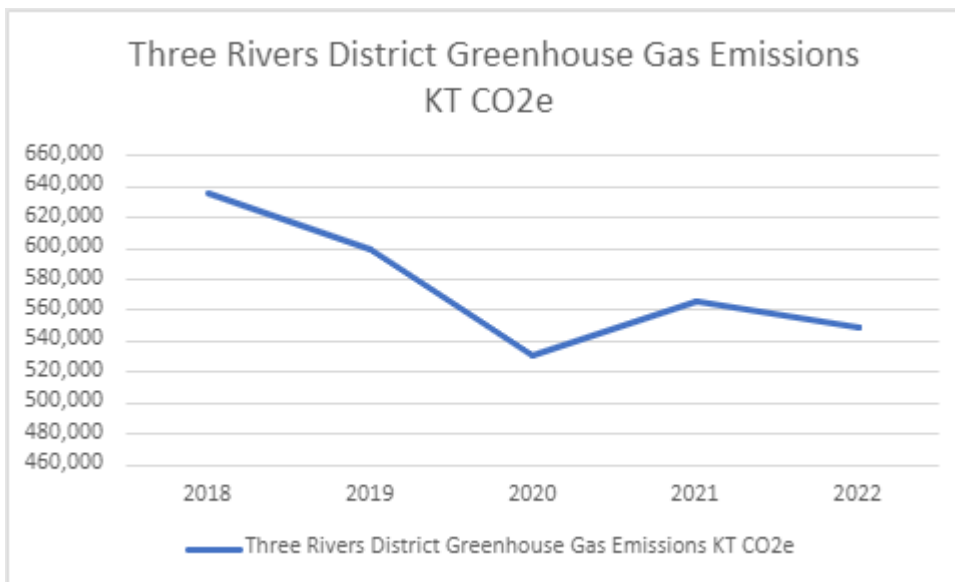
3.8.2 All council services have adaptation and resilience to climate change actions and risks embedded into service plans and risk registers

3.8.3 A new Biodiversity Policy was adopted in July '24 [to protect, enhance and improve biodiversity in the district.](#)

4 District Emissions

4.1 Between 2021 and 2022, greenhouse gas emissions decreased in 346 of the 361 (96%) local authorities in the UK. This is consistent with the 5% fall in overall UK emissions in 2022, largely considered to be result of a reduction in fuel use to heat buildings. Figure 4 shows the reduction of emissions in Three Rivers District. Between 2021 and 2022 they fell by 3%³

Figure 4

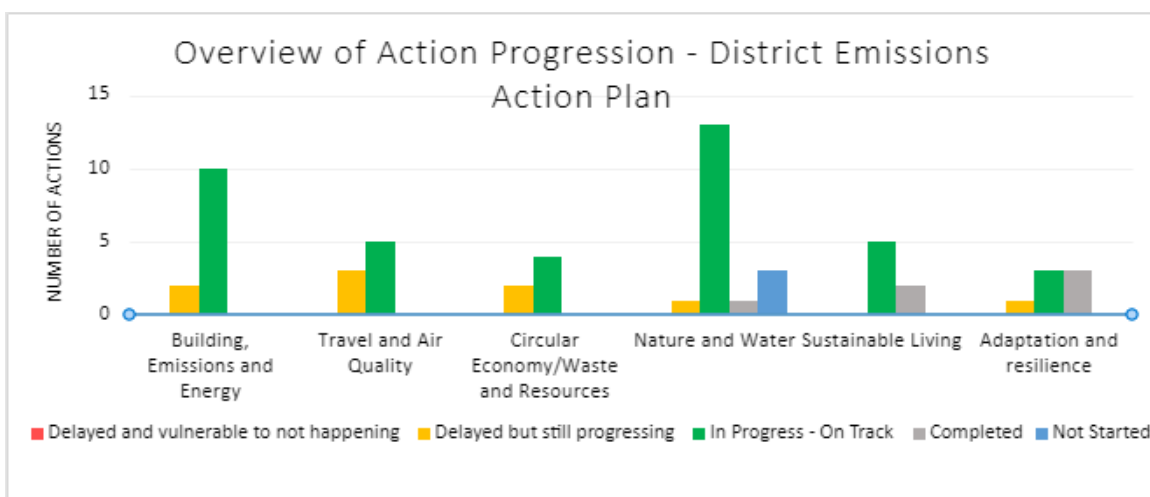


4.2 Appendix 1 shows the detail on progress on district actions, with a summary below in Figure 5.

4.3 Figure 5

³ [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-2005-to-2022)

District Emissions Action Progress	Building, Emissions and Energy	Travel and Air Quality	Circular Economy/ Waste and Resources	Nature and Water	Sustainable Living	Adaptation and resilience	Total
Delayed and vulnerable to not happening	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delayed but still progressing	2	3	2	1	0	1	9
In Progress - On Track	10	5	4	13	5	3	40
Completed	0	0	0	1	2	3	6
Not Started	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Retired	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
Total							58



4.4 For the district action plan, 3 actions have been retired because two featured twice in the original plan (Appendix 1 Row 56 and 63) and a third as the obligation is for the National Energy Foundation to source their own funding (Row 16 Appendix 1). Of the 58 district actions, 40 are in progress and on track, 6 completed, 3 yet to start and 9 in progress but subject to delay. These are complex projects and involve co-ordination of multiple partners, are often led or heavily rely on partner organisations such as electric vehicle infrastructure rollout, Local Cycling and Walking Strategy, and flood prevention schemes.

4.5 The highlights of the first 6 months of the year are:

4.5.1 Utilising Fast Followers funding secured in 2023:

- a Retrofit One Stop Shop has been piloted with 100 “hard to treat” homes in Three Rivers receiving a free retrofit survey and retrofit options plan.
- a group of neighbours from Rickmansworth were the first to complete the pilot Transition Streets programme and provided [strong endorsements of the programme in a case study video.](#)

- Draft policies and evidence bases are being developed by consultants to enhance the policies relating to energy efficiency of new builds and retrofit of existing buildings in the emerging Local Plan.
 - To help develop the local green economy and skills, the council hosted a [sustainability careers fair](#). Over 425 sixth form students and job seekers attended.
- 4.5.2 Up to 121 socially rented homes are being retrofitted with external wall insulation using £1.9m of Social Housing Decarbonisation Funds. Meanwhile, 22 private homes have been deeply retrofitted using ECO4 funding from E.ON. A range of energy efficiency grants are available to residents through the [Home Energy Support Service](#) which adapts continuously to reflect the changing funding climate.
- 4.5.3 The second round of Solar Together installations has been completed. After two rounds of the Solar Together bulk-buy scheme, 93 solar PV arrays and 83 batteries have been installed in Three Rivers, saving 71.6 tonnes of carbon.
- 4.5.4 A draft Electric Vehicle Strategy has been developed and is undergoing a [public consultation](#) which closes 4/10/24.
- 4.5.5 The council has been awarded Local Electric Vehicle Funding (LEVI) for on-street parking, Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) funding for town centre car parks, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds will be used for destination car parks such as the leisure centres. More details can be found in the [draft strategy](#).
- 4.5.6 The Council has approved the extension of the Watford Borough Council Beryl Bike service to Croxley Green, which is due to commence in Autumn '24.
- 4.5.7 To assist district sustainability since April 2024, £5,200 grant funding has been issued to 5 community organisations whose projects include insulating a community hall (Hendersen Hub), supporting home energy champions to advise residents on saving energy, installing a water collection system at an allotment (South Oxhey), clearing litter in Hunton Bridge, and improving biodiversity outside Kings Langley station.
- 4.5.8 The [Guide to Greening your Home](#) has been updated providing residents with guidance on ways to improve their property's sustainability, value to nature, and resilience to the effects of climate change.
- 4.5.9 Residents of Three Rivers have been given a great opportunity to grow their own food with Community Gardens in Rickmansworth, Chorleywood and South Oxhey. The council has set up a community garden task group to encourage the development of further sites while the Food Box project is supporting residents with fresh produce and cookery skills.

5 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council declared a climate emergency and agreed a strategy in 2023 as noted above. It was agreed on adoption of the strategy that a report would be brought to this committee biannually to report on progress against the strategy

and its action plan. This update is to advise this Council on the progress which is being made to date in 2024.

6 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 6.1 The budgets associated with the actions are identified within the report and its appendices. Most identified actions are achievable within existing budgets; however, some will need require additional funding. If the outcomes of the actions where further research and work is required to develop projects, future reports to Policy and Resources will be developed or external grants may be sought.
- 6.2 In setting the budget for the current financial year, the council approved an additional £75,000 budget to support delivery of the climate change and sustainability strategy. This additional funding has been invaluable in unlocking external sources of funds, and for supporting specialist consultancy to ensure the sustainability policies in the Draft Local Plan are as robust as possible with the current legislation. Table 1 below provides further detail on spend against this budget to date.

Table 1

Key Green: Spent/Acquired, Amber: in progress, Red: targeting	Funds Spent	Funds Raised/ Targeting
Sustainability Projects Budget	75000	
Support for Community Energy application for exploration of solar canopies on 7 council car parks	2700	£40,000
Consultancy support funds to ensure Draft Local Plan Sustainability Funds are as robust as possible. Project to complete by December 2024	£24,871	
William Penn: Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund application	£1,350	£49,995
William Penn Decarbonisation Plan Feasibility Study Invitation to tender, procurement and ongoing support to the project aiming. Outcome of feasibility, if approved will provide the information required for a Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund application more than £500m	£9,900	£500,000
Support for National Lottery Application to the Climate Action Fund	£750	£1,500,000
Cavity Fill outline business case application including application for Theatre Fund -decision expected early 2025	£900	£20,000
Cavity Wall installation for Three Rivers House - Outline Business Case submitted	£12,125	
Balance of uncommitted funds at 09/09/24	£23,154	
External Funds secured directly via investment from this budget line		£89,995

- 6.3 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators.

- CP50 District carbon emissions reported as tCO_{2e} equivalent.
- CP52 Council Operations Carbon emissions reported as tCO_{2e} equivalent.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 None specific to this report.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 None specific to this report

9 Staffing Implications

9.1 All service areas are and will be continue to be involved with the delivery of the Action Plan.

9.2 The staffing levels of the climate change team are in an extremely vulnerable position with just only one full-time position (split over two part time roles) funded through council revenue staff budgets. The current Net Zero Project officer is funded on a fixed term basis through short-term external grants. The uncertainty of future staff funding presents a significant risk to the team and to the ongoing delivery against the strategy and its action plan. A business case for budget growth has been submitted by officers for consideration as part of the budget setting process.

10 Equal Opportunities Implications

10.1 A Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment has been completed and can be found in the appendices. There are no negative impacts identified as arising from the proposals within the Action Plan and its delivery to date. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for specific actions and proposals on a project-by-project basis.

11 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

11.1 The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan reported in this report supports the Council and District to reduce emissions to net-zero carbon and increase sustainability across a wide range of areas. Furthermore, the Action Plan will support the mitigation of the impacts of the Climate Emergency.

11.2 A sustainability impact assessment can be found in the appendices resulting in a score of 3.8/4

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary	
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	3.75
Travel	3.33
Goods and Consumption	4.00
Ecology	4.00
Adaptation	3.50

Engagement and Influence	4
Total Overall Average Score	3.8

12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 Achieving the actions in this Action Plan will improve community safety across the district through reducing the risks associated with the Climate Emergency, including wildfires, floods, and heatwaves.

13 Public Health implications

- 13.1 The Action Plan should contribute to a prevention of deterioration of health and well-being issues arising from the consequences of climate change such as overheating, skin cancers, decline in productivity, and respiratory illnesses. Improvements in Home Energy Efficiency through retrofit work will improve environmental quality within homes and reduce energy bills, thereby assisting in reduction of financial anxiety related to household bills and benefitting physical health by improving the warmth and air quality within homes and preventing damp and mould.

14 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 14.1 None specific to this report

15 Communications and Website Implications

- 15.1 The website is crucial to this strategy as the repository for the information regarding all relevant projects and initiatives.
- 15.2 The district emissions ambition in the strategy demonstrates the need for sustained engagement with the residents, businesses, and communities in the district to encourage a shift to more sustainable behaviours. The climate change team works closely with the communications team and will continue to do so.
- 15.3 Briefings are held with members as required to optimise the chances of success of the various initiatives.
- 15.4 Active engagement will continue to be essential with the Local Strategic Partnership, parish councils, schools, resident associations, housing associations, activist, and conservation groups.

16 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 16.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk> with the climate emergency listed as a strategic risk.
- 16.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Climate and Sustainability service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response	Risk Rating
The Council fails to act to reduce its' CO2 emissions	The Council Net Zero target of 2030, Corporate Framework net zero carbon theme and requirements of the Climate and Emergency Sustainability Strategy are unlikely to be met unless a co-ordinated programme of activity is implemented. And importantly the Council will not be addressing the Climate Emergency and thus will contribute further to the increase in global warming and its' consequences.	For the Committee to note and continue to provide a mandate for officers to progress the actions identified.	Treat	6

16.3 In the officer's opinion the risk that the Council fails to act to reduce its emissions would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and therefore presents a strategic risk.

Recommendation

16.4 That:

The Committee note the progress made against the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan 2024 – 2027 and agree the forward direction of travel as outlined in this report.

Report prepared by: Joanna Hewitson, Climate and Sustainability Strategy Officer,

Background Papers

TRDC Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023 - 2027

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy Action Plan 2024 - 2027

Appendix 2: Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan 2024 - 2027 Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment

Appendix 3: Climate Emergency and Sustainability ACTION Plan 2024 - 2027 Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment

