

# Sustainability and Climate Committee Report

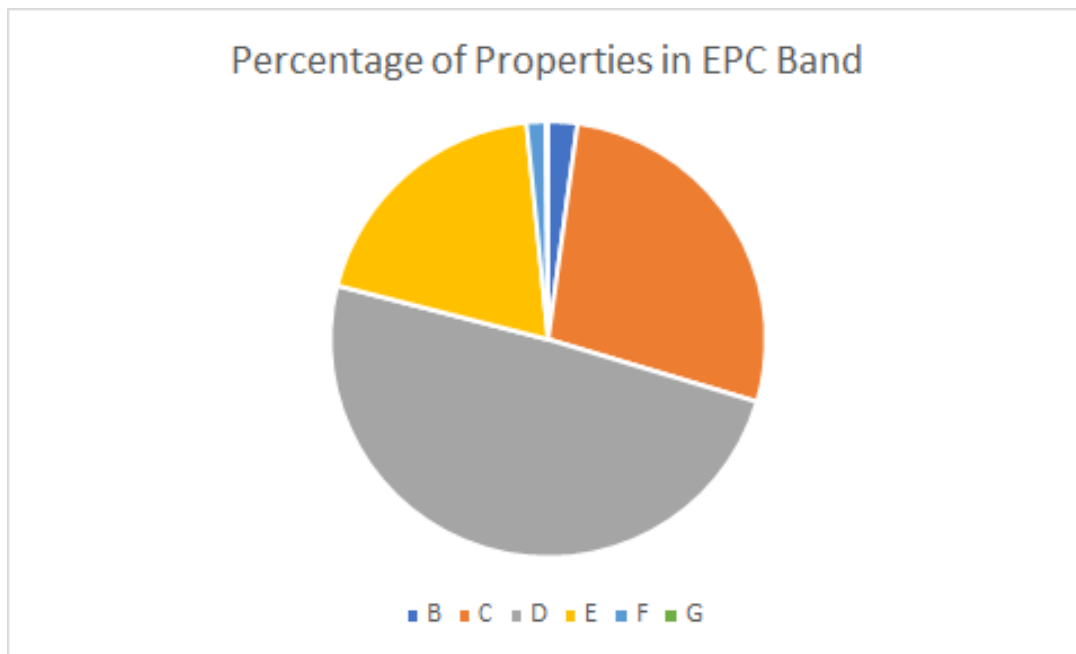
## INTRODUCTION

This month we have focused on housing within the district. Households are a big emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for 26% of total emissions in the UK, on a residency basis (\*ONS data)

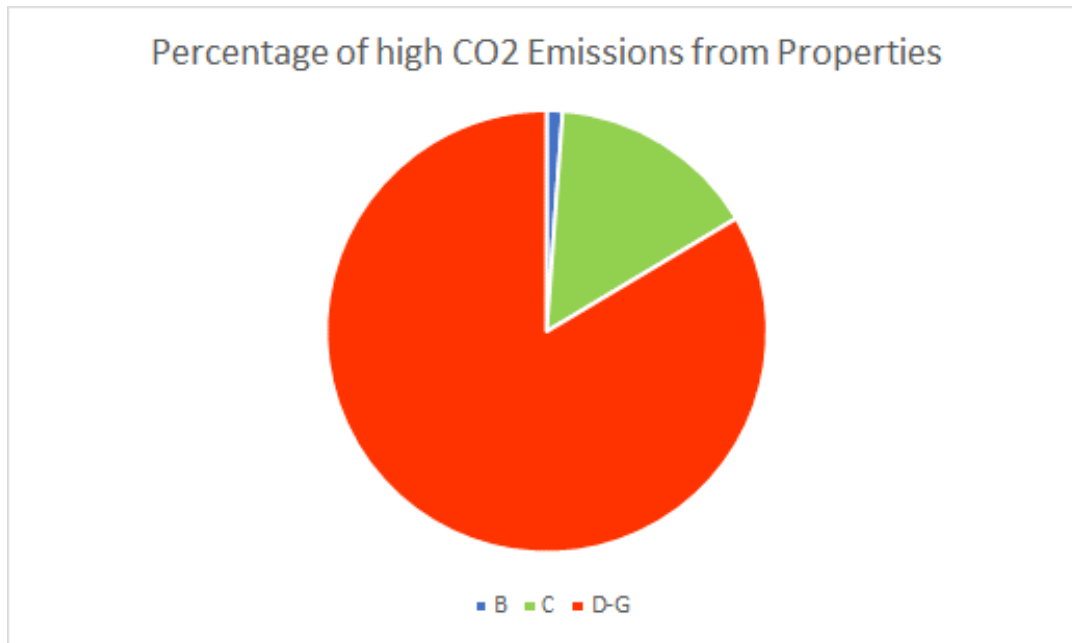
The vast majority of the UK’s privately owned homes are not energy efficient. More than half – 60% – are so poor that they have an EPC rating below C. With the UK now committed to reduce its net greenhouse carbon emissions to zero, the Climate Change Committee’s (CCC) 2019 Net Zero report concluded that ‘all building emissions would need to be entirely eliminated by 2050’

Within Three Rivers 70% of housing has an EPC rating of below C.

EPC Band	SAP score	Number of Homes	Percentage of Properties in EPC Band	Percentage of CO2 Emissions from Properties in EPC Band
B	81-91	811	2.15%	1.16%
C	69-80	10,364	27.47%	15.30%
D	55-68	18,617	49.35%	50.39%
E	39-54	7,328	19.42%	30.32%
F	21-38	541	1.43%	2.60%
G	0-20	64	0.17%	0.24%



\*<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/climatechangeinsightsuk/august20>



The average Carbon release for a 3 bedroomed EPC band D rated house is approx. 3.3 tonnes, the works carried out on the properties improved its rating to a Grade C, improving its footprint to 2.05 tonnes , a difference of 1.25 tonnes (on average) per house.

This means that if we were to upgrade all the Grade D and E dwellings in the district to a similar standard, we would reduce the district Carbon Footprint by at least  $25,945 \times 1.25 = 32,431$  tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. However, the graph above demonstrates the enormity of this task with all dwellings with a EPC of D and below, demonstrated in **RED**.

However, and here comes the issue, the cost of each of these upgrades, is in the region of £35,000 per house whilst the average saving on the yearly bills to residents is only £247 per house. This means that residents paying to upgrade properties could expect a payback period of 141 years (at today's prices), so for private residents absorbing all those costs this would not make economic sense and would only be an altruistic act for the next generation's future.

Without government intervention or support there is a huge barrier to action. However, even with government intervention, to bring all the District Houses to Grade C would be  $26,100 \times £35,000$ , so would cost in the region of £915.5 million pounds.

However, direct financial implications are not the only issue at play here. Issues with colder homes are associated with:

- 9,000 excess deaths a year attributed to poor quality cold housing.
- Children suffer from respiratory health, infant weight gain and overall susceptibility to illness.
- The previous statement can lead to time of school creating issues to education, further to this, colder homes have less warm rooms, resulting in children having limited space to study with homework often done in the family space.
- Unaffordable bills contribute to mental health issues in Adults.

- People with long term health issues and older people can have conditions exacerbated by cold homes, increase the risk of falls, increase hospital admissions and slow down recovery following discharge from hospital.

So, rather than look at the costs of home improvements as a stand alone costs, we need to also consider the social improvements and overall cost to the state that the improvements in health, that this will create.

## **SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

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### **Sustainability strategy updates**

- The Climate Emergency Strategy presented to P&R on 13<sup>th</sup> November.
- SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) Wave 1 completed at the end of October SHDF Wave 2 (120 Thrive Homes, 34 infill) is in the final phase of procuring a managing agent. Thrive are considering the timing of the project to align with their budgeting process. SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) Wave 1 completed at the end of October SHDF Wave 2 (120 Thrive Homes, 34 infill) is in the final phase of procuring a managing agent. Thrive are considering the timing of the project to align with their budgeting process. The Solar Together scheme Cohort 1 has completed with 73 installations. 590 residents registered for cohort.

### **Fast Followers project(s)**

- Transition Street programme - Applicants being shortlisted.
- One Stop Shop preparation complete, project now online. Structural surveys on key TRDC buildings have been completed with the report expected soon.
- Officers were due to be speak at a TRDC landlords forum to provide options on how they can improve their EPC to a C. Since the legislative requirement has been removed by central government this event will focus on funding that is available to landlords.

### **Behaviour Change: Waste**

- County-wide #WorthSaving project piloted in Three rivers has been expanded county wide
- Herts Confidence Contenance has launched county wide, a sister project to the ongoing reusable nappies and sustainable periods schemes
- Researching different approaches to increase food waste recycling from flats.

### **Adaptation Risk Management**

- Resilience and Adaptation register presented at P&R Committee 13<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Leisure Centres**

- Application submitted to Sport England for funding of additional solar panels at William Penn and South Oxhey Leisure Centre. Priority site is William Penn. Due to find out by the end of January 2024

## WOODLAND AND TREE PROTECTION

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### TRDC Tree Management

- Ash Die Back – Following inspection of high-risk locations, quotes for works are being obtained. Quotes should be received by January 2024. An action plan for works will then be prepared. Due to the large number of trees identified, works will need to be scheduled over multiple years.
- Oak processionary moth – A joint policy on OPM is being developed with other Councils in Hertfordshire, CMS are leading on the project and will confirm timescales once HCC funding for the work has been confirmed.
- Replacement and new trees for the forthcoming planting season are on order, planting anticipated in Dec/Jan.
- Tree Officer recruitment – The latest round of recruitment was unsuccessful, and no candidate appointed. Officers are currently looking at modern apprentices and other approaches such as a graduate position.

## BIODIVERSITY

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**Cattle Grazing** - All cattle are now off site.

**Croxley Common Moor** - Date of installation will be advised by CMS.

### **The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project**

Aiming to enhance the biodiversity/habitats present (including a section of river channel), protect the heritage and improve the accessibility year-round. Working in partnership with Batchworth Community Council and Colne Valley Regional Park, to secure external funding has commenced and a broad public consultation is live to aid understanding the site usage. - [The Bury Grounds Consultation | Have Your Say Three Rivers](#) The consultation runs until the 20<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Biodiversity Duty**

- The Environment Act 2021 introduced strengthened Biodiversity Duty (part 6, section 102) for public authorities in England who must consider what they can do conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- To comply with this biodiversity duty, the Council must complete its first consideration by 1st January 2024. Officers are working on this which entails identifying everything the Council is already doing for the benefit of biodiversity in addition to further opportunities that should be

taken. A statement of first consideration will then need to be published on the Council's website by the end of this year– this would be a broad outline of plans and will be brought to the December briefing for approval.

- Following the first consideration, the Council must agree the relevant policies and objectives through the committee process. Many of these are already in place and committee approvals processes part of BAU here at Three Rivers.
- The biodiversity duty then must be reported upon by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, and then a maximum of every 5 years following. The report communicates what has been done for biodiversity in the area and further plans that are to come in the next reporting period. As a local planning authority, additional updates relating to biodiversity net gain should be included within the reports.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

- Another element of the Environment Act 2021 that officers are currently working on is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (part 6, section 98-101). BNG is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural world in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. This includes a mandatory 10% net biodiversity gain using the biodiversity metric unless the application falls under an exemption.
- The original timeline for BNG to become mandatory was November 2023 when building new housing, industrial or commercial developments; however, this has now been pushed back to January 2024 and BNG for small sites will still be applicable from April 2024 as originally planned. Further guidance and secondary legislation produced from the Government On November 29th, which, once reviewed, should add clarity and aid understanding.
- Officers within the Leisure & Landscapes team are working with both planning colleagues and colleagues at Herts County Council to prepare for this. In addition, the Council are assessing opportunities to receive off-site BNG units on Council owned greenspace. A certain level of investment is first required to understand a baseline for Council owned sites and also if the land can be committed to the BNG management for a minimum of 30 years. Approval of these sites would need to go through the committee process in due course – further updates on this work will be provided as it progresses.

### **Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA) delivery**

- **Woodland Creation** at Cheshire Drive Open Space (Cheshire Dr, Leavesden, Watford WD25 7GP) & Barton Way Playing Fields (Barton Way, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth WD3 3QA): Creating small areas of woodland by planting approximately 100 whips (very young trees) at each site, the trees are then protected with guards and mulch mats to give them the best chance for success. The area of planting will be temporary fenced, without completely restricting access, to reduce the risk of trampling or crushing of the trees. The planting will take place this winter, with more detail to follow nearer the time. There are many benefits to woodland creation for local wildlife, for physical and mental health, and for the environment.
- **Standard Tree Planting:** Planting of 2-3m tall trees with adequate protection in appropriate locations. Trees will be planted through the Winter within council owned greenspaces and along within roadside verges. Where there isn't the space for woodland creation, or where it would be

inappropriate, the planting of individual large standard trees is a fantastic opportunity providing many of the same benefits.

#### **Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project**

- Officers have received confirmation that the bid to the “Additional Mitigation Panel” (AMP) has been approved - £510,463. Awaiting official grant confirmation paperwork before publicity can be undertaken or any work commence.
- The EOI has been accepted by the National Lottery Heritage Fund with the Council invited to make a full application. The full application for “Development Phase” will be submitted by August 2024.

## **AIR AND NOISE POLLUTION**

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- No significant issues at present

## **CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIALS**

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- Memorial Testing – Works expected to take place in January 2024

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM AND WATER PARTNERSHIP**

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- **Water Partnership:** Water Partnership following through with *Colne Can* to establish how TRDC can support the Smarter Water Catchment application officer are working to coordinate a cross council Officers working group focus on the regulatory aspect of water management.