Progress Report on the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy Target Delivery

To:	Environment and Green Investment Committee
Meeting Date:	12 October 2023
From:	Executive Director of Place and Sustainability
Electoral division(s):	All
Key decision:	No
Outcome:	The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the progress being made in implementing the Climate Change and Environment Strategy Action Plan and targets.
Recommendation:	The Committee is recommended to:
	Review the progress, key challenges and residual risk in the delivery of the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

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1.   Background

1.1   In February 2022, Full Council approved the Climate Change and Environment Strategy of the Council. This strategy covered three main areas, including mitigation, adaptation, and natural capital, and set out how the Council will support communities, businesses, and wildlife to thrive while reducing carbon and dealing with the effects of the changing climate.

1.2   In March 2023, the Environment and Green Investment Committee agreed a new risk-based approach to reporting progress against its targets and requested an update in six months to provide the first progress report using the new methodology.

2.   The Risk Based Methodology

2.1   The risk-based methodology was developed to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of the strategy and to highlight progress to the achievement of the Council's targets.

2.2   The new methodology uses action plans as risk mitigations, and where mitigations are not working or are insufficient to deliver the ambitions, these are amended and improved to ensure delivery is on track creating a more dynamic assessment. The risk methodology and matrix are set out in Appendices 1-3 of the report.

3.   Progress Report

3.1   A summary of the risk change is highlighted in Figure 1. The risk profile has improved as indicated in the October 2023 position.

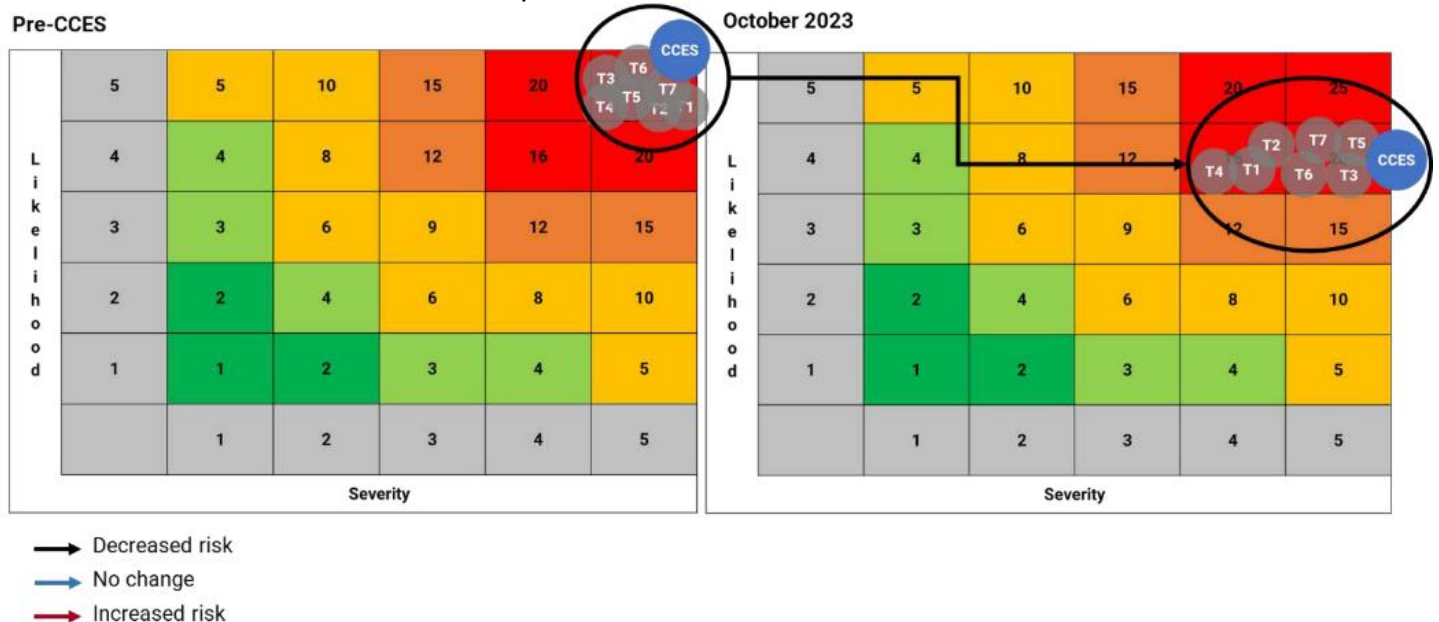
Figure 1 - Comparison of residual risk between pre-CCES and October 2023.

3.2   The Initial Risk Score (i.e., before the Action Plan is implemented) across the Programme is set at 25, which is the highest possible level. This is on the basis that, while some action was already underway, it was insufficient to adequately deliver the Targets at that time.

3.3   Following the methodology outlined in section 0, the residual risk of not delivering the Targets is 20. The decrease reflects that significant action has been implemented, sufficient to reduce the likelihood of non-delivery. However, there is still significant risk,

as set out in Figure 1.

Risk Analysis by Target

3.4   Target 1: Understand and grow our natural capital account to benefit people and nature by 2025

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	4	4	16	improving

3.4.1 There are eighteen actions mitigating the risk of non-delivery of this target. Actions tend to be in their infancy, with a focus on developing specific plans and strategies to develop the Council's approach to biodiversity and natural capital. The outcomes of these plans and ability to implement them will define whether risk will further reduce over the next reporting period.

3.4.2 Examples of specific projects that are underway include the March Natural Flood Risk Management and Community Led Nature Restoration projects, which are reducing the risk to meeting this target.

3.4.3 Work is also progressing on a Biodiversity Strategy and a survey to underpin and refine this target. The intention is to then update this to provide a set of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) targets for this area of activity.

3.5   Target 2: The Council will reduce emissions from our buildings and fleet transport to net zero by 2030 (scopes 1&2)

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	4	4	16	improving

3.5.1 There are sixteen actions mitigating the risk of non-delivery of this target. Generally, actions are progressing well, with significant work underway to develop decarbonisation plans for Council premises. The Council has decarbonised twenty-two corporate buildings for heating and hot water, while a further six sites are currently in the design phase. Forty-four decarbonisation plans for buildings have been procured and these will inform the future plans for the Council's estate. Challenges related to securing funding to decarbonise are keeping the risk high currently, however work is ongoing to proactively explore funding approaches.

3.5.2 Work is to be commissioned to understand how the Council's fleet is managed and decarbonisation will form part of that review. The results from this work will inform action and support implementation of low carbon fleet options.

3.6   Target 3: The County Council will reduce its supply chain emissions (all scope 3) by 50.4% by 2030

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	5	4	20	improving

3.6.1 There are twenty-six actions mitigating the risk of non-delivery of this target. Projects to understand how to reduce carbon and deliver decarbonation plans are progressing across the Rural Estate, Highways and Waste Services. Action plans are anticipated for January 2024.

3.6.2 Significant progress has been made to integrate climate and nature into procurement processes, however further piloting is required to understand any implications of greater environmental requirements on contract delivery and value. Potential funding implications remain a key risk along with the highly limited ability of some already stretched markets to make changes (e.g., social care provision, school bus provision).

3.7 Target 4: Improve our Biodiversity across the Council estate by 2030

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	4	4	16	improving

3.7.1 There are twenty actions mitigating the risk of non-delivery of this target. As with Target 1, actions tend to be in their infancy, with a focus on developing specific plans and strategies to develop the Council's approach to biodiversity.

3.7.2 Delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy and the Updated Tree and Woodland Strategy will support delivery of this target, and consideration for nature is also incorporated into Council asset decarbonisation plans. Similarly, the Rural Estates and Highways Service decarbonisation plans both incorporate improvements to nature in their scope. Management of this target will rely on effective implementation of these strategies and plans.

3.7.3 Key work is progressing on a survey to underpin and refine this target to make it SMART.

3.8 Target 5: Cambridgeshire carbon emissions will be net-Zero by 2045

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	5	4	20	improving

3.9 Target 6: Support our communities and businesses to decarbonise by 2045

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	5	4	20	improving

3.9.1 Due to their strong overlap, these two targets are discussed together. Across these targets there are forty actions - the majority of the action plan - mitigating the risk of non-delivery of this target.

3.9.2 Key actions are collaborative in nature, and the Council is not leading all partnership activities (e.g. the Council is a partner in Fenland SOIL looking at peatland emissions). While some collaborations are strengthening, such as integrating sustainable transport into plans with the Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the partnership developing the Local Areas Energy Plan, others are more challenging.

Managing collaborations to ensure delivery of this target is a key task with fluctuating partner positions over time.

3.9.3 Key areas that increase the risk profile of these targets:

- External Community Engagement: A communications plan has been implemented by the Communications Team. However, collaborative external proactive engagement activities have been a key challenge due to resource capacity across all partners, including the Council.

- Funding: Delivery at pace and scale across the different actions is limited by the availability and/or complexity of funding. While some projects have sound business cases and significant grant funding is being secured, further work is needed to secure long-term funding. This is being picked up via a government-funded Innovate UK project exploring financing solutions to deliver net zero, with results of the funding application pending.

- Facilitating community action: Various schemes such as Action on Energy Cambridgeshire and Heat Pump Ready have progressed. Challenging delivery of the Solar Together scheme, triggering a review of the longer-term outlook for such projects is currently increasing the risk to this target.

- Supporting electrification of transport: To date progress to provide Public Electric Vehicle Infrastructure across the county has been limited, with a pilot installing nineteen chargers on-street in Cambridge now complete. However, in collaboration with the Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council, the Council has now secured £232,000 from the government's Local EV Infrastructure Fund to enable resourcing and capacity building within the authority. Further funding to support joint training, consultancy and engagement activities will be held by the Combined Authority. Recruitment of a Lead EV officer has concluded with further support to follow once a funding agreement with the Combined Authority for the funding is signed. This means the authorities will shortly have dedicated resources and capacity building to support this action.

3.10 Target 7: All Council buildings and infrastructure to be resilient to climate change impacts by 2045

Initial Status			New Average Target Status			
Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	Direction
5	5	25	5	4	20	improving

3.10.1 There are twenty-two actions mitigating the risk of non-delivery of this target. While significant progress in managing flood risk across the county is recognised within the risk analysis, there remains a key challenge in ensuring the Council and its infrastructure are resilient to the additional pressures the changing climate may bring.

3.10.2 The Public Heath team is undertaking analysis to understand the potential health implications on residents and working with the Integrated Care System (ICS) to begin exploring how services may need to evolve.

3.10.3 A lack of suitable information on the nature and scale of the risk climate presents the Council is the key barrier to delivery of this target. A collaboration with the Combined Authority, District and City councils, the Local Resilience Forum, the ICS, as well as the Ambulance, Fire and Police Services is under development. This is seeking to commission a quantified evidence base of the risk climate poses to our collective

statutory services, quantifying the "do nothing" position financially where possible. This would enable targeted adaptation actions to be defined and support future business case development. This is currently being led by the Council as the lead with the Regional Climate Change Forum for adaptation.

3.11   Across the programme, there are several key elements that are either supporting or inhibiting significant progress towards target delivery as set out below:

- Integration of Nature into the Climate and Environment Programme (previously Net Zero Programme) over the last six months aligns all the CCES actions within a single strong existing governance mechanism to drive delivery.

- Resourcing and Funding: This remains an ongoing challenge, and is particularly acute in certain areas, such as driving forward net zero delivery and important biodiversity actions that will arise once strategies are developed.

- External Strategy Developments: A range of proposals have been recently suggested for the Cambridge area by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in relation to forthcoming legislation and strategy. It is not possible to assess the implications of these ideas until further detail is available. Should new legislation come into effect in line with nationally highlighted proposals, further assessment of the climate and nature related implications for the county will be required in addition to the statutory processes. The risk mitigation (climate actions) needs to be regularly reviewed to reflect the current risk position according to the external impacts of decisions and legislation.

3.12   Next steps for progress reporting. The fifth annual carbon footprint report (for 2022-23) is currently being drafted and will be presented to the Committee in November 2023. Discussions are now underway on bringing together both the annual carbon footprint report and this risk report into one document over the next twelve months, to start to build a more coherent picture of the successes, the challenges and gaps to delivering the Council's ambitions.

4.   Alignment with ambitions

4.1   Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes.

       The report outlines progress towards reaching this corporate ambition.

4.2   Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable.

       The CCES Action Plan includes actions to support sustainable travel.

4.3   Health inequalities are reduced.

       Improving the natural environment is a key wider determinant of health, supporting better health outcomes and reducing inequalities across the County.

4.4   People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs.

       The actions within the CCES deliver several wider co-benefits that align to this ambition. For example, adapting services to ensure they continue at their best despite the changing

climate.

4.5   Helping people out of poverty and income inequality.

The actions within the CCES deliver a number of wider co-benefits that align to this ambition including reducing fuel poverty and developing funding routes to enable all residents to benefit from the transition to a low carbon economy.

4.6   Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised.

Just transition is a key theme of the CCES, with all projects designed to support communities to take advantage of the benefits climate and environmental action brings.

4.7   Children and young people have opportunities to thrive.

The actions within the CCES deliver a number of wider co-benefits that align to this ambition including supporting schools to decarbonise and improve the school environment.

5.   Significant Implications

5.1   Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category. Resource is highlighted as a key challenge to delivery of the CCES action plan and its targets. Proposals for changes to the level of resources will be picked up via the business planning process.

5.2   Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.3   Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Legal review of the grant funding agreements for the LEVI fund (see description at target 5 & 6) will be undertaken ahead of signing.

Should the LEVI funding not be drawn down, the Council will be unable to build capacity and resource to deliver EV charging infrastructure across the County (unless funded by a new Council revenue budget). Without this capacity the Council will also be unable to develop a business case to access the separate c.£5million LEVI capital funding in 2024.

5.4   Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category. Each project resulting from the

CCES will produce its own EqIA as part of project governance.

5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category. Each project resulting from the CCES will produce its own Health Impact Assessment as part of project governance.

5.8 Climate Change and Environment Implications on Priority Areas:

The CCES sets out the Councils priority areas for action, all of which are covered by the CCES action plan. Progress to deliver these actions helps to mitigate the risk of the council not reaching its climate targets and ambitions.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?   Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial?   Yes
Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory and legal implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer? Yes
Name of Officer: Emma Duncan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User?
Yes
Name of Officer: Sheryl French

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes
Name of Officer: Kathryn Rogerson

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?   Yes
Name of Officer: Sheryl French

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?
Yes
Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Climate Change and Environment implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?
N/A

6.   Source Documents

6.1 [Update on delivery of the Climate Change and Environment Strategy (CCES) Action Plan](Agenda Item No. 6 – Environment and Green Investment Committee meeting on 16 March 2023)