

The current government pledge sees us needing to hit net zero by 2050, and whilst Essex County council have already pledged to hit this target many other councils and organisations are aiming for a target of 2035, I would ask that we could hold a separate meeting with the intention of working out our route to net zero so that we can develop a plan to reach net zero and make our pledge to work towards a more sustainable tomorrow.

I have listed the basic steps needed as well as other additional steps which I think we should consider taking, however there is a purpose made tool for local councils to measure their carbon footprint, this will allow us to accurately calculate to include things like our paid services such as grass cutting and flower bed maintenance which will help focus our attention on reducing it, I would ask that we register an account with SCATTER cities and use this tool to look at our current carbon footprint and look at the prospecting changes we can make and their impact to allow us to make a plan for the way forward?

“SCATTER is a local authority focussed emissions measurement and modelling tool, built to help create low-carbon local authorities. SCATTER provides local authorities and city regions with the opportunity to standardise their greenhouse gas reporting and align to international frameworks, including the setting of targets in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. Its use is free of charge to all local authorities in the UK.” (<https://scattercities.com/>)

With regards to the things I have identified as needing doing, as members will see some are really simple changes like switching lightbulbs, which probably doesn't need to come to council and can simply be done next time a light bulb needs replacing, whereas others like replacing council vehicles for electric vehicles do obviously need debating and if we are going down that route then consideration in budgets and in getting a charger need looking at; and I would suggest that a separate meeting to look at the list and determine a timeline for moving forward on individual steps is drawn up, this will then allow us to commit to a meaningful pledge to achieve net zero with a realistic timeframe.

Easy changes

Switch to LED light bulbs in all buildings

Use green energy suppliers for all buildings

Recycle all waste products possible

Put water bricks in toilet cistern

Fit aerators to taps

Install water butt close to flower beds where possible

Access website for redundant pages

Making sure unused email addresses are deleted, and encouraging members and staff to not save messages unnecessarily

Review ordering

Buy recycled products where possible

Buy products in bulk (annually) to reduce deliveries / trips to suppliers

Buy as local as possible (an order from Scotland has a lower carbon cost for delivery than say China)

Bigger Changes

Bring all insulation up to current standards

Replace and upgrade all door and windows

Replace vehicles for EV vehicles and install chargers for them

Replace all appliances with the most energy efficient models

Where applicable installing solar panels

Upgrade heating and hot water to heat pumps, solar or other lower carbon costing alternatives where applicable

Going Further

We also need to consider as a council how far we want to go, realistically we need to reduce our own carbon emissions, however I would suggest that we have a responsibility to promote net zero and support residents, businesses, and community groups on their journey to net zero too, some ideas as to how we can do that are:

We could reach out to local individuals like Dawn Wood to see if they would work with us to host events aimed at residents, community groups, organisations, and businesses to raise awareness of the carbon targets and sustainability and to encourage and support them with practical advice on how to embark on their journey to carbon neutral. As well as contacting Love Essex about involvement from them with promoting carbon neutral and sustainability.

With the governments push for EV cars and many residents in the town not able to have EV chargers at their properties due to a lack of drive ways and even in many streets a lack of parking near the properties in general we need to do all we can to help local residents access EV charging points and thus make it easier for them to switch, whilst we are currently looking at EV charging in Providence carpark, these are few and only at one end of town and whilst we may not own other land to look at installing them we could look at other ways we could look to facilitate this such as

Contacting Essex highways about any plans they may have to install on street charging in the town

Contacting the owners of the other parking spaces in town (MDC) about them installing EV charging points

Contacting Greater Anglia about the potential of them putting EV chargers in their carpark, for residents without the option to charge at home and for visitors to the town too.

Contacting Co-op about the potential of them putting EV chargers in their carpark, for residents without the option to charge at home and for visitors to the town too.

Additional Reading

The carbon cost of water

<https://www.csu.edu/cerc/researchreports/documents/CarbonFootprintofWater-RiverNetwork-2009.pdf>

Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral

<https://assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/19s2K8YmSWTjxDOU7qjSz/e1a2c27e79661f691c8af5687c34d70e/Net-Zero-Report-Making-Essex-Carbon-Neutral.pdf>

The Climate Change Committee: The Climate Change Act 2008

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/what-is-climate-change/a-legal-duty-to-act/#:~:text=The%20Climate%20Change%20Act%20commits,20%25%20of%20the%20UK's%20emissions.>

Net Zero Strategy: build back greener

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf

Carbon map

<https://www.carbonmap.org/#Historical>