Green recovery

BRIEFING

<u>CEN Councillors: Green recovery briefing</u>

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This is not intended to be an exhaustive briefing, but an overview of the key facts, figures and information that can help you to respond to the topic. This is written as if the reader is a new Councillor who does not have a background in climate policy. If you are interested in finding out more, please see the useful organisations in Section 6.

<u>Top tips on delivering a local green recovery and funding opportunities for CEN Councillors</u>
1. Team up with a local environment charity to apply to the Government's new <u>Green Recovery Challenge Fund</u> for local nature conservation projects (e.g. tree planting, pollinator work or green spaces). **Open until 24 September** (find out more in **Section 3**).
2. Promote the new Green Homes Grant scheme to help local residents install energy efficiency measures, reducing their household bills and supporting local construction jobs. A<u>pplications are open from the end of September</u> (find out more in **Section 4**).
3. Consider introducing a Green Recovery Plan, outlining your priorities and policies (or outlining how it may impact your existing net zero strategy), particularly ahead of the local elections to show progress on any climate emergency/net zero motions (find out more in **Section 5**).
4. Look at how you could work with head teachers to introduce 'school streets' to protect school children from the impacts of air pollution as we get our communities moving again. School streets involve closing the road directly outside of the school to cars during peak pick up and drop off times to safeguard the health of pupils while encouraging walking and cycling. Our polling showed that school streets are a particularly popular measure to tackle air pollution (find out more in **Section 2** including a Conservative Council case study from RBKC).

<u>1. Background to a green recovery</u>

Key information:
- **The Government has already taken steps towards a green recovery.** It will be creating 5,000 conservation jobs through a £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund, investing £100 million into direct air capture technology, and spending £2 billion this year on vouchers worth up to £5,000 for home energy efficiency upgrades. It has also announced £2 billion of funding for cycling and walking infrastructure and set a goal of delivering a zero emission flight across the Atlantic within a generation.
- **Green projects have huge potential to generate short- and long-term economic benefits.** As part of its recovery package, the Government will be considering new policies to unleash private

and public investment in clean and resilient infrastructure and industries. It will look to support the UK's booming low-carbon economy to grow, export and create more jobs.

- **Our polling shows clear support for an economic recovery that also tackles climate change.** If the government does not choose to tackle pollution and climate change in the economic recovery from Covid-19, 71% of the British public describe this as 'the wrong thing to do'. This result is broadly consistent across age groups, regions, and voting behaviour.

Context to the recovery:

- [The smarter economic choice](#): Research led by a group of Oxford economists shows that green investments could offer the best long-term economic returns for government spending. Respondents to their survey, who included G20 finance ministry and central bank officials and academics, gave some of their highest economic ratings to green measures including clean energy and building retrofits. In the global financial crisis recovery, green stimulus policies during the global financial crisis had [20% better returns than traditional fiscal measures](#).

- **Supporting reskilling, retraining, and research:** Green investments will both create new jobs to tackle the higher unemployment caused by the pandemic, and help us to build the national workforce required to meet net zero. Builders, installers, and designers are needed to install low-carbon heating, improve flood defences and energy and water efficiency, or maintain wind turbines and solar panels. This will create jobs across the country and help the levelling up agenda.

- **Decoupling emissions from growth:** Economic growth and carbon emissions are not mutually dependent. Investments in green, low-carbon, and resilient solutions will avoid creating stranded assets with stranded jobs longer term and will be better value for money for the taxpayer. There was a similar dip in emissions in 2008/09 following the economic downturn, but it was followed by a surge in emissions from new carbon-intensive infrastructure that was supported to generate short-term economic growth.

Long-term change:

- **Post-lockdown travel:** There is a worldwide trend of pedestrianisation and encouraging cycling to facilitate socially distanced and sustainable urban travel. [France](#) introduced a $20 million scheme to get more people cycling, including making available cycle repair vouchers. [Milan](#), one of Europe's most polluted cities, introduced one of Europe's most ambitious pedestrianisation schemes - their initial pop-up bike lanes are now also becoming permanent creating a network across up to 35 additional kilometres. [New York](#)'s "nation-leading" Open Streets scheme has also just been expanded, with another 23 miles added to bring the citywide total to 67 miles.

- [The consequences of ecological disruption](#): The growing number of animal-borne diseases, like Covid-19 and SARS, is driven by human activities. Whether it's through the wildlife trade, agricultural expansion, mining, logging or urbanisation, humans are coming into closer contact with wildlife, which creates opportunities for viruses to 'spillover' into human populations by mutation or recombination.

- [Economic benefits of biodiversity recovery](#): The [interim report](#) of the Treasury-commissioned Dasgupta Review into the economics of biodiversity notes, "the current high rates of biodiversity loss pose a major risk to our economies and our way of life," and "urgent action is needed". Poor environmental quality imposes huge costs in healthcare and lost productivity. Investment in access to green space, waterways and healthy air will bring rapid productivity dividends and savings for the

NHS. Sectors such as tourism, farming, and fishing all rely directly on the restoration of nature, which can also be used to defend against natural risks such as flooding and drought.

Existing Government action:

- **Petersberg Climate Dialogue:** On April 28th the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said: ([00:47]) "It will be the duty of every responsible government to see that our economies are revived and rebuilt in a way that will stand the test of time. ...There is no choice between cutting emissions and growing economies. That's a myth the UK has helped to shatter over the past decade."

- **Post-lockdown travel:** The Government is encouraging people to commute by bicycle as a key part of proposals to avoid overcrowding on public transport. They also praised the "massive increase in active transport", pointing to a rise in the number of people taking part in the cycle to work scheme. The Government has given local authorities greater powers to create car-free streets during the pandemic. This will help to encourage new cyclists, who may be afraid of heavy traffic and accidents. They also announced a £2 billion funding package to support councils to create more walking and cycling infrastructure and fast-tracked the legalisation of e-scooters.

- **Green Recovery Fund:** The Prime Minister's speech on Tuesday 30th June included a pledge to create a new £40 million Green Recovery Fund to deliver shovel-ready local conservation projects, generating 3,000 jobs, including new 'conservation rangers', and safeguarding a further 2,000. This will go a long way to safeguard the UK's natural carbon stores and wildlife habitats – our meadows, rivers, and local green spaces – which are central to capturing and removing CO2 from the atmosphere, protecting precious biodiversity, and connecting people with nature.

- **Innovation:** The Prime Minister set the goal for the UK to deliver the first transatlantic zero emission flight and pledged to invest £100 million into direct air capture technology.

- **Brownfield development:** The speech included a policy to make it easier to build on brownfield and repurposing existing empty buildings to protect greenfield land. He also, however, pledged to tackle "newt-counting delays" to new development (a reference to the EU's Birds and Habitats Directives), which some environmental groups have criticised.

- **Energy efficiency package:** Rishi Sunak's Summer Economic Update pledged to deliver a green recovery with "concern for our environment at its heart". He announced a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme, £500 million of which will be allocated by councils and their partners through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme. (Find more below in **Section 4**.)

Public support (from CEN polling in June - find out more):

- **Prioritising climate in the economic recovery:** If the government does not choose to tackle pollution and climate change in the economic recovery from Covid-19, two thirds of the British public (71%) describe this as 'the wrong thing to do'. By contrast, just 17% see this as 'the right thing to do'. This split is broadly consistent across age groups, regions, political party vote, and Brexit vote. Most also believe failure to tackle climate change in the recovery would 'harm future generations' (73%) and be 'bad for the economy in the long run' (67%).

- **Economic benefits of a green recovery:** Over half of people (57%) believe tackling climate change in the economic recovery would 'create new jobs and boost the economy', compared to just 11% who believe it will 'cost jobs and harm the economy'. A fifth (19%) say it would 'make no difference to jobs or the economy'. A belief that a green recovery will 'create new jobs' is slightly higher in the North of England (59%).

- **Job creation priorities:** When asked to choose which green and brown sectors they would like the government to prioritise for job creation out of a list of options, people choose: renewable energy (46% of respondents); nature conservation (37%); and energy efficiency (35%). These came ahead of clean transport (31%), science (30%), housing construction (29%), road construction (18%), telecoms (12%), and auto manufacturing (5%).
- **Local infrastructure priorities:** Energy efficiency is a bigger priority for 55-75 year olds (40%) than the general population (35%). Making schools, hospitals and care homes more energy efficient (51% put it in their top three) and making older homes more energy efficient (49%) are the two infrastructure projects people most want to see in their local area. They are the top two priorities for every age group and region of the UK. Improving local bus and train services (45%) and building more cycling and walking routes in the local area (38%) follow closely behind, while improving local access to faster broadband (26%) and building new houses in the area (23%) are further down the list. The least popular options are expanding local airports (6%) and building more roads (9%).
- **Air quality policies:** The public are strongly in favour of tougher air quality measures. There is joint-highest agreement that 'councils should create car-free zones outside of schools during pick-up and drop-off times, even if it makes it harder for parents to pick up their children' (70%) and 'the government should strengthen air pollution laws, even if this means restrictions on driving in big cities' (70%). The next most popular measures are 'the government should invest in electric and hydrogen buses, even if taxpayers' money goes towards the cost' (67%), 'the government should offer incentives for people to replace their old petrol or diesel car with an an electric car, even if taxpayers' money goes towards the cost' (64%), and 'the government should invest in cycling and walking, even if this makes it slower for some drivers' (63%).

2. Transport and active travel

Cycling and walking:
- With the significant uptick in walking and cycling since lockdown began, it's important to provide people with safe options to choose active travel. This will help to lock in reduced air pollution levels experienced during lockdown. These measures don't need to make it harder for people to drive, but if everyone who would normally use public transport also chose to drive, there would be significant congestion and air pollution.
- Rural and urban areas will have different needs for cycling infrastructure, but you will know your area best. If your area is particularly hilly, you may be interested in encouraging more e-bikes (below).
- You could open a consultation to ask local residents where they would like to see changes that make them feel safer to walk and cycle, for example, pop-up cycle lanes, wider pavements to accommodate a two metre distance when passing someone, safer junctions, zebra crossings, or speed bumps. (See this survey led by Transport Minister Rachel Maclean for her local area in **Redditch.**)
- Temporary measures can be reviewed if underused or unpopular - e.g. paint marks, plastic bollards or movable tree planters (which can also contribute to tree targets).
- Pedestrianisation measures can also be temporary or timed - for example, timed bollards can allow trucks and vans access to shops early in the morning for deliveries, and then cut off through traffic

during peak shopping hours. There are case studies showing that improvements in pedestrian access to public spaces can improve footfall in shops (see the Pedestrian Pound). This also allows more space for social distancing, improving shopper confidence in your high street.

- **Leicestershire County Council** have introduced several pop-up cycle lanes alongside a mix of permanent and temporary schemes to encourage people to walk and cycle, thanks to funding from the Emergency Active Travel Fund.

Schools streets:

- Our polling showed that 67% of Conservative voters agree that "councils should create car-free zones outside schools during pick-up and drop-off times, even if this makes it less convenient for some parents to pick up their children".
- Children can be particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution, so creating a radius around the school to safeguard them from traffic pollution, whilst also encouraging them to walk and cycle to school, can be hugely beneficial. It also improves the safety of children on an often busy road.
- School street schemes close the road directly outside schools to vehicles during peak drop off and pick up times. Councils put up signs, barriers and/or cameras to stop non-residents driving through the area. (Find a toolkit via Living Streets)
- You can consult with your schools to start phasing in these measures, and begin by encouraging parents to park away from the school gates and walk the last ten minutes.
- Schools could consider a rewards scheme for those who cycle or walk to school more frequently, with certificates to be awarded by the council for the best Clean Air Champion pupil or school.
- The **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council** has set up a number of school streets as part of their Active Travel Plan, working with eight schools to close the road outside their school gates during arrival and closing times. This aims to encourage socially-distanced cycling and walking while reducing reliance on cars. This followed a successful local trial.
- **Harrogate Council** has been working on a programme of activities to encourage more children to walk and cycle to school, including improving safety on specific routes working with schools and parents.

Public transport and electric vehicles:

- You must wear a face covering on public transport and in closed areas of transport hubs in England unless you are exempt. You should also aim to maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- The government has also encouraged people to travel at off peak times and use quieter stations and stops where possible, keeping changes to a minimum.
- Near the beginning of lockdown in April, the government announced that bus companies would receive £167 million in new Government funding to help them to cope with the loss of revenue.
- Many of you are likely already in touch with your providers (such as Stagecoach) to hear about the provisions they have put in place to safeguard both drivers and passengers.
- **Kettering Council** has been working to deliver numerous electric charging points at council-owned car parks by lobbying for funding and working with partners.
- **Kent County Council**'s 'Kent REVS up for Cleaner Air' project aims to offer local businesses the chance to borrow an electric van for up to two months, with capital funding from Highways England, supported by Council funding for administration costs. At the end of the scheme, some vans will be retained to replace council leased vehicles or sold on to public sector partners.

E-scooters and e-bikes:

- E-bikes are [available](#) through the Cycle to Work Scheme, a salary sacrifice process whereby an employee can give up part of their pre-tax salary in exchange for upfront support to buy a bike. Find more information on the criteria and guidance for employers on [the gov.uk website](#).
- [The recent Gear Change Strategy](#) confirmed that the Government will set up a national electrically-assisted bike support programme in due course. It "could include loans, subsidies, or other financial incentives, using the learning from other schemes in the UK and abroad for e-bikes, adapted e-bikes and other e-vehicles".
- [**Rutland County Council**'s scheme](#) allows people to hire e-bikes for travel to work, school, training, or social activities they would otherwise be unable to attend.
- Public e-scooters are now [legal on roads](#), with the Government monitoring their safety as part of a year-long scheme. The Department for Transport wants e-scooters rental schemes - similar to those seen in European cities - tried out across England, Wales and Scotland. Riders wouldn't need to take out their own insurance to hire an e-scooter, but they would need at least a provisional driving license, and could use the e-scooters within set geographical boundaries.
- **Redditch Borough Council** submitted a successful bid to be a trial area for e-scooters, after accepting bids from various companies including Bird and Bolt to run their town centre scheme.

3. Greening green spaces

Co-benefits of your green spaces:

- Parks in England deliver an estimated £6.6 billion of health, climate change and environmental benefits each year including £2.2 billion in avoided health costs alone and are worth £140 per year to each urban resident (according to [the Parks Alliance](#)). For every £1 spent on parks in England an estimated £7 in additional value for health and wellbeing and the environment is generated.
- Green spaces can create significant mental and physical health benefits. Studies have linked exposure to green space to reducing the number of long-term conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and musculoskeletal conditions.
- Your green spaces should offer value for people and nature. Consider diversifying your green spaces beyond open patches of grass with a range of types of foliage and flowers that could help to maximise their value to pollinators and wildlife, bringing enjoyment for visitors at the same time. Formal flower beds, botanical gardens, wildlife and special interest gardens, clusters of trees, and ponds can add new features to your green space.
- Parks can help with flood management (porous surfaces), absorbing urban heat, and filtering contaminants and noise pollution (e.g. green walls and vertical gardens).
- People living in deprived areas often have less access to green space, with estimates that children in deprived areas are nine times less likely to have access to green spaces and places to play (as of 2013).

Review management practices:

- **Staffordshire Moorlands Council** is working with their local Wildlife Trust on a Green Infrastructure Strategy, to find out where the best value habitats are and restore and connect them.
- Could you create a wildlife corridor? Species become more vulnerable when habitats are disconnected. The [Wildlife Ways scheme](#) from **Solihull Council** aimed to make improvements to

woodlands, grasslands, and verges to make a green network of sites and habitats. They've planted 64 football pitches of wildflowers. This has created beautiful places for residents to enjoy and helped support butterflies and pollinator species.

- Could these green spaces and pathways be connected with your cycling plans? Perhaps joining up canal-side cycle paths or moving one off road through a park could increase footfall and keep cyclists safe.

- Look at where your green gaps are. Who doesn't have access to a green space and where can you create more? Small pocket parks or street parks can be a solution for denser urban areas. Greening urban fringes can support access to green spaces for urban residents.

- Consider prioritising nature-friendly planting and mowing methods. Setting aside areas for meadows or allowing a fringe of longer grass can allow flowers and help reduce browning during dry summers. Rye-grass turf may be easy to maintain but over-frequent cutting can reduce flowers.

- Do you have any particularly valuable habitats in your area that need protecting? Some may also be great carbon sinks, making them an integral part of your climate change plans too (see the RSPB map for your area's carbon sinks mapped out).

- What measures can support local bird species? From bird houses, to feeders or baths, could you work on a project with local schools to build bird houses, or could they monitor the bird houses during nesting season as part of an outdoor lesson?

- Research commissioned by the National Trust estimates that people across Great Britain are missing out on 500 million potential park visits a year due to poorly equipped facilities. Basic facility upgrades can help accessibility - from toilets, or an income generating cafe, to play areas. Natural England also reported that insufficient footpaths and the presence of busy or dangerous roads can prevent easy access and deter use, particularly by children.

- **Kettering and Corby Councils** delivered the 'Pardon the Weeds, We're Feeding the Bees' initiative in April which involved leaving some verges longer to promote pollinators, and planted trees in their local park as part of a series of improvements.

Trees - the previous CEN briefing goes into detail on tree planting strategies:
- Since our last CEN Councillor briefing on tree planting the government has published the England Tree Strategy consultation, which plans to set out their forestry policy through to 2050 and deliver their tree planting programme.

- The Tree Council has produced guidance on socially distanced tree planting events.

- During lockdown the National Trust launched their Cherry Blossom Watch campaign, encouraging people to stop and admire local spring blossom trees in their areas. Blossoms are the first sign of spring and have a special meaning in Japan with a special tradition called 'Hanami' meaning 'flower viewing'. During difficult times, cherry blossoms can bring some beauty to your area and symbolise new life. Perhaps consider how you could include blossoming trees in your tree planting plans to bring extra beauty to an area. They can also support a variety of wildlife.

Partnerships:
- Local charities and environmental groups are likely to be struggling financially at present, yet may find they have greater access to volunteers who got in touch to see how they could help during lockdown or while furloughed. It's worth reaching out to these groups to see how you could work together, for example, on local litter picks or a community garden scheme.

- **The [Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund](#) is currently open for applications until 24 September.** It's open to all environmental charities and partnerships, for projects that aim to contribute to nature conservation/restoration, nature-based solutions (e.g. tree planting), and connecting people with nature. Could you establish a new partnership with a local environmental charity to apply for this funding? Ideas could include a tree planting day, a wildflower planting scheme for verges/roundabouts/sections of local park, or a scheme to engage schools with a local forest or wood.
- Could you create a framework for voluntary and community groups or nearby schools to participate in the management of green spaces?
- Updating your Green Spaces Strategy can also help you to proactively apply for funding rather than reactively, and seek out partnerships for innovative funding arrangements, for example through business sponsorship opportunities (such as roundabout adverts) or charities.
- You can find more resources via the [Parks Management Forum](#) (including '[Managing Public Parks during Covid-19](#)').

4. Buildings and energy

Buildings and energy efficiency:
- From October, the Government will provide vouchers to cover at least two thirds of the cost of home energy improvements via the [Green Homes Grant.](#) The Treasury said that, for example, a homeowner installing cavity wall and floor insulation costing £4,000 would only pay around £1,320, with the Government contributing the remaining £2,680. Those on the lowest incomes could see the Government cover full costs worth up to £10,000.
- The Chancellor also announced £1 billion to improve public sector buildings' energy efficiency, and a £50 million fund to pilot social housing decarbonisation. Together, the Government expects 650,000 homes to be insulated and around 140,000 jobs supported. The scheme could take £300 off bills, and will be the equivalent to taking 270,000 cars off the road.
- Applications for the initial stage of £200 million investment for local authorities are now [closed](#), but further details for a second £300 million phase of funding to be allocated through Local Energy Hubs within 2020/21 will be released in due course for delivery by March 2022.
- Local authorities can encourage local businesses who could benefit from delivering energy efficiency to make sure they're signed up to the TrustMark accreditation scheme or are MCS Certified. Businesses can [sign up to become an accredited business](#) through the [Certification Body Register](#), which will have them added onto a public [register](#) which helps customers to find local suppliers by postcode. Providing this information to residents on the council website and through advertising will help them find accredited local businesses.
- **You can also promote the scheme via your local newsletters and social media with residents to encourage them to apply for this great grant from the end of September.** Energy efficiency measures can both reduce emissions and household bills whilst keeping homes warmer, a win-win for residents and climate action. The grant also aims to support local construction jobs forming a key part of any local recovery.
- **[Adur and Worthing Council](#)**'s planning team has published a Position Statement on planning and climate change providing guidance on the relevant planning policies that must be taken into

account when formulating development proposals (within the context of climate change). This live document will be regularly reviewed to ensure it's up-to-date.

Identifying sites for renewable energy projects:

- As part of your net zero plans and past work to tackle climate change many of you have already begun to explore local sites for renewable energy generation, or have already set up projects.
- There are mainly two key options for inland councils: onshore wind and solar power. These projects can provide multiple benefits, from producing reliable electricity locally for your communities, to helping you to meet your decarbonisation targets, to even generating income for the Council in certain set-ups.
- Even if you don't establish the project yourself, you can be a key facilitator in encouraging uptake - particularly of solar panels - by reaching out to the relevant businesses and residents, or adopting supportive policies for e.g. developments of a certain size to have a certain percentage of renewable energy or setting out a Sustainable Housing Guide for your social housing developers.
- In order to develop onshore wind locally, sites must be identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. A consultation is then required to demonstrate local communities have been fully involved and that the proposal has their backing. If you don't identify the sites, then at present it's very difficult to get planning permission for onshore wind.
- Are there any potential sites in your area where the community could be amenable to an onshore wind proposal? Could you open a consultation for them to submit their own ideas or find a site where residents approve? Our polling showed that onshore wind is quite popular with the public (find constituency breakdown statistics here).

Solar energy:

- You can find more ideas in the Solar Trade Association briefing for councils, including innovative financing ideas such as through the Public Works Loan Board which provides long-term financing at low interest rates, or using unspent capital project funding. The STA also commissioned some economic modelling on the projected costs and returns from solar energy projects.
- Local authorities can also access 0% interest Salix loan finance for over 100 energy efficiency technologies including solar PV, on a case by case basis. Find out more via www.salixfinance.co.uk.
- By retrofitting solar to supply power to offices, you can earn revenue on a competitively priced electricity provision to occupants, and enhance your green credentials for new tenants. You could start with your own office buildings or council-owned business parks as well.
- **Kent County Council** has a 'Solar Together' scheme asking Kent residents and community groups to register their interest in a collective buying project for solar panels and battery storage, using the council's procurement expertise and joint buying power to make solar a viable option for many more buildings.
- **West Sussex County Council** built a subsidy-free solar farm on a closed landfill site in 2018, building on its previous park opened in 2015 on an old RAF airfield with a partnership between 12 councils of different tiers. The council estimates that the scheme will pay back in 15 years and generate £7.9 million in net income. The council now plans to supply its residents with energy generated locally as well.
- Solar parks can also be great spots for wildlife, given that they are secure areas, if for example hedgerows and wildflower mixes are planted alongside the solar panels at the sites.

- **West Sussex County Council** also secured £3 million of capital funding (PWLB) to finance solar across 50 schools after piloting them successfully on 8 schools. The schools will contract to purchase the solar electricity from the council-owned solar through a Power Purchasing Agreement at a lower price than retail to avoid the need for upfront investment. The council estimated that it would recover its expenditure in 12 years.
- **Cambridgeshire County Council** has also [developed](#) a 12MW solar array and a school's energy programme. They've also been working on a project to turn existing landfill sites into two solar-plus-storage sites and build a solar carport at their park and ride.
- **Northumberland County Council** has also been working on a 800kW solar carport at their headquarters, due summer 2021, with 60 electric vehicle charge-points. The solar park will aim to provide 50% of the site's electricity needs, alongside existing rooftop solar.

Lastly - as part of your Council buildings strategy, there is now **a unique opportunity to trial more remote working and support more council staff to work from home more frequently**, reducing building and associated travel emissions. How can you best support more staff members to make this transition? For example, consider how they may need grant/financial support to address a poor internet connection (boosters etc.) or to ensure they have appropriate equipment (e.g. desks and chairs). Long term this could help you to reduce the size of the council estate and reduce your operational carbon footprint.

5. Local elections and climate change

Climate change and local elections
- A recent poll from YouGov showed that just 9% of people want to return to life as normal after lockdown ends.
- It's particularly important for those of you who have passed climate emergency or net zero motions to be seen to be making some progress on this ahead of local elections when public scrutiny is likely to increase.
- Due to the many immediate issues that have arisen over the last year, it's fully understandable that you may not have made great progress since you passed a net zero/climate emergency motion, and many of the net zero projects will be longer term anyway. However, you can show that you have made progress by publishing a plan - outlining the issues that need to be addressed, bringing in stakeholders, and setting out what you're going to prioritise and when.
- **Hertfordshire County Council** has outlined a strategy and action plans have been drafted by all services areas. They're now working to rationalise those plans and update them in light of Covid.
- To ensure your plans are based on science and evidence (with feasible targets that can counter local Extinction Rebellion narratives), you can speak to your local universities, businesses and experts, to gather evidence.
- The planning stage doesn't need to be the most resource intensive part of your plan, but it can show you've made real progress in thinking through your approach and setting out what you're going to do. The **West Midlands Combined Authority** worked with the Tyndall Centre to set their target at 2041, and have now set out short-term urgent actions alongside 12 month priorities and 5 year delivery plans.
- Planning structures can also give you an opportunity to publicise what you're going to do regularly, reporting back against short-term goals and targets.

Other ideas:
- Setting up your net zero procedures - if you are particularly short on resources why not use this time to reassess your procedures (procurement and treasury strategy) and make connections with local groups or businesses working in the green economy or nature conservation?
- You could consider publishing a green recovery plan (see below for examples), or setting out your general approach or five priority areas as part of a green recovery.
- **Adur and Worthing Council** have started a new SustainableAW magazine to showcase their sustainability activity, as well as efforts from local businesses and community groups. This builds on their climate conference in March. Ensuring that your InTouch leaflets or local newspaper columns have regular mention of your climate work can be helpful to reference during your campaign.

Green recovery plans:
- **Derbyshire County Council** focuses its recovery plan on Covid-19 and climate change, with the key priorities of: value for money; a prosperous and green Derbyshire; empowered and self-sufficient communities; a focus on prevention and early intervention; and high performing council services. It has committed to reach net zero emissions by 2032.
- **Staffordshire County Council** has adopted a recovery plan that pledges to "ensure climate change is always at the heart of our thinking and delivery planning".
- **Devon County Council** has set the ambition to create a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable economy as part of its recovery process. There are plans: to roll out an ambitious pilot investing in domestic energy efficiency and energy generation measures; for a £2.5 million investment to work with SMEs on reducing carbon emissions; to establish a £3.75 million "Centre for Clean Mobility" at Exeter Science Park for research and development of autonomous transport; and to champion a SMART aviation cluster and freeport working with Exeter Airport and other partners to support the development of new electrical air vehicles and green aircraft.
- **Lancashire County Council** have joined a coalition of councils to launch the Greater Lancashire Plan which will seek to re-open the economy with core components including 'capitalising on the county's unique set of environmental assets' and ensuring 'sustainable economic growth. Key aspects include a Local Transport Restart supporting pop-up cycle lanes etc, and identifying shovel-ready projects that can support job creation and a green recovery.
- **Buckinghamshire Council:** Bucks Council is working with the Buckinghamshire Growth Board to lead on a recovery plan across the public realm, environment and infrastructure.

LGA Net Zero Innovation Programme: Delivered in collaboration with University College London, the Net Zero Innovation Network brings together local authorities, universities and other stakeholders to address climate challenges at the local level and seek routes to achieve council's net zero commitments. Within the wider network in 2020-21 the Net Zero Innovation Programme will **provide training and project funding to equip councils and universities to work in partnership to help achieve the local carbon reduction goals of councils. The application closing date is 25 September.**

6. Other useful organisations: Woodland Trust; Wildlife Trust; Solar Association Trust; Living Streets; Adept (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport); CyclingUK

CONSERVATIVE
ENVIRONMENT
NETWORK