

North Somerset Council

Report to the Council

Date of Meeting: 12th January 2021

Subject of Report: Climate Emergency 6-month Progress Report

Town or Parish: All

Member Presenting: Bridget Petty

Key Decision: No

Reason: For Information Only

Recommendations

- Members receive and consider the progress with specific initiatives within the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan
- Members consider the half-year update of council carbon footprint

1. Summary of Report

- 1.1 The report provides a progress update on a few key activities related to the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. It reports on the half-year update of council carbon footprint.
- 1.2 An annotated version of the climate emergency action plan, giving brief descriptions of progress is attached to this document (Annex 1).

2. Policy

- 2.1 North Somerset Council declared a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and part of this motion included reporting to Council every six months on progress. In November 2019, we published the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan and in February 2020, we published the Corporate Plan 2020-24; choosing the term 'greener' as one of three key themes. This means that we will include climate change as a deciding factor in all policy and strategy decisions going forward.
- 2.2 North Somerset Council has been invited to join the UK100 Countryside Climate Network in recognition that rural communities are at the frontline of feeling the effects of climate change, but also may have different barriers and opportunities when it comes to climate action. Officers suggest North Somerset Council participate to meet this pledge, seeing it as an opportunity to work collaboratively with other rural authorities; to add rural voices into national policy advocacy.

3. Details

- 3.1 In July 2020, the council published baseline evidence reports on the greenhouse gas emissions for the council own activities during the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years; and on greenhouse gas emissions for the whole area of North Somerset from

2005 to 2018. These reports and the datasets behind them form the basis of a programme of progress reporting. It also broadcast on YouTube and can be found on our website here: <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/priorities-strategies/climate-emergency/our-plans-tackle-climate-change>

3.2 An annotated version of the climate emergency action plan, giving brief descriptions of progress is attached to this document (Annex 1).

3.3 Half year emissions update:

Area-wide emissions can only be reported annually when national data becomes available, however, some corporate emissions can be reported more regularly as required. Due to the drastic changes to the way we are now working, a comparison has been produced of emissions for April-September 2019 and 2020. Not all corporate data are available for this period, but we are able to compare emissions for energy consumption in buildings (includes some schools) and streetlighting; business travel and commuting.

	Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ e)		Difference		Comment
	Apr-Sep 2019	Apr-Sep 2020	tonnes CO ₂ e	%	
Electricity (buildings)	1,213	795	-418	-34%	
Gas consumption	615	564	-51	-8%	
Business Travel	605	531	-73	-12%	
Commuting	350	70	-280	-80%	<i>Estimated based on usual work patterns</i>
Streetlighting	697	499	-197	-28%	<i>Due to LED replacement program</i>
Total	3,479	2,459	-1,020	-29%	

3.4 Action planning – prioritisation exercise and budget

Since declaring a climate emergency, many potential actions have been discussed, and during summer 2019, an exercise of prioritisation took place to identify those which should be incorporated into the next budget. Actions were assessed on their ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, their cost, complexity, urgency and social and political acceptability.

This assessment was not a fully costed list of what is required to get the area of North Somerset to Net Zero, but an assessment of what we can and should be doing urgently. Decisions on project budgets are not being made in isolation but are forming part of Medium Term Financial Planning across the organisation.

Urgent actions fall into four broad categories:

- Decarbonising the council – this is within our direct control, with funding streams available and we must be taking a leadership role.
- Decarbonising transport – transport makes up 42% of North Somerset's greenhouse gas emissions and continues to rise gradually, this is a high priority of central government and North Somerset has significant policy

levers in this sector. The council can encourage walking and cycling, use of public transport (outside Covid pandemic).

- Policy development – research and development continues to be required to understand what can and must be done in North Somerset to meet the needs of the Climate Emergency.
- Communications, engagement & support – it is only through behavioural change that a large proportion of emissions can be reduced and resilience to a changing climate be improved.

3.5 Carbon Literacy: The Climate Emergency Action Plan states that the council needs to take a leadership role across the area to encourage, support and enable others to reduce carbon emissions.

One of the ways North Somerset Council is meeting this challenge is by bringing Carbon Literacy training to members and officers across the Council, ensuring that everyone is aware of the risks and opportunities of climate change in their day to day activities. This began with a day of training facilitated by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) for members and senior officers in October. This was the first course of its type to be run in the country and has now been adopted by the Carbon Literacy Project for use with other councils.

Following on from this, “Carbon Literacy for Local Authorities” is now being given to officers across the council. The training has received fantastic feedback, with personal action plans developed to feed into annual team plans. In December 2020, the Council was awarded the Carbon Literacy Bronze Award which is a visible ‘badge’ that shows we are both committed to Carbon Literacy and serious about establishing and maintaining a low carbon culture.

3.6 Transport Policy: Nationally, updated guidance for cycling infrastructure was published in July in the form of Local Transport Note (LTN) TN 1/20. This sets out for the first time that cycling must be placed at the heart of the transport network and no longer be treated as marginal or an afterthought. These principles have been incorporated into both the draft Active Travel Strategy and revised Parking Standards SPD, and complements our ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

3.7 Economic Plan: November 2020 saw the publication of our new Economic Plan, which responds to the challenges we know North Somerset businesses are facing as a result of Covid-19. The Plan sets out commitments to help us build a green, digital, people-centred recovery. It is also an opportunity to promote our visitor economy as a low-carbon alternative to travelling abroad (details can be found in the targeted Visitor Economy Action Plan). Focusing on low carbon investment such as retrofitting buildings and community renewable energy can maximise the environmental benefits of energy efficiency schemes while also ensuring local people have the right skills to make the most of job opportunities (further details on the approach to skills can be found in the Employment and Skills Strategy). All three documents can be found: <https://innorthsomerset.co.uk/why-north-somerset/north-somerset-economy-an-overview/>

4. Consultation

4.1 The action prioritisation process was completed with input from the Officers Working Group and has been presented and discussed with the Members Working Group and CLT. Updates on progress have been sought from the Officers Working Group as well as other relevant officers. This report was presented to the Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel in November.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 This report is for progress update only, there are no financial implications. However, Members should be aware that Climate Emergency work is feeding into the MTFP and an action prioritisation process has been taking place to identify projects which should be taken forward in the next financial year.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

6.1 This report is for progress update only, there are no legal implications.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

7.1 The details in this report relate directly to the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. Projects described within this report and Annex 1, aim to support the transition to a zero carbon Council and area, through reduction of fossil fuel consumption; increasing renewable energy generation and improving communications and awareness around the Climate Crisis.

8. Risk Management

8.1 As projects are developed, detailed risk appraisals will be undertaken to anticipate and mitigate barriers to delivery. There will inevitably need to be consideration of risks and the agreement of compromises to achieve overall ambitions for North Somerset.

9. Equality Implications

9.1 No specific Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this progress update. However, Climate Emergency actions decisions will be assessed individually as required.

10. Corporate Implications

10.1 The Climate Emergency is a cross-cutting issue and a corporate priority; it is a key priority within the Corporate Plan and impacts everything the council does. It will be at the forefront of any future transformation programmes.

11. Options Considered

11.1 The February 2019 motion specifically required the preparation of a report on how to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The council has chosen to prepare a positive Action Plan that identifies a set of initiatives, projects and policy changes that can help achieve that ambition.

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Appendices:

Annex 1 – North Somerset Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress October 2020

Background Papers:

None

North Somerset Climate Emergency Strategic Action Plan – Progress October 2020

Our commitment: North Somerset aims to be a carbon neutral council and a carbon neutral area by 2030

Impact

H: high
 M: medium
 L: low
 TBC: to be confirmed
Note, these are estimates subject to further work

Deliverability

GREEN: delivery is unlikely to pose any challenges or difficulties/ additional financial costs will be minimal
 AMBER: delivery will pose some challenges or difficulties/there is likely to be an additional financial cost
 RED: delivery will pose significant challenges or difficulties/there is likely to be a significant financial cost

Action	Method	Influence	Impact	Other benefits	Deliverability	Progress – October 2020
Become a Net Zero Carbon Council						
Take a leadership role across the area to encourage, support and enable others to reduce their carbon emissions	All	An area we directly control	H			NSC began a programme of Carbon Literacy in October 2020 and in December was awarded the Carbon Literacy Bronze Award. This aims to increase awareness across the council of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities and give employees the ability and motivation to reduce emissions. Annual Team Plans now include Climate Emergency actions. Team leaders are urged to nominate a representative from to attend training and feedback how teams can contribute to helping NSC achieve aims of a carbon neutral council and a carbon neutral area by 2030.
Appoint a Climate Emergency Project Manager to oversee the CE Strategy delivery and Action Plan implementation	All	An area we directly control	H			Project Manager appointed February 2020
Ensure a programme of robust reporting on progress internally and externally (data dashboard)	All	An area we directly control	M			Emissions reporting systems established. System for reporting individual progress action and indicators still required.
Assess all major council projects for	All	An area we directly control	M			Current WECA project to produce a Carbon

Action	Method	Influence	Impact	Other benefits	Deliverability	Progress – October 2020
their impacts on carbon emissions						assessment tool is due to be delivered in 2021.
'Carbon proof' all future strategies and policies and ensure mitigations	All	An area we directly control	H			The Climate Emergency features prominently in all strategy development.
Continuous development of the Council's sustainable procurement policies and practices	All	An area we directly control	L			Sustainable procurement policies and practices under review
Support flexible working and home working to reduce the carbon footprint of our workforce	Reduction	An area we directly control	M	Productivity gains Public health outcomes		Home working policy updated Autumn 2020. Large percentage of the workforce currently working from home. Emerging Asset and Accommodation strategy reviewing future working patterns. Home energy volunteer group in place to review changes to home energy consumption. Guidance given in internal newsletter on domestic energy conservation. Accommodation strategy to develop employee support strategies.
Continue to provide/promote schemes such as 'cycle to work' and 'Travelwest challenge' to encourage sustainable transport choices by our workforce	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can directly control or can influence through our contracts or through funding/support/policy	M	Air quality improvements Public health outcomes		Cycle to work limit increased to £2,500 to enable purchase of electric bikes. Approval to move forward with EV salary sacrifice scheme given in November 2020.
Calculate and then rapidly reduce the council's use of single-use plastic	Reduction	An area we directly control	L	Reduced waste		Work put on hold while low percentage of workforce in office.
Ensure all the council's electricity supply is provided by 100% renewably generated sources	Reduction	An area we directly control	M	Supports investment in technology		Mostly complete - all areas where council pays for electricity is provided by 100% renewables. Completely outsourced/outside managed we don't have sight of but will encourage through contracts and discussion.
Review our estate to investigate means of increasing energy efficiency to heating, lighting and cooling systems	Reduction	An area we directly control	H	Capital investment in estate Lower energy costs		List of 35 buildings agreed to receive energy efficiency audits. In addition, new Government decarbonisation fund and Low Carbon Skills Fund recently announced and assessment underway for feasibility.
Investigate the business case for acquiring or funding renewable energy installations in North Somerset	Avoidance	An area we directly control	H	Supports investment in technology		Initial feasibility of rooftop solar in council buildings assessed. Further business case not yet developed.

Action	Method	Influence	Impact	Other benefits	Deliverability	Progress – October 2020
				Security of own supply		
Replace streetlighting with low energy LED units	Reduction	An area we directly control	H	More resilient infrastructure Lower energy costs		65% complete. Energy consumption for streetlighting decreased by 31% in September 2020, compared to September 2019.
Renew our ageing fleet with fully electric vehicles and charging facilities	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can directly control or can influence through our contracts or through funding/support/policy	M	Supports investment in technology Air quality improvements		Currently, of a fleet of 95 vehicles, 33 are EVs. A further 30 of our fleet vehicles will be replaced with EVs/PHEVs by early 2021. A review of vehicle requirements will also commence shortly.
Work with our contractors and service providers to support them in reducing their carbon footprint, take advantage of renewable energy sources, consider an electric fleet, and reduce their use of single-use plastic	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can influence through our contracts or through funding/support	H	Supports investment in technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, NSC and Alliance Homes signed a partnership agreement which featured an objective working together to 'Support the achievement of carbon neutrality in North Somerset by 2030 and reduce fuel poverty.. In October, the Partnership Board met with a focus on climate emergency actions and understanding the scale of the task. Alliance Homes are currently undertaking an asset management review of their ~6,000 homes in North Somerset. • In September, discussions with representatives of town and parish councils who have climate emergency interests started. This group is now planning to meet every 6-8 weeks for themed meetings to support each other with progressing climate actions. • Skanska have a decarbonisation plan in place and are currently review this in line with the North Somerset contract.
An energy efficient built environment						
Aim for all our new homes to be zero carbon or net carbon plus	Reduction	An area we directly control	M	Air quality improvements Reduced carbon		<p>Creating Sustainable Buildings and Paces SPD currently under review.</p> <p>Proposals outlined in the Future Homes Standard and Government planning white paper may reduce the amount of control</p>

Action	Method	Influence	Impact	Other benefits	Deliverability	Progress – October 2020
						Local Authorities can have on new homes.
Aim for all our own new commercial space to be zero carbon or net carbon plus	Avoidance	An area we directly control	M	Lower energy costs for occupants		
Where possible, specify precision manufactured buildings for homes, community and commercial space	Avoidance Mitigation	An area we directly control	H	Reduced wastage Less time on site Drives new skills		North Somerset Council's Executive has approved a recommendation to appoint Keepmoat Homes to deliver 425 new high-quality homes on its land at Parklands Village in Weston-super-Mare, including 15 per cent zero carbon homes.
Aim to focus new mixed-use development on brownfield land, in town centres with public transport and proximity to major employment hubs	Avoidance Reduction Mitigation	An area we can directly control or can influence locally and nationally	H	Critical mass for transport and community infrastructure Protect habitats Affordable housing		The Local Plan 2038 is currently in development. The first document, outlining the 'Challenges for the Future' was consulted on in Summer 2020. Th responses highlighted public concerns over climate change. This has been taken forward into the 'Choices for the Future' consultation, which will take place in Autumn 2020. The Choices document outlines four spatial approaches to delivering housing to 2038. Responding to the climate emergency and developing in sustainable locations are key strategic priorities, alongside prioritising brownfield development in existing town centres.
New Item Take opportunities to retrofit and/or improve the home energy efficiency of existing buildings.	Reduction	An area we can influence through our contracts or through funding/support	M	Public health outcomes Supports investment in technology Supports green skills/jobs		In December 2020, NSC submitted a joint bid with Bristol City Council as lead to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) £200m Green Homes Grant. If successful, the work to improve the energy efficiency of 100 homes in North Somerset will be delivered between April and September 2021. Alliance Homes have joined the bid and they plan to target oil fired homes also provide external wall insulation. The proposal is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 park home full retrofit improvements • 50 social housing (Alliance Homes) combination EWI, renewables

Action	Method	Influence	Impact	Other benefits	Deliverability	Progress – October 2020
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 private sector dwellings identified through existing warm homes project
<p>*New Item*</p> <p>Support, encourage and enable homeowners and businesses to improve energy efficiency of existing buildings.</p>	Reduction	An area we can influence through our contracts or through funding/support	M	Public health outcomes Supports investment in technology Supports green skills/jobs		<p>North Somerset Council have expanded the range of loan assistance available to include lending money to homeowners or landlords to make homes more energy efficient or install low carbon technologies.</p> <p>The new Home Energy and Renewable Loan for up to £8000 (4% fixed/Typical 4.2% APR) can be used for the installation of renewable and low carbon technology measures and improvement of insulation in domestic properties.</p> <p>In addition, all homeowners will be given a £250 incentive payment, to use for the purchase of A++ rated kitchen appliances or used to reduce their Council Tax liability for the year the improvements are carried out. The loan can be used in conjunction with a voucher from the Governments Green Homes Scheme to fund the householders required contribution for works.</p>
Work with schools and other stakeholders to ensure their estate is energy efficient and install renewable energy sources	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can influence through our contracts or through funding/support	H	Supports investment in technology Security of own supply		Energy efficiency scheme to be offered to schools. To be funded through 0% Salix Loans, or Government decarbonisation grants where appropriate.
Develop planning policy to actively support community led housing, self-build and custom build housing and consider use of council land to enable this	Reduction	An area we can directly control or can influence locally and nationally	L	Diversify housing delivery models		
Replenish our carbon stores						
Develop and implement our Green Infrastructure Strategy	Mitigation Storage	An area we can directly control	M	Public health outcomes Ecological diversity		In development
Identify Council land suitable for rewilding with aim of reducing amenity grass by 20%	Mitigation Storage	An area we directly control	H	Public health outcomes Ecological		5,000 trees planted during spring 2020. Success rate has been reviewed and at most locations is around 70/80%. Select few

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				diversity		locations have a much higher success rate. 20,000 trees to be planted winter 2020/21.
Identify landscape scale tree planting opportunities to deliver nature recovery networks especially woodland creation and linking woodlands	Mitigation Storage	An area we directly control	H	Public health outcomes Ecological diversity		Within GI Strategy
Identify Council land suitable for changing grass cutting regime to encourage biodiversity	Mitigation Storage	An area we directly control	M	Public health outcomes Ecological diversity		Sites for tall grass on council land have been identified and established during 2020. Areas will be increased over the coming two summers
Encourage and support our residents to create wildflower gardens through schemes such as the 'Blue Heart'	Mitigation Storage	An area we directly control	M	Public health outcomes Ecological diversity		Using the blue heart campaign as part of the rewilding project. Areas of tall grass will be assessed for viability to increase wildflower
Adapting to climate change						
Ask Government to rapidly review the impacts which achieving net-zero will have across society and put in place effective measures to ensure that we have a fair transition to a net-zero country where the most vulnerable groups are supported	Adaption	An area we can ask for help nationally	N/A			Council response to the Government's proposed Future Homes Standard highlighted the urgency of zero carbon homes policies.
Ensure a resilient infrastructure in North Somerset including retrofitting our built environment where necessary	Adaption	An area we directly control	N/A			Creating Sustainable Buildings and Paces SPD currently under review – includes new section on adapting to climate change.
Ensure that work around our flood defences considers climate change and any local and regional effects	Adaption	An area we directly control	N/A			Summer Lane flood defence work underway.
Ensure North Somerset's Emergency Management Plan is robust and resourced	Adaption	An area we directly control	N/A			
Renewable energy generation						
Explore the development of strategy that discourages investment in fossil fuels and promotes renewable energy	Avoidance Reduction	An area we directly control	H	Investment in new technology Public		Assessment of potential for renewable energy generation across North Somerset currently underway. This will inform Local Plan

Action	Method	Influence	Impact	Other benefits	Deliverability	Progress – October 2020
generation				engagement		development. Potential locations for renewable generation included in Local Plan call for sites.
Pass a motion declaring North Somerset a Frack Free Zone to discourage the exploration and production of shale gas	Avoidance	An area we directly control	M	Investment in new technology Public engagement		
Encourage our partners and stakeholders to procure electricity supply from 100% renewably generated sources	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can influence through our contracts or through funding/support	M	Investment in new technology Public engagement		
Encourage our residents to consider 100% renewable energy and support access to grant funding where possible	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can influence through support	M	Investment in new technology Public engagement		Updated NSC Climate Emergency webpage and NS Life articles encourage 100% renewables. The new Home Energy and Renewable Loan for up to £8000 (4% fixed/Typical 4.2% APR) can be used for the installation of renewable and low carbon technology measures and improvement of insulation in domestic properties. Plan to join WECA Solar Together scheme in Autumn 2021 – bulk buying scheme which allows residents to purchase PV installations at a reduced rate.
Reduce emissions from transport						
Continue to drive project delivery to shift from private car use	Avoidance	An area we can influence or ask for help locally/nationally	H	Air quality improvements Access to employment Opportunities for investment		Active travel strategy has been developed – public consultation to run from 2nd November to 14 December. JLTP4 contains guidance and projects to reduce car usage, JLTP5 will further bolster guidance & projects
Develop policies that actively encourage the demand for and delivery of connected public transport	Reduction	An area we can influence or ask for help locally/nationally	M	Public health outcomes Ease congestion Air quality improvements		JLTP5 and the new Local Plan are likely to identify further public transport projects including Mobility as a Service
Develop and secure funding for projects to grow the walking and	Avoidance	An area we can influence or ask for help	M	Public health outcomes		DfT Emergency Active Travel funds secured – temporary and permanent schemes. All

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cycling network across the district		locally/nationally		Ease congestion Air quality improvements		transport projects are to include cycling and walking infrastructure within their business cases wherever possible.
Implement our project to deliver an electric charging hub in Portishead	Avoidance Reduction	An area we directly control	M	Air quality improvements Investment in new technology		Portishead Marina Electric Vehicle Charging Hub which is due to open in December. Other charging points are also planned in key locations, with the first in Kewstoke.
Require all schools to deliver travel plans which maximise the number of students walking, cycling or travelling sustainably to school.	Reduction Mitigation	An area we can influence or ask for help and support locally	M	Air quality improvements Public health outcomes Public engagement		Work beginning on Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS) for secondary schools. Strategy will audit current travel data and infrastructure and highlight what can be done to reduce reliance on school buses and cars.
Consider reviewing parking planning guidance note to set maximum parking levels and reduce the number of spaces delivered for new development.	Avoidance Reduction	An area we directly control	M	Air quality improvements		Parking standards SPD currently under review. Revised standards will facilitate reductions in vehicle parking in accessible locations.
Encourage resident parking schemes, car sharing schemes and walking and cycling to support	Avoidance Reduction	An area we directly control and/or influence through support	M	Air quality improvements		The new Local Plan is likely to require such in new developments.
Encourage our residents to consider their transport choices	Avoidance Reduction	An area we can influence through support	M	Air quality improvements Public health outcomes		Work continues to deliver the DfT Access Fund, with a focus on business, schools and communities to encourage active and sustainable travel and reduce single occupancy car use. Marketing and communication has been used to publicise offers, encourage active and sustainable travel and provide information about relevant upcoming events and road and path closures.
Repair, reuse, reduce and recycle						
Zero kerbside waste to landfill with an increasing percentage recycled and the remainder used as energy from waste	Avoidance	An area we directly control	H	Managing international impacts Ecological diversity		New 10 year contract commenced 1 April 2020 for the delivery of kerbside collected waste to Energy from Waste plants at Avonmouth. This is a joint WoE arrangement. Over 14,000 tonnes delivered in first 6 months and reduced road haulage as previously

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						waste taken to Gloucestershire. Waste strategy in development which will have climate emergency as a key theme and how the various waste management functions impact and measures to reduce.
Consider our green waste collection to encourage composting and rewilding	Reduction	An area we directly control	M	Financial savings		Charging for collections to commence from April 2021. An integral part of this is to encourage composting through subsidised composters, links to composting advice, community composting and working with Town and Parish councils and the local community
Increase the percentage of Improved reuse areas to be negotiated with contractors and encourage third sector involvement, such as Changing Lives in Clevedon	Avoidance	An area we can directly control or can influence through our contracts or through funding/support/policy	M	Resident engagement		Changing Lives carry out bulky waste collections within North Somerset with reusable items being prepared for re-use and sold within their shops. Reuse strategy is in development with opportunities for the new NSC owned recycling and waste company to provide.
Encourage our residents to reuse, repair and recycle	Reduction	An area we can influence through support	M	Resident engagement		Will be addressed within reuse strategy. Information provided within service leaflet, on web and social media. Community re-use events suspended due to COVID but will re-commence when possible.
Sign-post community groups to expertise and funding	Mitigation	An area we can influence through support	L	Community engagement		Signposting in place to local community groups. Will be covered more fully in reuse strategy.