

Climate, Energy, Nature & GI Highlights

PDS

Climate & Engagement

- Following the success of our pilot event in Batheaston on 8th October, we are continuing to roll out climate and nature conversations across the Bath and North East Somerset area. Our next conversation will take place on 20th November in Midsomer Norton Methodist Church, arrivals from 5:30pm for a 6pm welcome talk.
- I am looking forward to attending the launch event for Climate Hub BANES in the Old Ticket Office of Bath Bus Station – the Hub will open to the public on Monday 18th November.

Energy

- Green Open Homes- We were pleased to support another very successful series of Green Open Homes events in BANES this year. This year we saw more Open Homes across BANES including events in Radstock, Pensford, Peasedown and East Harptree.
- Retrofit West – In September 2024, calls to the Retrofit West advice line from BANES residents made up 24% of the overall share, which is higher than the expected 21% based on area proportion, and applications from BANES residents for the 70% off surveys/home energy assessments voucher made up 40% of total applications.
- Net Zero Council - We are continuing our work to decarbonise our own estate and operations. To date, we have delivered 1.6MW solar generation across our estate, and have installed heat pumps in three of our care homes via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. We are currently preparing bids for the next round of PSDS.

Nature

- The West of England Local Nature Recovery Strategy launched on the 7th November, the first in the country to be published; B&NES played a leading role in its development. It sets local priorities for nature recovery and maps ‘focus areas’ where action for nature will have the biggest impact.
- Our **BNG Pathfinder Project** is now identifying Council-owned land where habitats can be created or improved to provide off-site BNG units; we are already working with the local community at Charlcombe to improve the site for wildlife and enhance access.
- Our **Landscape City Project** is delivering nature recovery on key council owned sites around the city of Bath and providing evidence for investment in greening of

the city. This will include bringing more woodlands into management, working with local communities to improve sites for wildlife, and developing proposals for an 'Ecology Hub' in the city.

- Our **Somer Valley Rediscovered** project continues to work in partnership to improve the management of 34ha of green space in the Somer Valley for nature, as well as improving access. The **Nextdoor Nature** project in the area, which is led by Avon Wildlife Trust and supported by the Council, is empowering local communities to manage spaces on their doorstep for nature, and the **Active Way** project is getting people out in nature to improve their health and wellbeing.
- The **Chew Valley Reconnected Partnership** continues to strengthen, demonstrating the benefits of working in partnership with a wide range of organisations across the catchment. We have provided key support to the coordination of this Partnership and are currently supporting the development of a programme of work to enable partners to collectively unlock investment to deliver nature recovery targets and continue to connect people with nature.
- The **WaterSpace programme** is continuing to develop along the River Avon corridor. The **WaterSpace Connected** Project is being further developed and funding is being sought to improve connections at the Somerdale site, helping to link Keynsham to the wider River Avon Corridor, and deliver nature recovery benefits in the coming years.

Green Infrastructure

- The Council is leading on area wide **green infrastructure delivery partnership programmes – Somer Valley Rediscovered, Bathscape and Chew Valley Reconnected** – each improving management of habitat, increasing access to green space and nature through wide range of activities and events including walking festivals, practical conservation tasks, and citizen science projects.
- The Council is developing **green infrastructure mapping tools** to provide information on current GI provision and highlight deficiencies to support decision making to help meet climate and ecological targets, address inequalities in provision of green space to ensure communities who are most impacted by climate events- drought, heat and flood are more resilient.
- **Providing evidence to support new and revised Local Plan policy** to ensure new development meets B&NES Green Infrastructure Standards that are currently being aligned with new national GI Standards, and that development contributes positively towards nature recovery.
- Developing internal **GI training programme** to ensure new policy, evidence and tools are understood and used to embed GI in projects and decision making to deliver benefits for people, place and nature and meet councils targets and outcomes.

Additional Info - Energy

- Over the past year we have been proud to work with Bath and West Community Energy, Bath Preservation Trust and other partners on the Green Heritage Homes project, which provides support to owners and landlords of listed buildings to understand how to retrofit for reduced carbon and energy costs. This has included the launch of a “Level 0” pre-planning application service, to support homeowners to choose appropriate measures, the message being- yes, you can retrofit listed buildings.
- Mission Net Zero - We are working with Bristol City Council and the other Unitary Authorities on the creation of a Regional Climate Investment Plan, funded via the Mission Net Zero project led by Bristol.
- Heat from mines- we are working with the West of England Combined Authority and Coal Authority to look at opportunities to recover heat from disused mines in the Radstock/Peasedown area.