

**Report of the Cabinet Member for
Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services**

Introduction

I have been asked to report to Council by Members as follows:

1. by Councillor Hannaford on the Government's new Covid Marshall scheme, including how many we should have in the Devon County Council area, where will they be based, and what the governance and reporting structures will be; and,
2. by Councillor Wright on progress on the actions resulting from the 10-point green action plan

Response

1. Covid Marshall Scheme

The announcement of COVID wardens by the government to help tackle concerns raised about social distancing in town and city centres was a welcome acknowledgement of the difficulties posed to our partners in trying to manage the current legislation and guidance.

At this time the detail behind this announcement is still awaited and so I am unable to respond to the detailed questions you have asked, which we will seek to develop answers to with our district council and Police colleagues as well as other community safety partners.

2. 10-Point Green Action Plan

Enhanced Environmental Action – Progress and Reporting

In July last year, in response to a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. Wright, Council resolved to endorse the principle of further action to address environmental issues. Specifically, it mandated the Environmental Performance Board to consider how relevant issues raised originally by Cllr. Wright might be addressed through changes or additions to DCC's own suite of environmental action plans. As a result of this, the Board identified options for enhanced action in relation to several environmentally related topics.

I last reported on this issue at the County Council meeting of 20th February 2020. To ensure ongoing accountability and transparency on progress, I agreed to publish the highlight reports presented to each meeting of the Environmental Performance Board via the DCC Environmental Policy web

pages (at: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/environmental-policy>). This will remain as the main approach to reporting on progress.

However, in response to a specific request from Cllr. Wright for me to update Council on this issue, the table below provides examples of recent or current action. The following points also need to be considered in reviewing this progress:

- We have lived through exceptional times since I last reported to Council on this issue in February. The huge demands of dealing with the pandemic have, inevitably, affected the way we have been able to take forward our planned action. More positively, it has been recognised that environmental objectives must underpin our plans for COVID recovery.
- Given the huge imperative to support the Devon Climate Emergency, the Environmental Performance Board has deliberately prioritised effort to progress our DCC carbon reduction plan, as well as assisting in the development of the Devon Carbon Plan and Climate Impacts Plan. For this reason, formalising this broader approach to enhanced environmental action through a refreshed suite of action plans has not yet occurred, although opportunities for action are being pursued with vigour.

Environmental Topics for Enhanced Action	Examples of Recent Progress
1. Pollinators	<p>Recruitment to a new Ecologist position to help provide the required capacity to take forward actions from the DCC Pollinators Action Plan.</p> <p>Local Nature Partnership work on October Dark Skies Week will raise awareness of the impacts of lighting on insects and promote actions that people can take.</p>
2. Pesticides and Fertilisers	As above.
3. Habitat Protection, Creation and Tree Planting	<p>Work is progressing well, with significant input from DCC, on the Development Phase of 'Saving Devon's Treescapes', with the first tree planting events starting in October.</p> <p>DCC working closely with other local authorities, the Woodland Trust, Local Nature Partnership and others to secure national funding to progress a 'Trees for Devon' initiative, which aims to increase tree cover in the county.</p>

	<p>Early work is progressing on the planned development of the Devon Nature Recovery Network, with DCC chairing the Steering Group.</p> <p>DCC helped to secure the required funding for Devon Biodiversity Record Centre to review and update Devon's Ancient Woodland Inventory. Phase 1 of this work is now complete, with the project to continue for a further 2 years.</p> <p>Linked to the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, DCC is working with partners in submitting funding bids for new projects through the recently announced 'Green Challenge Fund'.</p>
4. Soil Health	<p>Arrangements are being made for a webinar on soils and carbon linked to the AgroRes InterReg Project and DCC's Carbon Reduction Plan.</p>
5. Water Use	<p>The draft Action Plan to reduce DCC's own water consumption has been taken forward through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning-up of DCC account held with Pennon Group; • Analysis of data over a 3-year period; • Identification of the top 10 sites for water usage from size of building; • Establishment of a Water Resources Management System to carry out surveys on those identified sites.
6. Devon Climate Emergency (action on County Farms Estate)	<p>The authority is committed to refurbishing county farm dwellings to reflect the decent homes standard. Twenty refurbishments have been completed and a further 6 are in progress during 2020.</p> <p>Typical decent homes works include damp treatment, new bathrooms, new kitchens, mechanical ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens, whole house ventilation systems, new boilers for heating and hot water, rewiring, installation of LED lighting, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and double glazed doors and windows.</p> <p>Nine of the 20 completed refurbishments have also received a roof top solar PV array.</p> <p>Energy efficiency improvements can be evidenced through improvements to the Energy Performance Certificate rating. Chapel Farm is a good example of what has been achieved on even a relatively</p>

	modest and modern bungalow; the EPC was upgraded from a G to a C.
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Councillor Roger Croad

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services