

New group for carbon reduction

ESSEX County Council has revealed the terms of reference in its bid to become a net zero carbon authority.

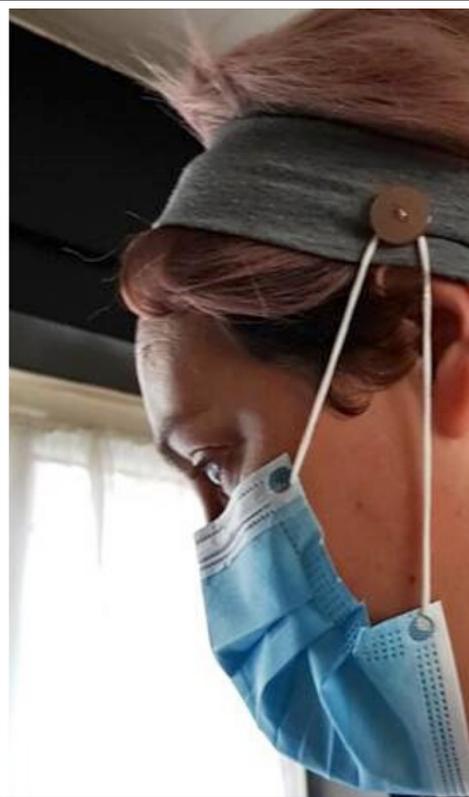
The task is significant – in 2017/18 the authority was responsible for the production of 206,000 tonnes of CO₂.

The commission is to produce an interim report to cabinet half way through the first year of inception, and make a further report, complete with a set of recommendations at the end of the first year on a net zero action plan.

In the second year, the commission will monitor the implementation of the recommendations in year one and provide further advice and guidance on an investment plan for Essex as it moves to a sustainable, net zero economy.

The creation of the commission was announced last year when the council agreed the earmarking of £5 million to drive the council climate change obligations.

Primary school pupil makes headbands to help her NHS mum



The headbands are the work of Freshwaters Primary Academy pupil Emma-Leigh Batten

THE young daughter of a front line NHS worker is doing all she can to support her mum during the coronavirus pandemic. Kirsty Bramble, a healthcare assistant at Princess Alexandra Hospital, in Harlow, is working on the front line, helping those who are suffering with Covid-19. Her 11-year-old daughter Emma-Leigh Batten, a Year 6 pupil at Freshwaters Primary Academy, is making headbands to help protect hospital workers' ears from chafing caused by the protective masks they have to wear.

Mrs Bramble said: "She said she wanted to do something to help; she even asked if she could come to work with me. "Instead, I said about the headbands as the PPE hurts our ears; when I get home, it still feels like I'm wearing the mask on my face.

"She is making a huge amount of difference to myself and my colleagues. "They are so happy when I turn up with her headbands; I've even had people from other departments come looking for me as they have heard about what my daughter is doing for us." The headbands are designed to have the protective mask's straps connected to them, rather than being pulled around the ear of the wearer.

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Hopes rising for a better environment

Response to crisis proves how fast we can change

By Piers Meyler

COVID-19 has shown us people can "deliver change on a previously unimagined level quite quickly", according to the woman overseeing climate change initiatives in Essex.

Samantha Kennedy, director for environment and climate change action, said that the coronavirus has shown businesses and individuals what can be achieved and hoped the new council climate change commission will reflect the new way of doing business that many firms have been forced into due to isolation rules.

The creation of the commission was announced last year when the council agreed the earmarking of £5 million to drive the council's climate change obligations.

Ms Kennedy said: "The council has demonstrated you can undertake this kind of work in a virtual world and the Covid crisis has forced us to do things online that we never thought were possible before.

"We are demonstrating we are



Campaigners say society can change. Photo: Pixabay

able to do the same level of work without requiring the carbon intensive journeys on the back of it.

"I'm quite excited for us to be a trailblazer in this space and demonstrating we can maintain a level of commitment and engagement via a virtual forum.

"What Covid has also shown is that we can deliver change on a previously unimagined level quite quickly.

"And I think it has shown we

can drive things that we thought were unimaginable very quickly and we have an opportunity to be bold in our thinking about what is and what is not possible.

"I'm hoping the commission will help us think about that."

It is believed that Covid-19 has decreased global CO₂ emissions by around six per cent, but net emissions are still increasing.

Ms Kennedy added: "Where we see the Covid-19 crisis as a current international challenge and disaster, climate change absolutely falls into that same category.

"It is a large-scale international challenge that requires global actions. And that we are able to respond to one crisis effectively gives me quite a lot of hope that we are able to do the same thing for the climate crisis in the future.

"I very much hope that we will be able to embed some of the behaviour changes we have seen to remove journeys because the air quality benefits and climate change benefits have been really significant and we would want to bank that as a way of working going forward."