

**MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING
HELD AT 7.00PM, ON
TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2023
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors N Day (Chair), C Wiggin (Vice-Chair), C Burbage, G Casey, M Farooq, JA Fox, A Jones, D Jones, M Sabir, L Sharp, Parish Councillor Michael Samways, Independent Co-opted Members Stuart Dawks and Dr Esther Norton.

Also in attendance: Miriam Sellick, Youth Council Representative

Officers Present: Charlotte Palmer, Head of Service Environment, Highways and Transport
Hannah Swinburne, Principal Climate Change Officer
Lewis Banks, Transport and Environment Manager
Rohit Singh, Principle Sustainable Drainage Officer
Richard Whelan, Principal Officer - Flood and Water
Darren Sharpe, Natural and Historic Environment Manager
Rowan Rumball, Wildlife Officer
Charlotte Cameron, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillor Skibsted, Chair of Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group
Trevor McSparron, Co-opted Member on the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group
Councillor JR Fox, representing the Group Leader of Peterborough First

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Day and Independent Co-opted Member Matthew Barber.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

Councillor JR Fox and Councillor Sharp declared their involvement in the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish group and that they had contributed to the final report.

The Chair advised the Committee that the Monitoring Officer had been informed of this and had determined that there were no issues with the Councillors contributing to the debate.

45. MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held January 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

46. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS

No call ins were received.

47. THE CITY COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY: PROGRESS REPORT 2021-2022

The Climate Change and Environment Committee received a report in relation to the City Council's Biodiversity Strategy as there was a requirement to annually report on the progress of the actions and targets within the strategy.

The purpose of the report was to provide information with respect to progress against the actions and targets contained in the Council's Biodiversity Strategy (December 2018) and allow feedback to be given by the Committee with respect to progress against the existing strategy. A further purpose was to provide an update on charities and landowners' activities for biodiversity in the Peterborough Area.

The Natural and Historic Environment Manager and Wildlife Officer introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

The report detailed the progress made and the strategy's compliance with the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recommendations for public authority regard to biodiversity.

The Council had made improvements in all areas including the promotion of biodiversity, protected sites and green infrastructure. Officers highlighted that the Council had achieved a 78.4% rating of county wildlife sites in positive management.

Appendix B had been included at the request of the Committee to detail the biodiversity positive projects undertaken by external organisations.

The Officers thanked the various teams who had contributed to the report and noted that the success of strategy had been achieved through the cooperation of all departments within the Council.

- The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:
- Members queried how the success of the county wildlife sites in positive management stacked up against statistical neighbours. Members were advised that nationally Peterborough were in the top 10 areas that had achieved that high of a percentage and that the Officer would confirm the figures for local statistics.
- The Wildlife Officer advised that there was a surface level agreement with the Wildlife Trust that had supported the success of the wildlife sites.
- Members were advised that replacement boxes for the Barn Owl Recovery Programme had lapsed during the Covid period.
- The Natural and Historic Environment Manager advised that the Council had worked with a consultancy company to monitor the owl boxes across the city to review areas where boxes had been lost, to provide a consistent coverage across the city.
- Members referred to the additional funding for protected verges outlined in Appendix A and queried how their protected status could be enforced. Members were encouraged to report any disturbances to protected verges so that they could be investigated, and remedial measures put in place.
- Members were also advised that the funding had been the result of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) development which had earmarked the money to a specific area of management to improve the protected environment.
- The Natural and Historic Environment Manager added that there was a balance to be had between marking the protected verges with signage and protecting the rural landscape.
- Members were advised that the Council had been working with John Clare Countryside to look at the challenges faced for protected verges.

- Alternatives to signage had been considered but the Officers hoped to educate the public on the value of the verges to prevent them parking on them.
- Members questioned what the figure was for the savings on page 12 and were advised that the benefits in the reduction of pollution were hard to quantify.
- Members were advised that there had been an attempt to quantify the benefits through the Future Parks Programme which had been costed in the billions, however, the accuracy of the data could be questioned and easily challenged.
- The Wildlife Officer further advised that the Government had attempted to quantify the benefits of a natural habitat into a numerical figure through the BNG Framework.
- Members requested a detailed map that identified where the owl boxes were for the Peterborough Barn Owl Recovery Programme. Officers had a record of all boxes and had funded replacements and where needed, would reinstall them.
- Members sought clarification on the success of the wildflower plot trials and queried when they would be rolled out across the city. Members were advised that the team would know the results in April or May 2023. An analysis would be carried out on what species had successfully germinated and a recent visit had shown them to be positive. The roll-out had faced a funding issue and could be rolled out in the coming winter as wildflower seed needed an over winter frost to have the most success in germinating.
- The Natural and Historic Environment Manager cautioned that the public response would need to be gauged as the intention for the species introduced would work with the typical mowing regimes of the city.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note progress made against the Council's 2018 Biodiversity Strategy and **RESOLVED** to make recommendations with regards the ongoing delivery of the Strategy.

The Committee also requested that the Wildlife Officer provide them with:

1. Information on the success of the wildlife sites in positive management in comparison to the Council's statistical neighbours.
2. The map that detailed where the owl boxes were for the Peterborough Barn Owl Recovery Programme.

48. PETERBOROUGH DRAFT COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the draft Council Climate Change Action Plan.

The purpose of the report was to share the Draft Council Climate Change Action Plan with the Committee so that they were able to provide comments on the plan for inclusion in the final version.

The Principal Climate Change Officer introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

The action plan covered three key areas: the first was a report on Council emissions from 2021-2022, the second was an update on the progress made on commitments from the previous report and the third was a section on the proposed commitments for the upcoming year.

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to the electricity generated by solar panels on page 32 and queried how that compared to the Council's statistical neighbours. The Officer advised that they would provide the data as a briefing note.

- Members noted that the name of the report had changed from Carbon reduction to Climate Change Action and sought clarification on the rationale behind the change. Members were advised that the change had been made as people recognised the terminology and were more receptive to the plan.
- The Officer advised that the Council had been successful in receiving £100,000 for the procurement and development of a climate adaptation plan for the city.
- Members followed up and asked that this report include the details of work around climate change adaptation and not just the reduction of carbon emissions.
- The Youth Council Representative questioned how the Council's plans would link into other city-wide plans around Active Travel. The Officer acknowledged the need for integration with the city and Council plan and advised that conversations with stakeholders were had. The Council had limited control over the city stakeholders but were able to support and provide advice.
- Members sought clarification on how the Council's emissions of 13,000 tonnes in purchase goods and services had been calculated. The Officer advised that they could only determine Council emissions for the purchased goods and services from Council contracts.
- Members referred to the green tariff that that Council had certified by Ofgem and sought clarification on what that meant. The Officer advised that the green tariff meant that the supplier provided a certificate that meant the supplier could demonstrate that they produced enough green electricity to confirm that the Council's energy supply was provided through their renewable electricity generation.
- Members followed up and queried whether we could audit the Council's suppliers to monitor what they were doing to control and reduce their carbon emissions. The Officer advised that they had looked at developing a climate change commercial ask for suppliers to sign up to. This would require a similar carbon target and the production of their own decarbonisation plan.
- Members questioned how much energy the city needed per year and if there was a forecast against the levels of growth that had been predicted. Members were advised that the recent Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) estimated that by 2024 there would be an additional 47% of electricity usage due to the electrification of heating and transport.
- Members were advised that air source heat pumps needed electricity and residents would be advised on how they worked and how the energy could be generated from a renewable source.
- Members queried if the predicted growth in electricity usage included the use of hydrogen and were advised that hydrogen had been predicted to be available for use in the mid 2030's but it would be prioritised for use in commercial units.
- Members were advised that the procurement plan had not been confirmed yet and training would be offered to Officers who make and manage contracts to ensure they meet the emissions standards.
- Members sought clarification on the engagement with national government on the resources and legislation for local government to deliver on climate change emissions. Members were advised that the team had responded to various consultations, had made funding applications and had continued engagement with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
- Members referred to the 95% of electricity purchased through green tariff and queried whether Officers knew what the savings had been, and if this would be communicated to residents. There had been no precise figures, but the energy companies had predicted a surcharge for green energy which would need to be considered in the next budget.
- Members queried how this plan aligned with the PIRI Programme. The combination of private wire and district heat network that would provide low carbon electricity and heating aligned the plan with PIRI.
- Members were advised that the Council had secured funding for next stage of development.
- Members referred to the Local Plan and the Officer confirmed they would be involved in that work.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the update on the Draft Council Climate Change Action Plan and provide comments on proposals for future commitments.

The Committee also requested that the Principal Climate Change Officer provide them with the information on how much power was generated by solar panels across the Council's estate in comparison to the Council's statistical neighbours.

49. FINAL REPORT OF THE CYCLING AND WALKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Climate Change and Environment Committee received a report in relation to the Final Report of the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group and their work on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and associated rural cycling strategy.

The purpose of the report was to report on the work of the Task and Finish Group in the development of the LCWIP and the rural cycling strategy. The draft LCWIP had been reviewed by the Task and Finish Group and the report had been produced to provide recommendations on revision and adoption of the LCWIP.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group accompanied by the Transport and Environment Manager and one of the group's co-opted members introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

The Chair thanked Members for their valuable input and was pleased to present the report.

The vision behind the Group's work had been to make cycling and walking a priority which had been a challenge when the main method of transport within the city was by car. The Council had set the aim to be net zero by 2023 and cycling and walking strategies would help to meet that.

The Group reviewed the existing LCWIP and made suggestions for the revision and prioritisation of routes. Appendix 4 detailed some examples of what cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20) compliant cycle routes would look like.

The main findings included a lack of connectivity through the city centre which led to the proposal of a city centre circular route and further proposals were to be delivered for North-South cycle journeys. The prioritisation measures had been reviewed and the Group decided to remove the time taken and public acceptance measures to better reflect the usage of each route.

The Group had operated under a tight time scale, with a lot of work to cover. The added expertise of two co-opted members from the Cycle Forum and Sustrans had supported the work.

- The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:
- Members thanked the Group and the Officers who had worked on this Task and Finish Group.
- The Transport and Environment Manager advised that developments to the plan were a result of public consultation and external expertise would be bought in to review from a cyclist's perspective.
- Members referred to the recommendation about the connectivity of the rural areas and asked for further details on the rural cycling strategy. Members were advised that the group had focused on the urban routes and that this strategy would be reviewed in the future. There was an acknowledgement of the importance of rural

areas and Members were advised that a Rural Cycle Strategy would be a key task moving forward, with Parish Councils and local organisations being consulted.

- Members referred to the Bridge Street recommendation and asked if the addition of a cycle route was realistic. Members were advised that with careful planning there would be enough space for both cyclists and pedestrians to use the route.
- Members referred to the removal of obstacles to cyclists and queried if there was a better way to use them. Members were advised that barriers inhibited disabled users and could be tackled by having a better understanding of what the obstacles were trying to achieve.
- Members referred to the development of new paths and queried the reduction of maintenance liability. Members were advised that anything that would be built would be reviewed and any new scheme design and planning were considered to reduce maintenance liability.
- Members referred to the reference of walking routes on page 73 and sought clarification on the accessibility for walkers on cycle routes. Members were advised that there was more to be done and would be taken on board.
- Members referred to Bridge Street and their concerns for the safety of pedestrians if cyclists were to be allowed. Members were advised that policies should not be based on an individual, looking at what the City needs. People use bridge street as it's a desire line, a reason it is used by cyclists. Would require a social change.
- Members were advised that if Bridge Street were to be laid out as a shared space, it would be safer for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Members referred to the lack of enforcement as an issue on bridge street.
- Members referred to the maintenance of cycle routes, who had the contract for the maintenance of the paths. Take that away and feedback.
- The Youth Councillor referred to the prioritisation on off-road versus on-road routes and their safety. The Officer advised that where possible everything would be on road, there were some streets where there were constraints. There was also the possibility of low traffic neighbourhoods and the political will, keeping routes on desire lines. There had been a focus within the group to keep the routes within the desire lines.

The following amendment to recommendation 5 was made by Cllr Casey and seconded by Cllr Judy Fox, that the Committee endorse removing obstacles to cyclists like staggered barriers and traffic signals which give priority to motor vehicles with consultation with Peterborough City Councillors before action is taken. A vote was taken on the amended recommendation from Cllr Casey and was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to consider the final report of the Task and Finish group and endorse the recommendations contained within it namely;

1. Review and endorse to Cabinet the amendments to the routes and prioritisation measures in the Draft LCWIP prior to its finalisation.
2. That the Council refers to the LCWIP alongside all developments and site allocations, including when seeking approval at the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee.
3. That the Council enables a cross- departmental approach to focus on improving city centre transport through the development of proposals for a new cycling route along Bridge Street. Any future vision for the City Centre should be based on a cycling and walking first principle.
4. That the LCWIP and Active Travel Plans be reviewed annually.
5. Removing obstacles to cyclists like staggered barriers and traffic signals which give

priority to motor vehicles with consultation with Peterborough City Councillors before action is taken.

6. Creation of a Rural Cycle Strategy, to be discussed with Scrutiny once drafted.

7. Draft a vision for the LCWIP to be included at the start of the plan, which includes relevant targets from relevant PCC and CPCA (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) strategies (e.g., net zero carbon and need for modal shift away from car travel) and references the Transport User Hierarchy.

8. Group has a further purpose once public consultation has been completed.

9. Major infrastructure schemes to include cycling and walking provisions.

10. Engagement with key stakeholders, including PCC councillors, as part of the public consultation.

11. To enhance the natural environment through the delivery of walking and cycling schemes; e.g., through tree planting along new and existing cycle routes. In particular, removal of trees, shrubbery and other vegetation should be minimised when constructing new cycle routes and any that must be removed should be replaced.

12. That the Task and Finish group's work is now concluded, and the group is formally closed. However, it should be noted that the Task and Finish group's work has concentrated on cycling routes in the LCWIP and has not specifically looked at walking routes or the Rural Cycling Strategy.

All recommendations would be presented at Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to consider the final report of the Task and Finish group and endorse the recommendations contained within it to Cabinet, subject to the amendment to recommendation 5.

50. PETERBOROUGH FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2027

The Climate Change and Environment Committee received a report in relation to the Peterborough Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027.

The purpose of the report was to inform and consult the Committee on the Peterborough Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS) before it was presented to Cabinet. The Principal Officer - Flood and Water and Principle Sustainable Drainage Officer the introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

The report had been brought back to Committee following the conclusion of the public consultation. The FRMS would be presented to Cabinet and then to Council, as it was part of the Major Policy Framework.

Members were advised that amendments had been made to the strategy and they were outlined in section 6.2 of the report.

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members praised Officers for the great report.
- Members noted that the next review would be in 2027 but queried if this would be the best time to review it given the plan to build 4000 houses by then in the Local Plan. The Officers advised that the strategy was dynamic and that situations would

change yearly. If there were to be a significant flooding incident, the strategy would be reviewed.

- Members were advised the process was monitored and reviewed annually as part of the local Flood and Water Management Partnership which had a range of stakeholders on. The strategy would remain unchanged but the action plan that supports it would.
- Members referred to infrastructure that supported the drainage systems in the Fens and queried if the work reflected the scale of the task. Members were advised that the Environment Agency had a Future Fens project and the development of the area with a baseline work that had looked to build a report on the risk, economic impacts and value of agricultural land. Large piece of work, that the Fens is the only region referred to in the national strategy. Looked at what we are doing now won't work and needs to be reviewed.
- Members referred to the Drainage Board and confirmed that Councillors would be informed of this work.
- Members referred to section 4.14.1 and the paving of front gardens and its enforceability. The Officers advised that they were not aware of any enforcements of this rule, reliant on neighbours telling on neighbours.
- Members referred to the flood adaptation plan and queried how we could become resilient to severe weather changes. The Officers advised that this was part of the flood mitigation strategy and would lead to flood resilient planning approaches, this could include the use of flood gates. Recommendations to adapt housing to use flood resilient construction.
- Members were advised that the FRMS would be discussed at Cabinet and then recommended to Full Council for approval.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to

1. Consider the completion of the public consultation for an updated Peterborough Flood Risk Management Strategy (FMS).
2. Review and provide comments on amendments made to the FMS following the consultation with such comments reported to Cabinet.

51. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Chair introduced the report which included the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing decisions that the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

- There were no questions raised.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Committee considered the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and **RESOLVED** to note the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions.

The Chair advised that it was the last meeting of the Committee for the year and wanted to thank all committee members for their contributions over the past two years, asking probing questions and providing good scrutiny on behalf of the residents of Peterborough. The Chair also thanked all officers who had attended and presented reports to the committee and answered questions comprehensively.

CHAIR

Meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.48pm