

**MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING
HELD AT 7.00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2024
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors: Day (Chair), Cole, Sandford, JA Fox, Rush, Sharp, Simons, Thulbourn, Warren

Others Present: Miriam Sellick, Youth Council Representative

Officers Present: James Collingridge, Head of Highways and Transport
Darren Sharpe, Natural & Historic Environment Manager
Phil Clark, Biodiversity and Greenspaces Manager
Cambridgeshire County Council
Pamela Abott, Co-Chair LNRS Steering Group
Rowan Rumball, Wildlife Officer
Zoe Peyton Jones, National Management Trainee
Hannah Swinburne, Principal Climate Change Officer
Charlotte Cameron, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Others Present: Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change.

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Jones and Strangward and Councillor Thulbourn and Cllr Cole was in attendance as substitute.

Apologies for absence were also received from Independent Co-opted Member Stuart Dawks.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

45. MINUTES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2024

The minutes of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 January 2024 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. **FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer 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.

- The Committee questioned the consultation process of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).
- The Committee also discussed the membership of the working group and whether a youth council representative could be involved.

AGREED ACTIONS

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

The Committee also requested that:

- The Committee requested that the LNRS come back to committee prior to being published for public consultation.
- The Committee requested that the Youth Council be represented on the Cycling and Walking Member Group.

48. **INFORMATION ITEM: BRIEFING ON THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the progress of drafting the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The Biodiversity and Greenspaces Manager Cambridgeshire County Council and Co-Chair LNRS Steering Group introduced the report and highlighted key points including:

The timeline for the delivery of the LNRS was tight and it would be provisionally signed off prior to consultation.

The strategy would help to improve the management of existing sites and support the expansion of wildlife.

The CPCA had been identified as the responsible authority and PCC were part of a wider engagement piece.

The team wanted the consultation to be locally led and use the opportunity to speak to people, however, engagement in Peterborough had been low.

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

- Members acknowledged that this was important work.
- The team had spoken to farmers to look into options for sustainable food sources. However, the levels of rain had meant that fields for biodiversity had bene plough to recoup losses.
- There was an understanding that not everyone can farm natural instead of food so options around that had been considered. The aim would be to restore nature with farming and not without.
- Members were advised that there had been engagement with the drainage boards and wet habitat plans were being produced.
- The LNRS would feed into the Local Plan and BNG funding.
- Members raised concerns that Cambridgeshire County Council was more urban and were advised that Peterborough's interests would be considered and reflected in the draft strategy.
- Members queried the reporting timelines and expressed that the consultation would need to come via scrutiny. Officers would review the governance dates offline.
- Members were pleased that the forest schools programme had been a success.
- Members acknowledge that the funding mechanisms need to be in place and that the strategy be embedded into the local plan.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee requested that:

- Officers review the work programme timelines against Committee meetings.
- Officers share the LNRS survey with all Councillors.

49. THE CITY COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY: PROGRESS REPORT 2023

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the progress on the actions and targets of the Council's 2018 Biodiversity Strategy.

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

Great progress had been made in achieving the strategy's objectives.

There had been a biodiversity net gain (BNG) change with new reporting requirements through the modified Environment Act 2021. This meant that the current objectives document would need to be reviewed and it was proposed that it would be brought back to committee.

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

- Members were advised that measuring BNG units was complicated, but you could project what sites could be worth more units.
- There were a range of opportunities with this work and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was the toolkit for delivering the BNG objectives.
- The Compliance with the toolkit was paired was considered alongside the

- viability issues.
- Members were advised that BNG was an addition to everything that already exists.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that Climate Change & Environment Scrutiny Committee review the progress made against the Council's 2018 Biodiversity Strategy and make any recommendations with regards the ongoing delivery of the Strategy.

The Committee also requested that Officers liaise together on the timelines for the review of the objectives and to add this onto the work programme for 2024/2025.

50. COUNCIL CARBON FOOTPRINT 2022/23

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the Council Carbon Footprint 2022/23.

The Climate Change Manager accompanied by the National Management Trainee introduced the report and highlighted key points:

- The Council's Carbon Footprint for 2022/23 was presented to the Committee.
- Members were advised that the authority had modified its approach to better reflect the emissions they have control over.
- The Committee were further advised that the council had recalculated its priorities to align with their footprint for 2022/23.
- Officers were pleased to note the consistent reduction in emissions for the baseline year of 2018/19.
- Members were informed that the authority's emissions derived from buildings, transport and infrastructure such as street lighting.
- The ongoing work in respect to net zero was detailed and it was hoped that the authority would reach net zero by 2030.
- Members were further advised that the roadmap to net zero would be presented to the Committee in the coming months.

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

- It was advised that work in respect to the use of HVO fuel by Peterborough Limited was ongoing and that different options were being explored.
- Given the importance of clean air around schools, the Committee queried whether the service area had any plans to support schools with reducing emissions from vehicles.
- It was confirmed that plans were in the pipeline and that the directorate was working towards a city-wide reduction in carbon emissions.
- Furthermore, Members were assured that support was being offered to schools through initiatives such as 'School Streets' and young people were encouraged to get involved by devising their own action plans.
- Moreover, the work pertaining to walking and cycling to school was also detailed.
- On the School Streets initiative, Members queried the enforcement measures.
- In response, it was advised that mobile cameras were in place to support with enforcement.
- It was advised that cycling around the city and strategic cycling routes would

support with the action on transport.

- It was noted that the LCWIP had been signed off and that a new Working Group had been established as per the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Climate Change's request and Members were updated on its aims.
- The Committee sought clarification on the Council's net zero target and whether the authority was on track to meet this.
- In response, it was advised that the roadmap, scheduled for the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting in July would detail the progress.
- It was noted that an integrated approach to sustainable transport was required.
- On page 103 of the report, Members queried why the carbon capture by council owned trees had not been calculated.
- The Committee were advised that this had been excluded due to the difficulties in measuring the impact and the difference in opinion on whether the emission source could be reduced.
- The Committee were advised of the directorate's plans to expand the carbon literacy offer over the next year to ensure that carbon reduction is considered by senior leaders and Officers and the ongoing work with Service Directors was detailed.
- With respect to the carbon literacy offer, it was acknowledged that additional work ought to be carried out.
- The Committee queried the impact of the Council's switch to a brown energy tariff on the authority's growth emissions and whether the brown energy tariff was more cost effective than the former green one.
- Members were advised that the switch was conducted in error and that the Climate Change Team were not aware of the transition.
- It was further advised that the authority could revert to the green tariff or remain on the brown tariff and utilise the cost savings to improve energy efficiency in Council buildings.
- Moreover, the Committee's feedback on the different options were welcomed for inclusion on the summer roadmap.
- In terms of costs, it was noted that based on estimated projections, it would cost £135,000 to purchase a green energy tariff and Officers agreed to share the most up-to date estimations.
- The Committee queried whether the savings were to be ringfenced.
- In response, it was advised that the authority would consider ringfencing options.
- With respect to a green energy tariff, it was suggested that the authority review different energy suppliers.
- A query on the financial support for the Council's Carbon Footprint was raised.
- In response, the public sector grants such as the annual Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was outlined. Members were advised that funding applications were set to open in Autumn 2024.
- Furthermore, it was hoped that the funding would assist with the delivery of low carbon heating and efficiency measures in Council buildings.
- Further clarification on the brown energy tariff switch was sought. It was advised that the switch took place in June 2022, and that Council Officers were not aware of the switch as it was conducted in error.
- The Committee were further advised that the switch came to light in July 2023.
- For future reports, to avoid confusion and overlaps, it was suggested that a separate report on the city be drafted.

- It was also suggested that the accomplishments be incorporated within the city-wide report.
- The Committee were updated on the work that had been undertaken to support others in reducing emissions including the decarbonisation guides for schools and carbon literacy training.
- The Committee were also updated on the Procurement Plan.
- Further clarification on the energy tariffs was sought, with one Member querying the difference between green and brown tariffs.
- Members were informed that brown tariffs were a combination of renewable electricity and fossil fuel electricity.
- With respect to green tariffs, the variations were noted.
- Councillor Sandford requested that an exercise on green energy be carried out and it was agreed that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee would collaborate with the Procurement and Finance Team in respect of this.
- To enable Members to keep track of the above collaboration, a formal recommendation was put forward by the Committee (listed below).
- The Committee pushed for the greenest energy tariff. It was also suggested that future costs be considered.
- Funding was noted as the most significant challenge in terms of reducing carbon emissions.
- Councillor Sandford requested that Officers carry out a further investigation on the carbon capture of trees to determine whether it can be included in the Council's emission targets.

The following recommendations was made by Councillor Sandford and seconded by Councillor Cole that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee recommend that the procurement and finance teams investigate the option of green energy tariffs with the idea of reimplementing a green energy tariff. A vote was taken on the recommendation, and it was **UNANIMOUS**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee recommended that the procurement and finance team investigate the option of green energy tariffs with the idea of reimplementing a green energy tariff.

AGREED ACTIONS

It is recommended that the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee:
1) review the data in the council's Carbon Footprint; and 2) consider items for inclusion in the council's roadmap to net zero.

The Committee also requested:

- The costings for the brown versus green energy tariffs.
- That Officers carry out further investigation on the carbon capture of trees to determine whether it can be included in the Council's emission targets.

51. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair introduced the report which enabled the committee to monitor and track the progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

There were no questions.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report.

CHAIR
Meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.06pm