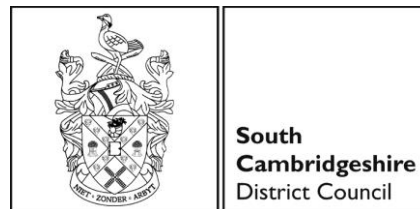


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27 March 2023

To: Chair - Councillor Pippa Heylings
Vice-Chair – Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn & Geoff Harvey

Members of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee –
Councillors Geoff Harvey, Ariel Cahn, Paul Bearpark,
Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Dr Lisa Redrup, Peter Sandford and
Bunty Waters

Substitutes: Councillors Graham Cone, Heather Williams, Dr. Richard Williams,
Lina Nieto, Sue Ellington, Stephen Drew, Peter Fane and
Natalie Warren-Green

Dear Sir / Madam

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Climate and Environment Advisory Committee**, which will be held in **Council Chamber - South Cambs Hall** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Tuesday, 4 April 2023 at 2.00 p.m.**

Yours faithfully

Liz Watts

Chief Executive

The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you

| Agenda | | Pages |
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| 1. Apologies | | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | | |
| 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 as a correct record. | | 7 - 10 |
| 4. Doubling Nature - Presentation by Richard Astle, Chair of Natural Cambridgeshire | | |
| 5. Doubling Nature in South Cambridgeshire: Progress Update | | 11 - 24 |

6. **Sustainable Food: supporting initiatives in South Cambridgeshire**

25 - 32

7. **Forward Plan**

The Committee is invited to note the Forward Plan below.

The following item is scheduled for the next meeting on Tuesday 6 June at 2 pm:

- Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan annual report incorporating the Council's annual greenhouse emissions accounts

The following item is scheduled for the meeting on Thursday 12 October at 2 pm:

- Climate Change Risk Register

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Disturbance by Public

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Declarations of Interest - Information for Councillors

As a Councillor, you are reminded of the requirements under the Council's Code of Conduct to register interests and to disclose interests in a meeting. You should refer to the requirements set out in the Code of Conduct which are summarised in the notes at the end of this agenda frontsheet.

Disclosable pecuniary interests

A "disclosable pecuniary interest" is an interest of you or your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners) which falls within the categories in [Table 1 of the code of conduct, which is set out in Part 5 of the Constitution](#).

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your disclosable pecuniary interests you must:

- disclose the interest;
- not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter; and
- must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

It is a criminal offence to:

- fail to notify the monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election
- fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register
- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of a disclosable pecuniary interest that is not on the register that you have disclosed to a meeting
- participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest
- knowingly or recklessly provide information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a disclosable pecuniary interest or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

Other registerable interests

These are categories of interest which apply to the Councillor only (not to their partner) and which should be registered. Categories are listed in [Table 2 of the code of conduct, which is set out in Part 5 of the Constitution](#). Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter; and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of non-registerable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects – a. your own financial interest or well-being; b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in Table 2 you must disclose the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied. Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) affects the financial interest or well-being: a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and; b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest, you may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

[Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

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Agenda Item 3

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on
Tuesday, 6 December 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Geoff Harvey

Vice-Chair: Dr. Martin Cahn

Committee Members in attendance:

Ariel Cahn

Paul Bearpark

Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya

Dr John Loveluck

Dr Lisa Redrup

Peter Sandford

Bunty Waters

Councillors in attendance:

Councillor Henry Batchelor was in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:

Patrick Adams

Peter Campbell

Bode Esan

Eleanor Haines

Siobhan Mellon

Alex Snelling-Day

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Head of Housing

Head of Climate, Environment & Waste

Climate & Environment Project Officer

Development Officer - Climate and

Environment

Policy, Climate and Environment Team

Manager

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Pippa Heylings.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

4. GCSWS Circular Resource Plan Update

The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager introduced this report on the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service Circular Resource Plan. She explained that the Plan focussed on five key areas to work with partners in reducing waste.

Monitoring the Plan's implementation

The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager explained that progress made on the implementation of the Plan would be monitored through Key Performance Indicators which would be included in a quarterly report.

Reducing consumption

It was agreed that more should be done to reduce waste, which was typically due to people buying more than they needed. Reducing consumption generally would reduce waste and the carbon footprint. The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager explained that the Council was attempting to reduce its consumption and the Committee would be updated on this. The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that a national initiative was planned to reduce packaging.

Reusing and recycling

The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager explained that the new pink bins for recycling of small waste electrical and electronic goods were being monitored and this report could be shared with the Committee. The Council was promoting repair cafés and would use trials to evaluate the success of various initiatives.

Reducing food waste

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that the carbon balance was positive for collecting food waste separately and composting it or treating by digestion. Government direction on assisting with the additional cost of collection was awaited. It was understood that a significant percentage of food waste was being disposed of in black bins. The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager explained that providing a separate caddy for food waste could increase recycling and also inform residents on how much food was being wasted.

Educating young people on waste reduction

It was agreed that recycling should be promoted in schools. The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that an education programme was being worked on and this would include liaising with schools in the District.

Timescales and targets

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste stated that the Joint Waste Strategy was being revised in the coming year and this would include details of timescales and targets. There were various schemes expected from the Government, which would help inform the Strategy. The Committee would be updated on this matter.

The Committee thanked officers for their work and their presentation of the report, which was **noted**.

5. Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan Progress Update

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment presented a revised Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan which included changes made responding to points raised by the Committee at their previous meeting. It was

noted that the annual review of the plan would take place in May or June next year.

Adapting heritage assets to climate change

Councillor Geoff Harvey suggested that the Greater Cambridge Local Plan proposed policy GP/CC Adapting heritage assets to climate change, should be included in the section of the ZCDNAP, which listed proposed climate-related policies. He expressed concern that the proposed policy appeared to be weaker than policy NH/15 in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which it would replace. The Development Officer, Climate and Environment agreed to include it in the list of proposed climate-related policies.

Reducing waste

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that the Council was keen to work more closely with councillors and local residents to reduce waste in the District. Many parishioners could reduce their waste by putting out their black bin once a month or even less frequently. Councillor Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya reported that a village near Darjeeling that had gone completely plastic free.

Biofuels

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste was pleased to report that the budget for substituting diesel with HVO bio-fuel in some of the Council's refuse collections vehicles had been agreed for the financial year 2023/24.

Transport

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment explained that the Council was working with its partners to support community level projects to improve sustainable transport in the District. This included promoting car sharing and providing cycle storage. It was agreed that the section in transport should include a reference to the Local Plan.

Sustainable farming

It was noted that it was important to promote sustainable farming practices including the storing of rainfall and carbon sequestration.

Provision of EV charge points

The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager explained that officers were working with parish councils and its own sheltered housing schemes to provide EV charging points in the District. It was suggested that parish councils could be encouraged to use communal land for EV charging points. It was noted that the Climate and Environment Project Officer was writing a report on this issue.

Watercourses

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that the Council had to balance the need to keep watercourses clear with the need to promote natural habitats.

Provision of green space

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that whilst there were no plans to adopt a park, officers were working hard on the implementation of the

Doubling Nature Strategy.

Trees on A14

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment explained that the Council's planning enforcement team were working to ensure that trees on the A14 corridor were replanted. The Committee could expect to receive an update on this.

The Committee **noted** the report.

6. Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network (WREN) Business Case Update

The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager presented a report that summarised the business case and implementation plan for the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network (WREN).

Seasonal variation

The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager acknowledged that solar panels would generate less energy in the winter. She explained that it was expected that about 65% of the energy required to charge the electric fleet vehicles would come from the solar panels and 35% from the national grid. A power management and energy storage system allowed power to be stored when it was not required.

Concern was expressed regarding the capacity of the grid and how this could affect Waterbeach new town.

The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste explained that the implementation of the project was being carefully monitored and any significant delays would be reported. The Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager stated that alternative forms of sustainable energy generation would be considered in the future. The Committee **noted** the report.

7. Forward Plan

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment reported that the Doubling Nature Strategy would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 2 February 2023 at 2 pm.

The Meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.



| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Report to: | Climate and Environment Advisory Committee 4 th April 2023 |
| Lead Cabinet Member: | Lead Cabinet Member for Environment |
| Lead Officer: | Bode Esan |

Doubling nature in South Cambridgeshire: Progress Update

Executive Summary

1. In 2021 South Cambridgeshire District Council published its Doubling Nature Strategy (DNS), following the declaration of an ecological emergency in July 2019 at Full Council. 'Doubling nature' is an aspiration rather than a closely defined target. The strategy sets out a plan for council actions to impact positively directly and indirectly on the district's natural capital, that is, its stock of natural resources. This report updates and provides detail on these actions. It then presents an approach for further involvement by the Council in this area, to define and advance the Council's contribution to doubling nature in South Cambridgeshire.

Key Decision

No

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Committee considers the report and the actions below and advises the Lead Cabinet Member for Climate and Environment accordingly.
 - 3.1 Realise benefit for nature in South Cambridgeshire via Biodiversity Net Gain planning policy, by working with communities to identify local opportunities to restore nature and understand where biodiversity gains might be best placed.
 - 3.2 Plan subsequent phases of nature-based projects and/or management on HRA estate including reduced mowing regimes and planting, following advice from an ecologist.
 - 3.3 Expand the nature-based projects delivered through watercourse management
 - 3.4 Continue the Council's Six Free Trees with at least 50 parish councils planting trees.

3.5 Work with external partners through the Natural Cambridgeshire partnership to advance support for parish-scale and community projects and support projects within strategic Priority Landscape Areas.

3.6 Further promote the concept of gardening for nature, including measures such as home composting in the context of soil's contribution to natural capital, to inform and enable residents to plant to enhance nature in their gardens or local communities.

3.7 Share best practise with regard to local nature recovery through the Zero Carbon Communities communication channels, for example, the nature recovery projects within Cottenham.

3.8 Improve uptake of grants to villages to plant trees and help biodiversity projects to deliver 'doubling nature' at the parish level.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Committee's role is to advise Cabinet on policies, actions and resources required to deliver on the Council's climate change and environmental ambitions and provide updates on progress towards achieving agreed targets and outcomes

Details

4. Following South Cambridgeshire District Council's declaration of an ecological emergency, the Council published its Doubling Nature Strategy (DNS) in 2021, to establish the Council's vision to double nature by 2050 and set its approach to delivering that vision. As summarised in the DNS and the combined Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan (ZCDNAP) there are a wide range of initiatives underway across the council to support the doubling nature vision. The wider context of doubling nature actions across the Council and district is set out in the following sections.

Being an exemplar through our own estate and operations

5. A large proportion of the Council's doubling nature activities on its own land are carried out by the Housing department. A tree audit of all 2975 trees on communal HRA land has produced a maintenance and enhancement programme which is now underway. In addition to internally funded tree planting, tree and hedge planting is taking place at two locations on HRA amenity land, funded through the Local Authorities Treescapes scheme, and the Housing department has also supported parish councils to plant trees on HRA land. In addition, the Housing department and their grounds maintenance contractor are setting up a pilot project to create wildflower meadow areas at four locations on HRA Land for this growing season.
6. The Housing department's open spaces maintenance policy is being redeveloped to reflect the ambitions of the doubling nature strategy and support is being

provided to resident initiatives such as hand-weeding in place of chemical weedkillers, carried out by a resident's group in Cottenham. A review of Housing garage sites for alternative uses will identify any opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Furthermore, in alignment with good sustainability practice, our estate contractors minimise pesticide use where possible and avoid peat-based compost.

7. The Council has started to explore opportunities for nature recovery on Council-owned commercial land and property, and how to make the business case for investment in biodiversity projects. The Council has supported the Nature Smart Cities programme by providing an example real-life site and several project scenarios to assess outcomes for nature and the case for change. Nature Smart Cities is an Interreg-funded programme to develop an easy-to-use Business Model to quantify the benefits of green infrastructure and ecosystem services. Carbon sequestration for example, but also rainwater infiltration, air quality, biodiversity, social cohesion or the effect on the temperature. Further information on Nature Smart Cities can be found at the Background Papers section.
8. The Council is responsible for maintenance of 275km of awarded watercourses. These are managed for nature and flood prevention using a variety of techniques to preserve and encourage habitats for wildlife, including water voles and wild trout. These techniques largely reflect those used by local Internal Drainage Board (IDBs), however the Environmental Operations Team also work with partner organisations such as the RSPB and the Wild Trout Trust to ensure their work is carried out in the interests of nature and assist local nature groups to carry out smaller nature projects.
9. The Councils manages three closed churchyards in Horseheath, Great Shelford and Willingham. These are currently overseen by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) and outline management plans have been created to ensure these sites are managed for both nature and their historic environment, while balancing health and safety obligations.

Using our direct influence through policy

Biodiversity

10. The most significant contributor to the Council's doubling nature ambitions is arguably through the planning system. This contribution is mainly achieved through securing measurable improvements for biodiversity through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), to create or enhance habitats affected by development. A 10% increase in BNG, mandated in the Environment Act 2021, will be required by all planning applications from November 2023. However, Ecology officers within GCSPS are already negotiating this wherever possible ahead of the November 2023 deadline. An aspiration for a 20% BNG requirement is being explored as a target for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, exceeding the increase required in the Environment Act and tested as viable in other parts of England (Kent).

11. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan will include policies to enhance biodiversity and green spaces in new developments across the district. The evidence base for the Plan includes an extensive study which maps existing green infrastructure (GI) and identifies 14 strategic initiatives for improvements to green infrastructure in Greater Cambridge. These are mapped out in **Appendix A**.
12. Climate adaptation measures proposed within the emerging local plan employ 'green infrastructure' within new developments to reduce impacts of climate change that are being felt now. This includes measures such as using tree planting and soft landscaping to naturally cool buildings, and green roofs and sustainable drainage systems to help address flooding risk. These measures will support biodiversity while strengthening climate adaptation within new communities.
13. In addition, the adopted Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document strengthens the existing South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 biodiversity policies and provides updated guidance for securing biodiversity enhancements in new developments incorporating language from the Environment Act 2021.
14. Alongside the current and emerging Local Plans, the Neighbourhood Planning process enables parish councils to set policies in addition to those in the Local Plan to guide development in their locality and protect and improve green infrastructure.

Water

15. The Council's influence over water quality is similarly established through the planning system. The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document supports existing Local Plan water management policies and guides the approach to flood risk for new developments, by incorporating sustainable drainage systems which can preserve water quality, provide habitats, and increase biodiversity.
16. A council motion was passed in September 2022 with a number of actions in response to the dumping of sewage in South Cambridgeshire chalk streams. A key action was to consider an application to DEFRA for inland bathing water designation along a stretch of the River Cam. This would require water quality sampling and monitoring for at least a year within the designated area. A consultant is currently being engaged to advise on the practicalities, costs and timeline of submitting an application to DEFRA. This will inform a decision to proceed or not with the application.

Soil

17. Through the proposed policies of the emerging Local Plan, the Council is intending to support protection of soil quality, another crucial aspect of our natural capital and a key element of the ecosystem. Significant adverse impacts on soil occur through activities associated with construction. As currently proposed, local

plan policy could promote approaches that minimise soil disturbance, compaction, and disposal during construction projects.

Air

18. Alongside water, air quality is another crucial aspect of our natural capital and following establishment of the Air Quality Strategy, actions are underway by the Environmental Health department to monitor and protect air quality in the district, reducing impacts from new developments and promoting and educating residents on air quality.

Working in partnership with organisations and communities

19. The Zero Carbon Communities grant, and Six Free Trees programme enable tree planting which improve biodiversity as well as performing a carbon reduction function.
20. The Community Chest Biodiversity Grant is also available for parishes, charities, and community groups to fund biodiversity measures. This can fund up to £2,000 per project. The grant has an annual budget allocation of 10,000 and is in its second year. Three successful applications have been funded so far, leaving approximately £17,000 still available for 2022/23 at the time of writing. Ways of increasing future uptake for this grant could be investigated, for instance, by engaging with community groups to gain a better understanding of any obstacles they are facing in setting up nature projects, that might be stopping them from applying to the grant.
21. GCSP will also be undertaking a pilot project involving two parish councils, to review the process of designating Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), and digitising TPO records across the district.
22. Co-ordinated by the Communities Team, Community-Led Plan process enables communities to produce an action plan that helps local people to take steps towards delivering the change they want to see in their areas. These plans can support and guide work on community nature projects.
23. The council is a partner in Natural Cambridgeshire, the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, works to bring together key organisations, businesses and communities to champion, influence, and action that can establish a significant long-term recovery of nature in our area.
24. Natural Cambridgeshire have drawn up six priority landscapes within the county, within which there are opportunities for landscape scale transformation. Two of these landscape areas, the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds and the Cambridge Nature Network, fall partly within South Cambridgeshire. These areas have been incorporated into the aforementioned evidence base of the Greater Cambridge Plan, to inform the development strategic initiatives for green infrastructure improvements and are referenced in the Council's Interim Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain, which can be found in the **Background Papers** section.

25. Natural Cambridgeshire also have developed the Local Nature Recovery Toolkit, to support communities in creating their own nature recovery plans and in doing so deliver increases in key wildlife habitats, help communities to appreciate their natural and built heritage, promote public health and wellbeing and foster new jobs and economic opportunities. A link to the full toolkit is provided in the **Background Papers** for this report.
26. Natural Cambridgeshire have secured a £1million 'fund for nature' from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. This will incentivise and attract investment in landscape-scale projects as well as small parish level community projects.
27. Natural Cambridgeshire will also be working with the Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, and district councils, to develop the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy as mandated by the Environment Act 2021. This work will create an overarching strategy to tackle the nature crisis and deliver co-benefits for the climate, health and wellbeing.

Recommendations for further action

28. It is evident that within the Council there are a range of activities, from those supporting larger scale gains for nature through BNG, to smaller scale / high engagement community scale nature projects. This balance is retained in the options for further doubling nature initiatives set out in the following section, which are summarised in the recommendations at the head of this report.
29. In terms of its ability to provide strategic, larger scale improvements for nature through BNG, the planning process is considered to be one of the key methods through which the Council can meet its doubling nature ambitions. This would be far easier however, if we were effecting change within our own estate, and so perhaps a consideration about the future possibility of owning land upon which to create BNG might be considered as one option by the Council.
30. It is therefore important that this area continues to develop to maximise the benefit to South Cambridgeshire of BNG improvements. Key to this is the delivery of BNG measures in identified strategic locations, and the coordination of this with communities to maximise the outcomes for people and environment. This is an area already being explored by GCSP.
31. As noted above there are already nature projects underway on the Council's own land; it is proposed that this work continues and is enhanced by identifying areas of SCDC's own estate that may lend themselves to specific nature improvements, in particular where these areas overlap with Natural Cambridgeshire's priority areas and the Council's strategic green infrastructure initiatives identified through the GCSP Local Plan process.
32. This would build upon the process used for the successful application to the Local Authority Treescaping fund. Seeking advice from a consultant ecologist will aid in identifying suitable sites and in devising specific plans for the enhancement and

management of these areas, subject to the requirements and constraints of HRA operations and resourcing.

33. There is also an opportunity to further develop projects related to the Council's work on awarded watercourses, particularly supporting local conservation groups in watercourse improvement efforts, utilising inhouse knowledge and equipment.
34. There is an opportunity to build on the support to community groups and parish councils carried out via the Six Free Trees and Zero Carbon Communities programmes and Community Chest Biodiversity Grant. This could be enhanced by more effective signposting to support and resources from external agencies, (such as the Local Nature Recovery Toolkit), working to increase uptake of the Biodiversity Grant and Six Free Trees scheme, and by upholding and promoting exemplars of community action.
35. An example of this is the work done in Cottenham, led by the late Cllr John Loveluck, a member of Climate and Environment Advisory Committee who worked with Sustainable Cottenham to deliver an array of nature projects in Cottenham. Appendix B shows a case study of nature-based projects in Cottenham which could be used to encourage and inspire action elsewhere.
36. Given the importance of soil within as part of Cambridgeshire's natural capital, and the role of gardens as a haven for wildlife, greater promotion of measures like home composting, avoidance of peat-based compost and gardening for nature would increase awareness of these issues, and better enable residents to preserve and enhance nature within their own spheres.
37. While this is an area that the Council is already exploring, it is recognised that more focussed discussion and collaboration with external partners would allow the Council to leverage greater support for parish councils and community groups and bring to bear the dedicated resource and expertise at the disposal of these partners.
38. Similarly to how the Council engaged with the Nature Smart Cities programme, there will likely be future opportunities to utilise tools and best practise, including land use frameworks to assess suitability of land for a number of different uses in order to maximise ecosystem services and positive impact.

Implications

39. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Financial

40. Financial resources for the proposed actions will be assigned through the Council's usual budgetary processes.

Climate Change

41. The proposal would allow the council to enhance natural assets on its own estate and improve support given to residents for doubling nature in their communities, to reduce the damage to nature by climate change.

Consultation Responses

42. The Housing Department, Communities Team and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service have been consulted on the content of this report.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Being green to our core

The proposal would support the council's commitment to doubling nature and addressing the ecological emergency.

Background papers

Natural Cambridgeshire; Local Nature Recovery Toolkit 2020

https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Doubling-Nature_Local-nature-recovery-toolkit.pdf

21 June 2022 An interim approach to biodiversity net gain including offsite provision
<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1095&MId=9469&Ver=4>

12 Jan 2021 Doubling Nature Strategy and (plans for) Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s120256/Doubling%20Nature%20Strategy%20Biodiversity%20Report.pdf>

14 June 2021, Biodiversity Supplementary Planning document

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s122284/SPD%20Report.pdf>

Nature Smart Cities

<https://naturesmartcities.eu/>

Appendices

Appendix A: Green Infrastructure and Cambridge Nature Network maps

Appendix B: Case study: Cottenham Community Nature Sites

Report Authors:

Luke Waddington – Project Officer

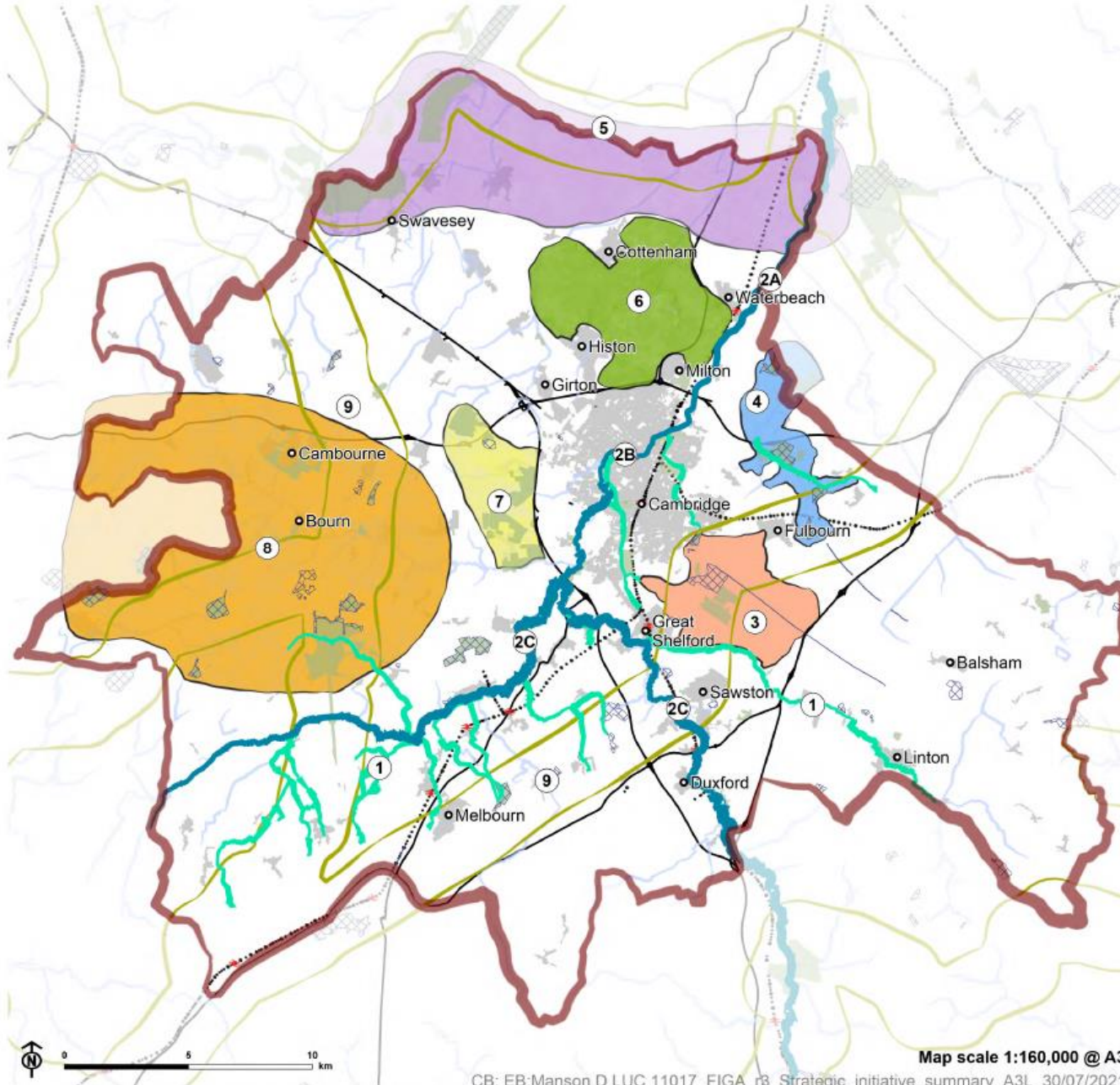
Siobhan Mellon – Development Officer – Climate and Environment

Alex Snelling-Day – Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager

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Figure A: Strategic Initiative summary



- Greater Cambridge
- Large natural greenspace (all access types)
- SSSI
- Spatially-specific Strategic GI Initiatives**
 - 1. Revitalising the chalk stream network
 - 2. River Cam Corridor
 - 3. Gog Magog Hills and chalkland fringe
 - 4. Enhancement of the eastern fens
 - 5. The Great Ouse fenland arc
 - 6. North Cambridge green space
 - 7. West Cambridge GI buffer - Coton Corridor
 - 8. Western gateway multifunctional GI corridors
 - 9. Pollinator corridors
- Dispersed Strategic GI Initiatives**
 - 10. Expanding Greater Cambridge's 'urban forest'
 - 11. Woodland expansion and resilience
 - 12. Urban greening and 'de-paving'
 - 13. Allotments and community gardening
 - 14. Environmentally friendly farming



Map scale 1:160,000 @ A3

CB: EB:Manson D LUC 11017_FIGA_r3_Strategic_initiative_summary_A3L 30/07/2021

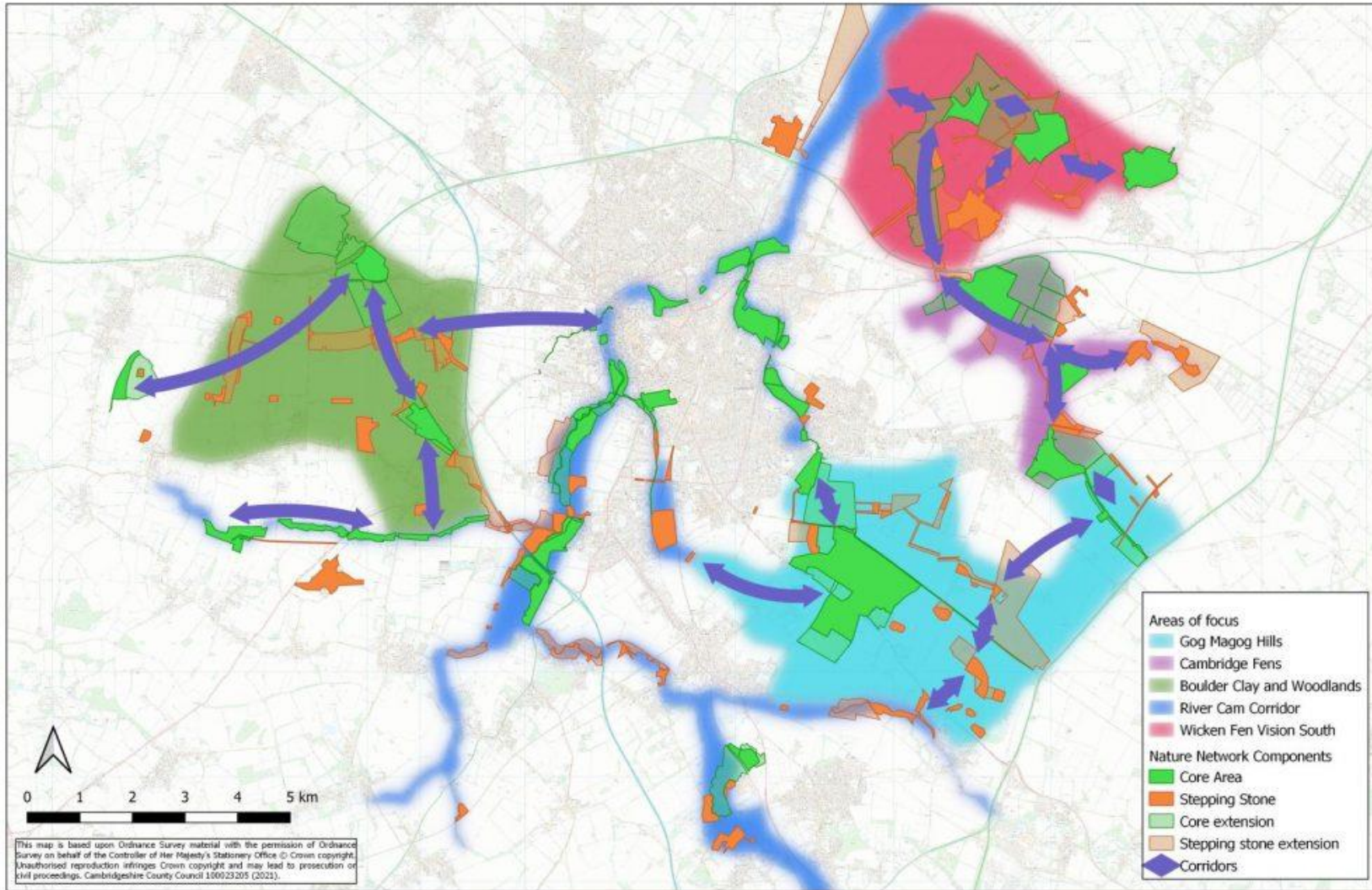
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Cambridge Nature Network

Core Areas and Stepping Stones of existing habitat and their possible extensions
March 2021



Case Study: Cottenham Community Nature Sites



Nature recovery work in Cottenham has been very successful in bringing together numerous partner organisations, funding opportunities and resident volunteer groups to achieve real gains for nature across the parish.

Much of this has been coordinated through local community group Sustainable Cottenham. Their nature recovery branch, which was headed by Cllr John Loveluck, leads the way on nature-related projects. By working with Cottenham Parish Council, and other partner organisations such as the New Life on the Old West (NLOW) project, the Scouts, and Cambridgeshire ACRE, an array of projects within the parish have been achieved across several sites.

- Crowlands Moat: This mediaeval moated site hosts great crested newts, as well as mature trees and wild grass areas. A recent reed clearing project with volunteers from Sustainable Cottenham and the Scouts, has increased the open water habitat favoured by great crested newts for breeding.
- Creation of a pond complex on the Old Rec with varying depths and gradients to suit different species of birds, fish, amphibians, and invertebrates. The land is parish-owned; ponds were Designed by Natural England and funded by NLOW, with local volunteers undertaking hedge planting around the ponds to provide a barrier and further habitat improvement.
- The parish owned 'WARG field' hosts wildflowers, grasses, and bee orchids, as well as 3 new apple trees and a newly created pond, funded by the National Lottery. The WARG field has benefited from a change to the Parish Council's mowing policy which leaves areas uncut for these plants to flourish.
- Fen Reeves wood is formerly agricultural land, planted in 1993 and now in the ownership of the parish council. It is being managed for nature and improved access, with bulb planting, coppicing, path clearance and bird and bat box installation recently undertaken by Sustainable Cottenham volunteers, with plants and tools provided by NLOW project.

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Agenda Item 6



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report to: | Climate and Environment Advisory Committee 04 April 2023 |
| Lead Cabinet Member: | Deputy Leader and Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment, Cllr Brian Milnes |
| Lead Officer: | Head of Climate, Environment and Waste, Bode Esan |

Sustainable Food: supporting initiatives in South Cambridgeshire

Executive Summary

1. This report provides an overview of current action and plans by the council to support sustainable food initiatives. It fulfils action 6.2 in the council's Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan to explore feasibility of further work in the area of decarbonising food systems and agriculture (CEAC 4 October 2022).
2. Food is a key issue in relation to the climate and ecological crises and decarbonising food systems and agriculture will be necessary to meet national and international greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. Most of the work to do this is beyond the remit or influence of the Council. However, there are ways a district council can support the emergence of a more sustainable food system. Broadly defined, these are:
 - Supporting allotments and community-food growing initiatives
 - Supporting a local food economy
 - Influencing behaviour around food: reducing waste and providing information about the climate impacts of meat and dairy consumption
 - Improving recycling rates for food waste
 - Encouraging environmentally-friendly farming
3. In South Cambridgeshire several service areas are engaged in this work, with climate change mitigation a co-benefit rather than the main driver. The report brings this work together and identifies opportunities to add value to the existing activity.

Key Decision

4. No, as all actions in the report have already been agreed through the council's corporate and service planning processes.

Recommendations

5. CEAC is recommended to note the report and provide comments to the lead Cabinet Member for the Environment.

Reasons for Recommendations

6. CEAC's role is to advise Cabinet on how to achieve the council's climate and environmental ambitions. Food production, distribution and disposal has significant implications for these, which means it is important that the council reviews whether it is doing all it can to encourage a more sustainable food system.

Details

7. Sustainable means able to be maintained at a certain rate or level, (Google dictionary). For a food system to be sustainable it must be economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. The national organisation Sustainable Food Places defines sustainable food as:

Food that is produced, processed, traded and disposed of in ways that:

- *Contribute to thriving local economies and sustain the livelihoods of people working in the food sector (ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY)*
- *Protect the diversity of both plants and animals and avoid damaging natural resources and contributing to climate change (ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY)*
- *Provide social benefits, such as good quality food, safe and healthy products and educational opportunities (SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY)*

8. Since CEAC's role is to advise Cabinet on how to achieve the council's climate and environmental ambitions we are mainly concerned here with environmental sustainability although the three elements of sustainability are linked.
9. Food is important to achieving the council's climate and environmental ambitions. Although not relevant to the council's targets for reducing carbon emissions on our own estate and operations, (emissions from food purchased by the council would be out of the scope of our targets, but in any case, the council purchases negligible quantities of food), food production, distribution and disposal is relevant

to the council's aspiration to reach net zero emissions from the district by 2050. Precise figures for the contribution from food production, distribution and disposal are not available, but greenhouse gas emissions from the categories of land use and land use change, and agriculture, (likely to be largely food production given the rural nature of the district) together accounted for 16% of South Cambridgeshire's greenhouse gas emissions in 2020-21. The land use sector needs to become a net sink for greenhouse gas emissions by the mid-2030s.

10. Food production in the district is also important to the council's doubling nature ambitions. Agricultural intensification has been the main cause of loss of nature in the UK. Environmentally sensitive farming is encouraged by government schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship, for which there has been significant take-up in South Cambridgeshire. Post Brexit, new Environmental Land Management schemes are being developed to deliver outcomes for the climate and environment including creating and restoring wildlife-rich habitats. As these come on stream, there may be potential for more environmentally sensitive farming.
11. A key risk of the warming climate is to food security, that is, the availability of food at affordable prices, which may be impacted by drought and flooding, which may in turn affect global food prices. The council is already addressing the issue of households struggling to afford food as a key part of its cost of living work, prompted by recent hikes in inflation, attributed largely to the war in Ukraine. As detailed in paragraph 20, the council's cost of living work has clear cross-overs and synergies with work to support environmentally sustainable food production, distribution and disposal.

Current and planned work by the council

Supporting allotments and community-food growing initiatives

12. Allotments and community growing sites not only provide a source of locally grown produce but also deliver benefits for health and wellbeing, community cohesion, education, biodiversity, climate change, food waste and the local economy. The council supports these through planning policy, which requires that developers make appropriate provision for these. It also supports these as part of community development work on new developments, for example, Northstowe, and through grants to community groups.
13. Current planning policy in the adopted Local Plan require developers to provide areas for community food growing and allotments, (policies SC/7 and SC/8). Guidance on best practice in implementing these policies is included in the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (Section 4.4). Similar policies are included in the First Proposals for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
14. Community food growing projects are eligible to apply for up to £1,500 from the Community Chest and for up to £15,000 from the Zero Carbon Communities

grant. Projects funded include a community building for the Northstowe Horticultural Association, the Orwell Living Food Bank and an apple press in Girton.

15. Details are currently being finalised for new grant schemes funded through the government's Rural Prosperity and Shared Prosperity Funds. These schemes will run for two years April 2023 to March 2025, and it is anticipated that community food-growing projects will be eligible for funding under the 'Creation of new green spaces or improvements to existing spaces' theme.
16. An opportunity to support further allotments and community growing sites across Greater Cambridge is identified in a report produced in 2020 as part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan development process. The Green Infrastructure Opportunities Mapping Report Plan includes an outline of an initiative to create a patchwork of allotments and community growing sites across Greater Cambridge, delivered through expansion and upgrading of existing sites and providing new sites in areas of deficiency and new development. The report sets out an overview of the initiative, potential delivery partners and funding mechanisms and indicative costs. Building on this, a further green infrastructure strategy evidence base is in progress which will define quantity, accessibility and quality standards for new open spaces. These standards will be incorporated into the emerging Local Plan policies.
17. CoFarm is a registered charity with a bold vision to create a network of community-based agroecological farms across the UK. Their subsidiary company CoFarm Cambridge is a community farm started in 2020 on 7-acres of privately-owned agricultural land off Barnwell Road in Cambridge. The GI Opportunity Mapping Report notes plans by CoFarm to develop a community food growing scheme across a patchwork of sites extending from Wicken Fen towards their Barnwell site in the city, in partnership with the National Trust.

Supporting a local food economy

18. There are various ways to help strengthen a local food economy. By supporting the development of community markets with advice (including a toolkit), market and stallholder directories and help with promotion, the council's Business Support team helps food businesses sell their produce locally.
19. Cambridge Food Hub is a pioneering project initiated by Haslingfield-based company Cambridge Organic. Its mission is 'to significantly increase the amount of locally and sustainably produced food that is consumed in Cambridge using processes and facilities that are as environmentally sustainable as possible and with an ethical business model that aims to provide value to its customers, suppliers, employees, owners, the local community and the environment in equal measures'. Currently an online hub, the vision is a building which would serve as a food storage and distribution centre, a small business incubator, shop and café to serve Cambridge and the surrounding area. The GI Opportunity Mapping Report notes that Northstowe was identified as a potential site for this centre.

20. Plans to lead the development of a South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Food Network as part of a package of cost of living support for households were agreed by Cabinet on 20 March. The network will include

- facilitating the setup of new foodbanks
- creating community vegetable gardens
- facilitating a better relationship between supermarkets and foodbanks to donate excess food
- delivering food parcels to those in need

21. Over the coming year we will explore the potential for this work to form the basis of an application for membership of the Sustainable Food Places Network. Sustainable Food Places brings together and supports local cross-sector food partnerships taking a whole food system approach. They have an award scheme recognising and celebrating the success of places taking a joined up, holistic approach to food and achieving a significant positive change on a range of food issues. Cambridge Sustainable Food are currently leading a campaign going for the gold Sustainable Food Places Award.

Influencing behaviour around food: reducing waste and providing information about the climate impacts of meat and dairy consumption

22. The council influences food behaviour through communication campaigns. Love Food Hate Waste campaigns help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, both because food production and distribution produce greenhouse gas emissions which are avoided when waste is minimised, and to a lesser extent because waste food rots and releases methane.

23. Reducing meat and dairy consumption and eating less and more sustainably produced meat and plant-based alternatives is recommended by the Committee on Climate Change. The council supports residents to make healthy and sustainable food choices through information and by ensuring that when catering for events, good quality, healthy plant-based options are available.

24. Three projects funded through the council's Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme have included promoting climate-friendly diets – two from Cambridge Sustainable Food promoting climate-friendly diets and one from Let's Cook supporting low carbon cooking.

25. Support for community-based sustainable food initiatives such as those in Bassingbourn and Haslingfield includes encouraging applications for funding through the ZCC grant scheme and using the ZCC newsletter and networking opportunities to share good practice.

Improving recycling rates for food waste

26. Food waste makes a two-fold contribution to climate change, directly in the methane emissions from food waste in landfill sites, and indirectly in the emissions from producing, packaging and transporting food which is not eaten.
27. The Council encourages home composting of food waste, with some exceptions for cooked food, meat, dairy, and fish. Information about how to compost and a link to purchase composting bins and kit are promoted to residents via the Council's website and as part of regular food waste campaigns.
28. The Council provides a fortnightly food waste collection within the green organic recycling bin, preventing it going to landfill and making it available as compost and a soil improver.
29. The Council has completed a separate food waste collection trial across Greater Cambridge which has been extremely successful, and we have collected over 1,400 tonnes of food waste from almost half a million caddies over the three years. This equates to 3.2kg per household per week (based on 55% participation rate).

Encouraging environmentally-friendly farming

30. As noted in paragraph 10, there is potential for more environmentally-friendly farming in the district. One mechanism for this is Biodiversity Net Gain. A good example of this is the pioneering BNG initiative at Lower Valley Farm, Fulbourn, being delivered by Bidwell's in partnership with landowners Cambridgeshire County Council.
31. The Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Report recommends a strategic initiative to support environmentally-sensitive farming, (Strategic Initiative 14). This has yet to be fully explored. One separate initiative has, however, played a useful part in encouraging regenerative agriculture. As part of the Zero Carbon Communities Climate and Environment Week in 2021, seed funding was provided for the creation of a film profiling six farmers in South Cambridgeshire and neighbouring districts who are pioneering new environmentally friendly agricultural techniques. The film has been widely shared on social media and the project has grown from strength to strength, with a current campaign to fund a longer film on the same subject making good progress.

Implications

32. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, there are no significant implications as the report covers actions already agreed through other processes and makes no significant proposals.

Background Papers

[Annual Progress Review of Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan, report to CEAC, 21 June 2022, and Appendix.](#)

[Cost of Living – Options to Continue Support, report to Cabinet, 20 March 2023](#)

[Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report \(Land Use Consultants\) November 2020 \(greatercambridgeplanning.org\)](#)

[Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping \(greatercambridgeplanning.org\)](#)

[Lower Valley Farm | Bidwells](#)

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