

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on
Monday, 8 July 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

Chairman: Pippa Heylings
Vice-Chairmen: Dr. Martin Cahn
Geoff Harvey

Committee Members in attendance:

Grenville Chamberlain
Jose Hales
Peter Topping

Officers:

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Soraya Hashemi	Scientific Officer
Kevin Ledger	Senior Policy and Performance Officer
Siobhan Mellon	Development Officer - Climate and Environment
Stuart Morris	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Trevor Nicoll	Interim Assistant Director for Waste Resources & Special Projects

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Graham Cone. Councillor Peter Topping acted as substitute.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. HISTON & IMPINGTON YOUTH ECO COUNCIL

The Chairman invited five primary school children from Histon and Impington Youth Eco Council to speak about their concerns regarding climate change.

The Committee acknowledged the responsibility of the current generation to make the correct decisions to avoid the worst consequences of climate change for the next generation. The Chairman explained that "being green to our core" was one of the Council's four priority areas. The authority took decisions regarding the building of homes and the location of roads that affected energy usage and co2 emissions.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Histon and Impington Youth Eco Council for their participation and wished them well in their endeavours.

5. FEEDBACK FROM ZERO CARBON SYMPOSIUM (PRESENTATION FROM CARBON NEUTRAL CAMBRIDGE)

The Chairman invited Anne Miller, from Carbon Neutral Cambridge, to give a presentation to the Committee on the recent Zero Carbon Symposium held in Cambridge.

The Symposium had been attended by 57 expert participants, of which just over half had been Council Officers and local Members.

Anne Miller outlined the key points relevant to the coming Local Plan arising from the Symposium:

- Start now and tackle everything
- Establish a Climate Commission to help you
- We can transform our energy systems for free, by working with businesses who provide upfront investment paid back from savings to energy bills
- Modern methods of construction allow virtually zero carbon homes at low or no extra cost
- Follow the example of leading local authorities and require homes in major new developments to be zero carbon including 35% reduction on current building regulations
- Councils have a legal duty for Local Plans to be “in line” with the requirements of the Climate Act

In discussion following the presentation, the following comments were made.

Off-setting

Members of the Committee acknowledged the challenges involved in carbon off-setting.

It was suggested that Developers should pay for local off-setting schemes, to mitigate the effects of the development. A recent report by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority on modern construction methods was discussed, and it was agreed this should be circulated to the members of the Committee.

Anne Miller explained that a recent housing development at Bicester had been built with a low carbon footprint and recommended that councillors visit it.

It was noted that carbon offsetting was a potential business opportunity.

Local Plan

The Committee agreed that it was imperative that the new Local Plan included the strongest possible policies to support the transition to net zero carbon in the District. It was noted that a sound evidence base would be required for proposed policies.

Climate Commission

The Interim Assistant Director for Waste Resources and Special Projects warned against creating an additional and potentially unwieldy new organisation in relation to a Climate Commission.

The Committee recommended that

- Schemes whereby developers can offset unavoidable carbon emissions are further explored, and
- Efforts be made to find a model to ensure that policies on sustainability be brought into the Local Plan.

6. FINDINGS FROM OPPORTUNITY MAPPING (PRESENTATION FROM THE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP)

The Committee received a presentation from the Biodiversity Partnership, which reported on a recent project commissioned by the Partnership to map natural capital and

opportunities for habitat creation in Cambridgeshire.

The project had delivered a detailed habitat base for the whole of Cambridgeshire, matched and compared to a map of land-use and habitats from the 1930s. Potential opportunities for the expansion of key habitats had been identified.

The next steps were to improve the accuracy and detail of the basemaps by “groundtruthing” and incorporating information from existing plans and priority areas; to create base and opportunity maps for a number of ecosystem services and to start using the maps to assist with strategic plans.

The Committee discussed the merits and limitations of planting trees to off-set the carbon footprint of a new development.

It was suggested that the District Council should liaise with parish councils and Cambridge Past, Present and Future to identify sites for tree planting. It was also suggested the major landowners in the District, including Cambridge Colleges, the church and the County Council, should be encouraged to plant trees on their land.

It was suggested that soil types and the location of flood plains also needed to be considered. It was agreed that recommendations on promoting bio-diversity in the District needed to be made during the Local Plan consultation process.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that

- A)** The Council liaise with Parish Councils and the County Council regarding the maintenance of grass verges to promote biodiversity whilst maintaining road safety.
- B)** An appeal to landowners in the District for sites for planting be considered.
- C)** The maps being created be used in evidence for the Local Plan.

7. UPDATE ON AIR QUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (ORAL UPDATE)

The Scientific Officer – Air Quality gave a presentation to the Committee on the Council’s Air Quality Strategy. Air quality was monitored in 30 locations in the District and the Scientific Officer – Air Quality was pleased to report that the air quality was within the legal limits in all these stations.

It was suggested that extra stations should be set up outside schools to monitor air pollution from cars.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain explained that the technology existed to halve the emissions from diesel powered vehicles. The Chairman asked Councillor Chamberlain to provide more details on this at the next meeting of the Committee. It was suggested that a Business Plan be produced to look at the feasibility of increasing air monitoring in the District, possibly with the use of Section 106 funds.

8. INVESTMENT IN GREEN ENERGY PROGRESS REPORT (ORAL UPDATE)

The Senior Policy and Performance Officer presented a progress report on the Council’s Investment in Green Energy programme.

Recruitment of Energy Investment Officer

A new Green Energy Officer had been recruited. She has worked at Buckinghamshire County Council on implementing green energy projects and has experience of engaging

with this authority on the Sustainable Parish Energy Project (SPEP).

Green to Our Core Cluster Board

A “Green to our Core” Cluster Board has been set up to co-ordinate environment and climate change/carbon reduction projects. Along with three other cluster boards this reports into a Corporate Transformation Board at Executive Management Team level. The group will meet monthly. Projects being examined were street lighting, solar panels at the Waterbeach Depot, energy measures at the Science Park building, Northstowe Community Buildings, Waterbeach Phase 2 and the Zero Carbon Action Plan. The progress being made by the officer group would be reported back to the Committee.

South Cambs Hall

The Senior Policy and Performance Officer reported that the various green energy initiatives at South Cambs Hall were estimated to cost £1.3 million and would pay for themselves in approximately 14 years.

9. ACTION PLAN FOR ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE (ORAL UPDATE)

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment updated the Committee on the progress being made to draw together an Action Plan for a Zero Carbon South Cambridgeshire, based on the relevant actions in the Business Plan. Government data showed annual emissions produced by three major sectors: transport, non-residential and residential since 2005. It was noted that emissions had declined since 2005, largely due to reductions in carbon intensity of the electricity supply.

It was noted that the Council could reduce carbon emissions directly through its housing and planning policies and indirectly through its wider influence.

It was noted that an increase in development and improvements in infrastructure made carbon reduction in the District more challenging.

The draft Action Plan was available in hard copy and Members were invited to provide comments after the meeting directly to the Development Officer.

The next meeting of office group would take place on 15 August.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Committee agreed the following meeting dates:

- Tuesday 24 September 2019 at 2pm in the Swansley Room
- Tuesday 19 November 2019 at 2pm in the Monkfield Room
- Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 2pm in the Monkfield Room
- Tuesday 24 March 2020 at 2pm in the Monkfield Room

The Meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.
