

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on
Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Pippa Heylings

Vice-Chairs: Dr. Martin Cahn and Geoff Harvey

Committee Members in attendance:

Grenville Chamberlain

Peter Fane

Richard Williams

Officers:

Patrick Adams

Emma Dyer

Jane Green

Siobhan Mellon

Trevor Nicoll

Alex Snelling-Day

Rebecca Weymouth-Wood

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Project Officer

Built and Natural Environment Manager

Development Officer - Climate and
Environment

Head of Environment and Waste

Green Energy Investment Officer

Interim SSWS Waste Policy Manager

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Graham Cone and Jose Hales.
Councillor Richard Williams acted as substitute for Councillor Graham Cone.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the job title of the Built and Natural Environment Manager in Minute 6.

4. Presentation from Co-ordinator of the Future Parks Accelerator

Sarah Ferriss and Victoria Stacey gave a presentation on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Future Parks Accelerator, which sought to find ways to secure the long term provision, funding and management of parks and public open spaces to create a sustainable future for generations to come.

Members of the Committee made the following points

- It was important to both increase the number of accessible green spaces and to promote existing sites.
- The Council should also seek to promote tree cover in the District.
- The Council did not manage green spaces, so existing landowners needed

to be approached.

- The Local Plan identified green spaces.
- Connectivity between sites was also important.
- Neighbourhood Plans could also identify green spaces.

Sarah Ferris explained that the shared vision for provision of new spaces would be discussed through the forthcoming stakeholder engagement work. She stated that was also an important issue for Cambridgeshire County Council and the team worked closely with the County Council's Green Spaces Manager.

The Chair thanked Sarah Ferris and Victoria Stacey for their presentation and their informative answers.

5. Doubling Nature Strategy for Recommendation to Cabinet in January (Oral Update)

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment updated the Committee on the Doubling Nature Strategy. She explained that the Strategy will be considered by the Committee at its next meeting before being considered by Cabinet on 3 February.

The second members' workshop had been held on 20 October. Members raised the following:

On the Council's own estate

- It was important to have the right projects in the right places.
- Not all land was suitable.
- Wildflower areas should be promoted, especially in view of their importance to pollinating insects.
- Car parks should be considered, as sites for tree planting.
- Wildlife friendly planting and other measures should be considered on the the South Cambs Hall site.

In the wider district:

- Farmers and other landowners will need to be on board
- Community projects needed to be supported.

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment reported that a draft report on the key points from the workshop would be circulated to Members soon.

6. Travel to Work Plan

The Development Officer – Health Specialist presented this report on the Council's Travel for Work Plan, which will replace the Plan for 2015-20. She explained that the Plan included travel undertaken by officers on behalf of work as well as commuting. She suggested a six-month review of this Plan, due to the uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reducing travel

It was suggested that in the future there would be fewer meetings at the Council offices and so less travel.

Promoting electric cars

It was suggested that instead of paying officers 45p per mile, they should either be provided with a loan to purchase an electric car, or staff should be able to hire an electric car owned by the Council. It was noted that 20 new charging points would be made available at the South Cambs Hall site.

Promoting public transport

The Chair suggested that the public transport infrastructure should be improved. A toolkit was with Planning Policy for their input. She suggested that this be shared more widely.

The Committee **Recommended to Cabinet** that the Travel for Work survey goes ahead but is repeated in six months, in order to monitor a changing situation.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

7. Greening South Cambridgeshire Hall - Update

The Green Energy Investment Officer updated the Committee on progress being made on the heat pump, which received planning in August, the installation of LED lighting, solar carport, maximising energy efficiency in the building, installing 20 electric vehicle charge points, improving chiller efficiency and upgrading the AHU fan.

In response to questioning, the Green Energy Investment Officer confirmed that there had been a small increase in the budget for this project, which had been agreed by Leadership Team and was within tolerance levels.

It was noted that the photovoltaic cells were designed to provide energy for the building. It was suggested that the Council should consider installing a solar farm.

The Green Energy Investment Officer explained that the Council did not yet have the data on how much carbon savings had been generated by the office not being used by staff in lockdown. The Head of Environment and Waste explained that the Council planned to rent out any free office space, instead of leaving it empty.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

8. Green Gas Emissions Accounts for 2019-20

This item was discussed after agenda item 9.

The Project Officer, Climate and Environment presented this report that provided the Committee with greenhouse gas emissions accounts for the Council's estate and operations for 2019-20. It was noted that the Council aimed to reduce its emissions by 45% by 2025 and entirely by 2050.

It was noted that current projects to reduce emissions, discussed in agenda item 9, will result in emissions reductions in the current and in future years. The Project Officer, Climate and Environment explained that in the future these reports would be in synchronisation with the reports on Zero Carbon.

The Project Officer, Climate and Environment agreed to explore whether exact auditable figures could be provided on emissions, instead of relying on estimates.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that failure to meet carbon emissions targets be included in the corporate risk register.

9. 2020-21 Zero Carbon Action Plan Progress Report

With the Committee's agreement the Chair took this item before agenda item 8, the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Accounts for 2019-20.

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment explained that Council had adopted the Zero Carbon Strategy in May and that this report provided a progress update on actions arising from the Strategy. She reported that there was a mistake in paragraph 7 of the report where the target of reducing net emissions from the Council's own estate and operations should read 45% by 2025 and not 50%. She explained that the Committee would receive an update for the end of the financial year in June 2021.

Evaluating the objectives

It was suggested that Green in the RAG ratings meant different things in different circumstances. The Chair suggested that an extra column be added to the report to include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable and Time-related) objectives for each indicator. The Development Officer, Climate and Environment agreed, adding that objectives would be refined where necessary before the progress report was next considered by the Committee.

Comparing performance with other authorities

The Chair asked that the performance of this authority be compared with other councils and the work with communities should be highlighted. The delivery of technical assistance as well as grant funded should also be commended.

Reducing use of electricity in the Council's smaller offices

It was suggested that electricity usage could be reduced in the Council's smaller sites. The Head of Environment and Waste explained that South Cambridgeshire Hall had been the priority, due to its size and the fact that at 15-16 years old it need renovation work. Work would be carried out on the smaller sites.

Replacing electric lighting

The Head of Environment and Waste explained that parish councils were benefitting from the efficiency savings made from the installation of electric lighting. The plan was to replace all streetlights and he asked for councillors to report to him if they were aware of any lights that the Council owned which had not been replaced.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

10. **Forward Plan**

It was noted that the Combined Authority's Independent Commission on Climate Change was calling for evidence, but the responses would have to be received before the next meeting of the Committee. It was agreed that the draft response would be shared with the Chair and the Leader. Committee members were invited to e-mail the Chair if they wanted to see the draft response.

Members asked for the following items to be considered for the Forward Plan:

- Retrofitting Historic Buildings (January)
- Solar Together Scheme (January)
- Housing Assessment Management Strategy (January)
- Planning Reforms White Paper's Impact on Zero Carbon (January)
- Planning Permission for the Construction of cycle shelters.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 2pm.

The Meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.
