

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on
Tuesday, 12 January 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Pippa Heylings
Vice-Chairs: Dr. Martin Cahn and Geoff Harvey

Committee Members in attendance:

Grenville Chamberlain
Peter Fane
Dr. Richard Williams

Councillors in attendance:

Bridget Smith and Hazel Smith

Officers:

John Cornell	Natural Environment Team Leader
Jane Green	Built and Natural Environment Manager
Siobhan Mellon	Development Officer - Climate and Environment
Trevor Nicoll	Head of Environment and Waste
Alex Snelling-Day	Green Energy Investment Manager

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Jose Hales and Graham Cone. Councillor Richard Williams substituted for Councillor Graham Cone.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Fens Biosphere Project - Presentation

Mark Nokkert the Programme Manager of the Fens Biosphere Project and Roger Mitchell its Chairman gave a presentation to the Committee on the benefits of achieving UNESCO Biosphere status for the Fens.

In response to questioning, Roger Mitchell explained that:

- The aim was to create “buffer zones” alongside the statutory protected sites.
- The boundaries to the Project were the legally defined administrative boundaries.
- Quantitative data was being used to measure the targets such as doubling nature.

In response to questioning, Mark Nokkert explained that

- The Lowlands Agricultural Task Force was promoting low carbon farming techniques.
- Project were working with 11 local authorities and seeking their support.
- The Project was self-financing and so by endorsing the aims of the project the Councils were not committing to any expenditure.

The Built and Natural Environment Manager stated that the aims of the Fen Biosphere Project complements the Council's existing policies. She explained that a recommendation from the Committee to Cabinet would be required to make support of the Project corporate policy.

The Committee unanimously recommended that the Lead Cabinet member ensures that the Council supports the aims of the Fens Biosphere Project and encourages other local authorities to do the same.

5. **Green Energy Investment Programme Update**

The Green Energy Investment Manager presented this report that updated the Committee on the approach being taken to finding, prioritising and progressing green energy investment opportunities.

In response to questioning, the Green Energy Investment Programme explained that the Council should be able to continue to borrow funds from the Public Works Loans Board as the projects were for the public benefit and not just for profit. It was noted that officers in Accountancy would be able to provide Members with more information regarding this.

Members of the Committee suggested initiatives for widening the programme by working with the owners of neighbouring properties when installing solar panels or heat pumps and purchasing land for wind turbines. The Green Energy Investment Manager agreed that the Council should work in partnership to deliver the investment programme.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

6. **Doubling Nature Strategy and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document for Greater Cambridge**

This report was discussed after agenda item 4.

The Climate and Environment Development Officer introduced this report on the draft Doubling Nature Strategy, which provided details on how the Council would achieve the aims agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 4 July 2019. The Natural Environment Team Leader gave an oral update on the Supplementary Planning Document, which was a key component of the Council's strategy to double nature.

It was agreed that the Council should have challenging, aspirational targets.

Councillor Pippa Heylings noted the links between the Council's work managing awarded watercourses and the Fens Biosphere. The Head of Environment and Waste suggested the Fens Biosphere project might consider extending its boundary into South Cambridgeshire to include more of these watercourses and Mark Nokkert was invited to contact him to follow this up.

The Committee noted plans for the Biodiversity SPD and **Recommended** adoption of the Doubling Nature Strategy by Cabinet at their meeting on 3 February 2021.

7. **Retrofit Opportunity**

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment presented a report outlining an opportunity arising from the EU funded Eastern New Energy Research Collaboration Project (ENE) to support the development of retrofit services for the benefit of South Cambridgeshire residents.

Soren Nellesgaard and Warren Pope from the co-operative Retrofit Works gave a presentation on the working being done through the ENE project which included the retrofit of 40 homes, and the aspiration to develop a one-stop shop retrofit service enabling further retrofits beyond the end of the ENE project.

It was clarified that Retrofit Works will be working with local installers to help build capacity, and the aim was to retrofit far in excess of the 40 properties funded through the ENE project.

The Committee **Recommended** that the Council purchase a one year licence for the relevant software and champion the project in the wider area.

8. **Forward Plan**

The following topic was suggested for future discussion:

- The Ox-Cam arc project and its environmental principles

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 9 March at 2pm.

The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.
