

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on
Tuesday, 13 July 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Committee Members in attendance:
Paul Bearpark
Mark Howell

Councillors in attendance:

Councillors Cllr Sue Ellington, Cllr Peter Fane and Cllr Bridget Smith were in attendance remotely, by invitation.

Officers:

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Emma Davies	Principal Sustainability Consultant
Emma Dyer	Project Officer - Climate and Environment
Siobhan Mellon	Development Officer - Climate and Environment
Rebecca Weymouth-Wood	Interim SSWS Waste Policy Manager

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Graham Cone and Councillor Grenville Chamberlain. Councillor Mark Howell substituted for Councillor Graham Cone, whilst Councillor Sue Ellington attended the meeting remotely to substitute for Councillor Grenville Chamberlain.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment reported that following the item on the Chalk Streams report at the previous Committee meeting, the Council's Drainage Manager had met with Rob Mungovan, author of the report, to discuss improved management of awarded watercourses to enhance biodiversity. The Chair expressed enthusiasm for a report back to the Committee in due course on progress with this action.

5. Nature Smart Cities Business Model

Councillor Anna Oxenham from Southend-on-Sea Borough Council gave a presentation to

the Committee on the aims of the Nature Smart Cities and Phil Back described its business model. It was noted that the project were looking for local authorities to volunteer from the four participating countries.

Members of the Committee made the following points:

- This was an exciting opportunity for the Council.
- As Britain had left the European Union it was unclear where funding would come from after 2023.
- The European definition of a city was different from the British definition.
- Trees planted on A14 had died due to neglect.
- Tree location and plastic cover removal needed to be better planned.
- The Council did not own much land in the District.
- To implement change, a budget and staff were required.
- It was suggested that this could be part of the OxCam arc.

Phil Back explained that green initiatives in the District had been added after the development had taken place. This project was an opportunity to create a network of cities that shared business models and promoted sustainability.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Mark Howell seconded that the Committee **Recommended** that the Council offered to pilot test this scheme.

6. **Progress report on Zero Carbon Action Plan and Revised Plan with Doubling Nature Actions Added**

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment presented this report, which provided both a review of the Zero Carbon Action Plan for 2020/21 and an update of the Plan, which included the actions to deliver the Doubling Nature Strategy.

The Committee noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had made certain objectives unfeasible, such as the support for repair cafés.

Committee members made the following points:

- Newly planted trees often died, so planting two trees for every one removed should be considered.
- The reduction in waste at South Cambs Hall was welcomed.
- Numbers should be provided in reports, not just percentages.
- The Cambridge Ice Rink should be considered as a taxi charging site.
- To implement this properly, a culture change will be necessary.
- It would be useful to know where financial savings were being re-invested.
- Some of the “red” projects required urgent action.
- It would be challenging for the Council to meet its doubling nature aspirations, as the authority did not manage any land.
- The support of local businesses was important.

In response to a query regarding the Council’s approach regarding enforcement of energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector, the Development Officer – Climate and Environment suggested that the Environmental Health team be invited to a Committee meeting to discuss this.

It was suggested that Ermine Street Housing Ltd could pilot a scheme on this issue. In

response to a query regarding Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure the Development Officer, Climate and Environment suggested that a report outlining current and planned action by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, the Combined Authority, and the Council be brought to a future Committee meeting for discussion.

Combined Authority

The Leader recommended that the Council work with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, as it had just adopted the Independent Climate Change Commissions recommendations.

Paperless meetings

It was noted that the Council was carrying out a pilot scheme for having paperless meetings and that the Council's paper usage had significantly reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee **Noted** the revised Zero Carbon Action Plan, which had been updated to include the Doubling Nature actions.

7. 2020-21 GHG Emissions Accounts

The Climate and Environment Project Officer presented this report on the Council's Greenhouse Gas emissions for 2021. It was noted that to achieve the Council's target of 75% reduction by 2030 an annual reduction of 6.25% was required and the authority was slightly behind this target. It was expected that the greening of South Cambs Hall and the electric waste collection fleet vehicles would rectify this.

Comparing with other local authorities

The Climate and Environment Project Officer explained that the Council was considering using the Local Government Association's tool for benchmarking performance against other authorities next year.

Reducing food waste

The Waste Policy, Change and Innovation Manager explained that the Council was introducing a new initiative that would encourage residents to reduce their food waste.

Reducing mileage

The Climate and Environment Project Officer explained that an officer was looking at ways of minimising the increase in travel by officers after lockdown ended. It was agreed that the Council's Travel to Work plan should be shared with members of the Committee.

Internet usage

In response to concerns about the increase in emissions from internet usage, the Climate and Environment Project Officer explained that the Council was working with Cambridge City Council to measure the emissions produced by the 3C ICT servers.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

8. Update on Grid Capacity Issues Facing Greater Cambridge

The Principal Sustainability Consultant updated the Committee on the work being carried out to address grid infrastructure capacity issues across the District.

In response to concerns expressed about the possibility of a lack of grid capacity preventing future housing developments, the Principal Sustainability Consultant explained

that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority were already investing on infrastructure to avoid this.

Councillor Paul Bearpark agreed to provide the Principal Sustainability Consultant with details of the use of the greenhouse gas sulphur hexafluoride in the installation of grid infrastructure.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

9. A428 Environmental Legacy Update

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment provided an update on attempts to secure a positive environmental legacy from the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement works. She agreed to provide Committee members with the link to the online consultation on the Planning Inspector's website regarding this project.

The Chair stated that the environmental legacy for the A428 improvements needed to be better than that of the A14 and the Council needed to lobby Highways England to help ensure this. The Leader assured the Committee that the Planning Inspector had asked Highways England for information regarding their questionable figures. The three affected Cambridgeshire authorities were equally concerned about this issue and the Leader had raised this matter with the District's MP.

Councillor Mark Howell suggested that the plastic protective bags put on saplings be made of biodegradable material, or a strategy be drawn up for their removal.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

10. Six Free Trees Scheme

The Project Officer, Climate and Environment provided the Committee with details of the Council's Six Free Trees Scheme. She explained that unlike the previous scheme, the trees for this project would be bulk purchased, which would be cheaper and easier to administer. The aim was to deliver the free trees to parishes by December.

The Chair suggested that the survival of the trees should be monitored and Councillor Sue Ellington recommended that the Council replace any trees that die, free of charge.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

11. CPICC Recommendations to CaPCA - implications for SCDC

The Leader reported that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board had approved the recommendations of the Climate Change Commission. The Combined Authority would now be allocating officer support to this. There were opportunities for the creation of wetlands in the District. Unfortunately there had been some resistance to the peat restoration project. It was noted that the Government was about to out on consultation on the OxCam Arc project.

12. Forward Plan and Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 13 September at 2:00pm. It

was noted that the following issues were on the Forward Plan:

- Presentation from RSPB Area Manager on plans and issues around Ouse Fen Nature Reserve
- Air quality update
- The Local Energy Advice Partnership
- Net Zero housing project
- Approach to energy efficiency in Private Rented Sector
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The Meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.
