

## **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on  
Monday, 7 March 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

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

### **Committee Members in attendance:**

Paul Bearpark  
Graham Cone

Councillor Cllr Peter Fane was in attendance remotely.

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Councillors Bridget Smith was in attendance, by invitation.

### **Officers:**

Jane Green	Built and Natural Environment Manager
Eleanor Haines	Climate & Environment Project Officer
Soraya Hashemi	Scientific Officer
Siobhan Mellon	Development Officer - Climate and Environment
Alex Snelling-Day	Green Energy Investment Manager
Kate Swan	Project Officer - Commercial Development & Investment

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Grenville Chamberlain.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Draft Green and Blue Strategy - Northstowe Employment Zone and Local Centre**

Riccardo Boise and Fred Labbe from AR Urbanism gave a presentation to the Committee outlining the emerging plans for the public realm, specifically

sustainability and green and blue infrastructure at the Northstowe Local Centre and Enterprise Zone site.

Councillor Bridget Smith asked if the proposed 20% biodiversity net gain was a target or whether this could be exceeded. Fred Labbe replied that he was confident that the 20% figure would be met and that potentially more could be achieved but this depended on unknown factors.

Councillor Paul Bearpark welcomed the use of the “doughnut” economic model, which balanced different competing influences. He suggested that the figure of 10% energy generation appeared unambitious and asked if solar panels could be installed at the busway car park. Fred Labbe assured the Committee that the aspiration was to achieve a higher figure than 10% for energy generation. The Project Development Officer explained that car parks were owned by the County Council and so the Council would have to liaise with them regarding the installation of solar panels. Riccardo Boise explained that efforts were being made to reduce the use of cars for commercial deliveries.

Councillor Graham Cone asked at what height the bird boxes would be installed and if more energy could be created on site and more water captured. Fred Labbe explained that rainwater would be harvested to flush toilets to reduce the use of potable water. Riccardo Boise explained that no decisions had yet been taken regarding the height of the bird boxes.

Councillor Geoff Harvey asked whether embodied carbon had been taken into account when considering the building materials. Fred Labbe assured the Committee that there were ambitious targets regarding sustainable construction.

The Committee welcomed the presentation and hoped that the Zero Carbon Strategy and the Doubling Nature Strategy could help to inform the project. The Chair suggested that semi-permeable paving could be used and requested that water scarcity be emphasised, a plan for waste management be included and the business quarter not be placed on the edge of the development. The Committee **Noted** the report.

## **6. Cambridgeshire Solar Together Update**

The Climate and Environment Project Officer introduced this report that updated the Committee on the outcomes of the recently completed Solar Together Cambridgeshire Scheme.

The Climate and Environment Project Officer explained that 2,466 residents had registered with the Scheme and 605 had accepted the offer. She considered this to be a good acceptance rate. The Development Officer – Climate and Environment reported that the plan was for the Scheme to break-even but it had returned a profit, which indicated how successful the first year had been. It was expected that many of those who had registered in the first year would fully sign-up in the second year.

In response to questioning the Development Officer – Climate and Environment

explained that iChoosr originally offered two different grades of solar panel but now only offered the higher grade of panel.

Councillor Graham Cone asked if residents could be advised if it was economically viable to purchase a battery pack. Councillor Geoff Harvey added that the different tariffs and size of batteries made this a complex issue. The Climate and Environment Project Officer agreed to contact the Council's partner iChoosr regarding this issue. The Development Officer – Climate and Environment advised that residents who required a loan were probably best served by contacting a reputable bank or building society.

Councillor Bridget Smith stated that she owned a listed building and asked if there was any specific guidance on installing solar panels in conservation areas or on listed buildings. Councillor Peter Fane stated that it was possible to install solar panels on listed buildings, which integrated with the Conservation area. The Development Officer – Climate and Environment agreed to discuss this issue with iChoosr.

The Chair requested feedback on how the money generated by the scheme was being invested. The Committee **Noted** the report.

## 7. **Air Quality Update**

The Scientific Officer Air Quality presented this report, which updated the Committee on the progress being made on implementing the Air Quality Strategy that was adopted on 4 February 2022. She explained that the Council was using portable monitors called Zephyrs at Northstowe, Swavesey and Histon.

In response to questioning from Councillor Paul Bearpark, the Scientific Officer Air Quality explained that the developer had increased their monitoring of air quality at Waterbeach new town and data would be available to analyse in six months' time. It was noted that the location of the school at this development had been a long-running concern of this Committee.

The Chair warned that the World Health Organisation could change the threshold levels regarding air quality and the Council should therefore plan for this when agreeing planning approval for new settlements.

Councillor Geoff Harvey suggested that oil heating systems could be contributing to poor air quality. The Scientific Officer Air Quality explained that it was not possible to determine if poor air quality was due to vehicles or oil heating systems. She added that DEFRA had produced guidance on safe wood burning systems that could reduce emissions.

The Chair asked that a future report could include an analysis on the effect of efforts made by this authority and the City Council to reduce emissions by encouraging taxi drivers to change their vehicles.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

## 8. Green Investments Update

The Green Energy Investment Manager presented this update on the following three projects:

- Greening South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne
- Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network
- LED Streetlighting

Councillor Bridget Smith welcomed the work on the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network and the efforts to secure funding from the Combined Authority. She suggested that the Council should highlight the fact that East Cambridgeshire vehicles use the depot and so the grant would benefit more than one local authority. The Green Energy Investment Manager agreed to explain to the Combined Authority that the project will benefit other public sector organisations who could use the charging facilities at the Depot.

Councillor Geoff Harvey asked whether electric waste collection vehicles would need to connect to the grid when overcast conditions and winter months meant that there was insufficient energy being generated by the PV array. The Green Energy Investment Manager explained that the Council was testing its business case regarding the benefits, costs and energy demands of the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network, which included proposals to replace the fleet with electric vehicles. She agreed to provide Councillor Harvey with more details of the technological aspects of the proposed network.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

## 9. Forward Plan

The Committee agreed that the following items should be discussed at the next meeting:

- Update on EVCPs.
- Providing guidance to parish councils on declaring a climate emergency and promoting biodiversity.
- Update on zero carbon and doubling nature.

### **Annual Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise awards**

The Development Officer – Climate and Environment informed the Committee that the Council was a finalist in the category of Green Public Service at the annual iESE (Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise) Public Sector Transformation Awards.

### **Zero Carbon Grants scheme**

Members of the Committee agreed to contact the Chair with any views they had on the proposed changes to the Zero Carbon Grants scheme by the end of the week.

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 21 June at 10 am.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.50 p.m.**

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