

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on
Tuesday, 23 November 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

Chair: Geoff Harvey

Vice-Chair: Dr. Martin Cahn

Committee Members in attendance:

Geoff Harvey
Paul Bearpark
Sue Ellington
Mark Howell

Councillors in attendance:

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

Officers:

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Bode Esan	Head of Climate, Environment & Waste
Eleanor Haines	Climate & Environment Project Officer
Siobhan Mellon	Development Officer - Climate and Environment
Eddie Spicer	Service Manager - Housing Assets
Rebecca Weymouth-Wood	SSWS Waste Policy Manager

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Graham Cone, Grenville Chamberlain and Pippa Heylings. Councillor Sue Ellington substituted for Councillor Grenville Chamberlain and Councillor Mark Howell substituted for Councillor Graham Cone.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the removal of the letters “Th” at the end of the second paragraph under the heading “Converting taxis to electric vehicles”.

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Green Homes Grants Local Authority Delivery Scheme

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment explained that there had been three phases of the above Scheme. The first and third of these had been part of the City led Cambridgeshire consortium bids for funding, whilst the funding for the second phase had been allocated for South Cambridgeshire and it was hoped that this could be used for work on our Council properties. A park home project planned for the first phase had not been possible and project planned the first phase had not been possible and so the Council was looking into alternative ways to use the first phase funding.

5. Public Questions

Elizabeth McWilliams stated that following Councillor Gavin Clayton question to Councillor Neil Gough on the amount of plastic waste being burnt in the UK she had found it impossible to find the data for plastic recycling the Council on DEFRA's website, prompting the following question.

What happens to the plastics we put in our blue bins? I note that the SCDC website states:

"Over 97% of the recyclable plastic that Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service collects is sent to UK reprocessors for recycling. The remaining material which is exported is fully tracked in accordance with strict guidance from DEFRA and this is recorded on the national Waste Data Flow website. Materials are only sent to sites which have a permit to recycle them legally."

(i) What monitoring is in place of the Amey contract to ensure that the 97% target reprocessed in the UK is met?

(ii) What % UK reprocessed has been achieved so far in 21/22?

(iii) What was the % UK reprocessed in 20/21 and is the trend improving or not?

(iv) How does the tracking of the remaining material work? I tried generating reports from the National Waste Data Flow website on recycling and landfill and this returned 0% for SCDC. Could you therefore please clarify what % of waste is sent abroad for processing and to which countries?

The Waste Policy and Climate Manager explained that in 2019/20 97% of the Council's plastic waste had been recycled in the UK. For the following year the figures was 0.5%, whilst for the current year no plastics had been sent abroad. Waste and recycling collection was provided by a shared service arrangement with Cambridge City Council and unfortunately the DEFRA website only listed the statistics under Cambridge City Council and not under this authority.

As her supplementary question, Elizabeth McWilliams asked if the small percentage of plastics being sent abroad was being burned. The Waste Policy and Climate Manager replied that the plastics were being processed in Germany and the Netherlands and so were unlikely to be burnt.

Councillor Geoff Harvey thanked Elizabeth McWilliams for her questions. He hoped that residents could reduce their use of plastics and welcomed the setting

up of refill shops in the District.

It was noted that after speaking to the Chair of the Committee, Daniel Fulton had withdrawn his statement.

6. **Stock Modelling for Zero Carbon and Improvements to Energy Efficiency across the Council's Housing Stock**

The Service Manager – Housing Assets presented this report on the proposed improvement of energy efficiency of existing Council housing to reduce carbon impact and running costs. He explained that the aim was to improve the energy efficiency of the entire housing stock, prioritising work on those homes with the worst energy ratings. He highlighted the challenges in identifying those properties being occupied by residents who could benefit most from having a more energy efficient home and suggested that the priority should be based on the lowest performing properties. The cost of the work was estimated as £92 million over the next 30 years.

The Service Manager – Housing Assets explained that renovation would not be carried out on properties if the tenants opposed the work, which could be quite disruptive. He acknowledged that air source pumps occupied more space than a gas boiler and were not ideal in all cases. Decisions had to be taken with regard to the individual properties and those who lived there.

The Service Manager – Housing Assets explained that monitoring had shown that one of the residents in the trial had wanted their home heated to 25°C, which was possibly due to their age. Members suggested that replacing thermostats in radiators should be a priority to ensure that unoccupied rooms were not being heated unnecessarily.

The Service Manager – Housing Assets reported that the Council was looking at alternative funding sources for this work, including Government grants. It was understood that the Head of Finance would know whether the cost of the works had to be financed through the HRA or whether the Council could make additional borrowing.

The Head of Housing explained that councillors would be invited to comment on the Asset Management Strategy through member workshops, before it was considered by Cabinet.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

7. **Mid Year Progress Report on Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plans**

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment presented this progress report on the Zero Carbon and Doubling Nature Action Plan 2020-25. She explained that the Action Plan was reviewed annually and the Committee would be presented with the third Action Plan in the new financial year.

In response to a query about GHG emissions from IT servers operated by 3C

Shared Services, the Development Officer, Climate and Environment undertook to liaise with the Head of Transformation with a view to accessing data required to enable the Council's share of these emissions to be accounted for.

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment agreed to look into, and provide the Committee with further information about how opportunities to increase and enhance nature identified in the Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan would be progressed.

Members of the Committee expressed concern regarding the unsuccessful planting of trees on the new A14, where the majority of bushes and trees had died. It was also noted that protective plastic containers needed to be collected after the trees had matured. The Development Officer, Climate and Environment explained that it was now possible to use biodegradable protective containers, and that these had been supplied to parish councils in the recent Six Free Trees scheme.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

8. Zero Carbon Communities Programme and Six Free Tree Project Update

The Project Officer, Climate and Environment presented this report on the progress of the Zero Carbon Communities programme and Six Free Trees project.

It was suggested that the Council should provide parish councils with a map of land that this authority owns to assist them in finding locations to plant their free trees.

The Committee welcomed the success of the e-bike scheme.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

9. Forward Plan and Date of Next Meeting

The Committee **Noted** the following items for its Forward Plan:

12 January

- Biodiversity SPD
- Future Parks Accelerator – presentation by Rob Pearce
- Update on plans regarding EV Charging Infrastructure

7 March

- Proposals for trees protection in the Local Plan (pending appt of new Tree Officer)
- Air Quality Update

It was hoped that the Committee would be able to receive an update on green investment when the Green Investment Officer returned from maternity leave in the new year.

The Committee **Noted** that its next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 2 pm.

The Meeting ended at 3.25 p.m.
