

Environment and Green Investment Committee

Date: 7 July 2022

Time: 10.00am – 1:00pm

Venue: New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors L Dupré (Chair), N Gay (Vice Chair), A Bradnam, S Corney, P Coutts, S Ferguson, I Gardener, J Gowing, R Hathorn, J King, B Milnes, C Rae, M Smith and S Tierney

70. Notification of Chair/ Vice-Chair

It was noted that Councillor Dupre was appointed as Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, and Councillor Gay as Vice- Chair, for the 2022/23 municipal year at the full Council meeting on 10th May 2022.

71. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

No apologies were received.

Councillor Bradnam declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 11 as a local member.

Councillors Bradnam, Corney, Gardener, Gay, Gowing, Hathorn, Rae and Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 15 as a Members on the Planning Committee.

72. Minutes of the Environment & Green Investment Committee 28 April 2022 and Action log

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

73. Petitions and Public Questions

No petitions or public questions were received.

74. Enabling Net Zero Business Case and Programme

The Committee considered a report that sought the approval of a business case which would aid the strategic alignment and mobilisation of the whole Council to deliver the Council's Net Zero by 2030 and 2045 ambitions. Introducing the report, the Assistant Director Climate Change and Energy Services explained that the first phase of a three-phase programme would include mobilising and upskilling staff and members across the Council, tackling the high emission areas and putting in place the key enablers or strategic building blocks to plan the next two phases and increase the pace and scale of delivery to achieve net zero by 2030. Included in the report was a key principle to Design for Net Zero to build consistency of approach across the organisation.

Arising from the report, Members:

- Expressed concerns regarding National Grid's power supply, which was at capacity across Cambridgeshire and their plans to supply the grid with more green power generated from the North Sea. Members asked whether the Council had any influence over National Grid's plans and how to cope with potential power shortages.
The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services explained that National Grid managed the high voltage network system and UK Power Networks the distribution network. The connection challenges in Cambridgeshire were mainly on the distribution network which did require significant upgrades in some areas. Renewable energy would have an impact on the distribution network due to its variability but there was significant investment into how to manage increased renewable energy power accessing the network. She highlighted the complexity of network management, and that National Grid and UK Power Networks were highly regulated but that it would be important to plan energy infrastructure to get the right installations in the right place.
- Whether there were plans to install microgrids within Cambridgeshire and whether the Council would be able to set up their own renewable electricity supply.
The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that some microgrids were already under construction, for example, at St Ives Park and Ride and Babraham Park and Ride and these would supply green electricity to EV charging for buses and cars, for battery storage and for local business customers. The importance of local energy supplies was being recognised as a key part of energy security and that Local Area Energy Planning would be key to coordinate this and ensure some system and supply resilience.
- Expressed concerns about the balance between in-house and outside consultancy and sought clarification on the way knowledge from the consultants would be embedded within the Council. The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services explained that the outside consultancy would provide the additional capacity to undertake the decarbonisation planning for high emitting sectors and bring the skills to the Council which would help upskill the Council's workforce collaborating on the decarbonisation plans.
- Observed the high volume of very significant job roles coming forward in support of the Net Zero agenda and sought clarification on whether these roles could be filled internally rather than through recruitment.
The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that roles would be open to internal candidates and would provide an opportunity to bring in the specialist skills needed to deliver a low carbon future.
- Sought clarification whether there were any plans to develop net zero conscious supply chain.
The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that work was already underway with procurement to provide support for suppliers. For example, the Council is currently working with University College London and Local Government Association developing carbon tools and guidance to inform procurements and emissions reporting. The Head of Commercial and Operations, Business Improvement and Development added that expectations toward suppliers reducing their carbon emissions would differ depending on the size and value of their contract.
- Sought clarification on whether there were any plans in place to ensure that the net zero principle would be delivered across the authority, including contractors and sub-contractors.

The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that a new governance structure was proposed. The corporate leadership team would oversee and bring leadership to climate change and net zero and balance the climate ambitions alongside the other corporate objectives. A Net Zero Programme Board would be set up and led by the Executive Director, Place and Economy to oversee the implementation of the programme. The membership would include a wide range of representatives from across the organisation, to lead the implementation of the programme. The Executive Director offered to provide updates every six months to the Committee regarding the works of the Net Zero Programme Board. Action

The Head of Commercial and Operations, Business Improvement and Development added that eight workshops were held across the organisation to identify the challenges to delivery, with skills and capacity identified as key barriers to change.

- Sought clarification on whether transport costs of delivering a service were considered within procurement. For example, if a company was based out of county and would deliver their services here, that would potentially have a larger carbon footprint than a company based within Cambridgeshire.

The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that the social value portal would help identify the additional social and environmental benefits provided by suppliers. Reducing car mileage could be valued as part of this process.

Whilst most Members welcomed and were supportive of this initiative, one Member spoke against the proposal, explaining that the cost of living and the cost of fuel has a huge impact on people, so cost savings should be the first priority when considering projects. Therefore, he believed that the net zero principle would be the wrong approach.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Approve the Business Case for the Phase 1: Enabling Net Zero Programme attached in Appendix 3
- b) Approve the Phase 1: Enabling Net Zero Programme set out in Appendix 4
- c) Approve the principle of 'Net Zero by Design' as set out in paragraph 2.4
- d) Delegate the implementation of the Phase 1 Enabling Net Zero Programme to the Executive Director of Place and Economy and Assistant Director Climate Change and Energy Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Environment & Green Investment Committee.

With the consent of the Committee, the Chair proposed that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Climate Action Plan was taken as the next item on the agenda.

75. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Climate Action Plan

The Committee considered the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Climate Action plan that sought the Council's support for the plan and its implementation. The CPCA Climate Action Plan was developed as a result of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission for Climate Change (CPICC) report in October 2021. This identified 58 recommendations to tackle climate change. Some of the recommendations could be directly tackled by individual local authorities but many actions required collaboration where issues were bigger than any one organisation would

be able to tackle. The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services highlighted that Cambridgeshire County Council was looking to lead some actions in the Action Plan, for example, the Local Natural Recovery Plan for Cambridgeshire, Decarbonisation Fund, Future Fens Parks Accelerators and supporting discussions at the COP27, that would take place in November 2022.

Members sought clarification on:

- The way projects were funded for the CPCA Climate Action Plan and how the KPI's would be measured.
The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that in December 2021 the CPCA called for bids to be submitted for a first round of funding. A further round of bids would need to be submitted to access funding for next year. KPIs would be set based on the 2018-19 carbon footprint for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the projects that would be funded. For example, as the Solar Together project would provide evidence of number of households installed with solar panels and batteries. Across all the projects in the action plan the aim was to set milestones and deliverables, identify resource gaps funding opportunities and to measure and report progress.
- The way 15% reduction in car mileage would be achieved in rural areas by 2030, where public transport services were not widely available.
The Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services advised that different measures could count towards the 15% reductions, such as working remotely, shorten car journeys by driving to travel hubs or encouraging cycling or walking. She added that the 15% reduction would be applicable to the whole of Cambridgeshire, and some areas would be more able to cut car mileage than other areas.
- Whether funding was secured to deliver the projects identified via the CPCA and in case funding were not available, whether there was a contingency plan in place.
The Executive Director, Place and Economy advised that funding was already in place via the Gainshare Funding and there was no indication that this funding would be at risk for this or future years.

A Member commented that although the CPCA stated that all local authority partners were supportive of the Action Plan that was set up, this was not the case.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Endorse the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Climate Action Plan 2022-25
- b) Endorse the Council's contributions to support the delivery of the CPCA's Climate Action Plan as set out in section 3.0

76. The Nature & Climate Declaration and Climate and Ecology Bill (2022)

The Committee received a report that sought their support for the Nature and Climate Declaration (NCD) and the Climate and Ecology Bill (2022). The NCD was launched in Parliament on 10 May 2022 with the aim of the UK government to proceed further and faster in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and restoring the natural world. The Climate and Ecology Bill was a Private Members Bill for new UK law to request government and the Secretary of State to address the full extent of the climate change and nature crisis in line

with the most up to date science, set targets and measures and a strategy to deliver and establish a Climate and Nature Assembly.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Support the Nature & Climate Declaration and recommend to Full Council to sign the Declaration;
- b) Endorse the Climate and Ecology Bill (2022) and recommend this to Full Council.

77. Carbon Valuation

The Committee considered a report detailing the implementation of an internal carbon price. The Internal Carbon Pricing (ICP) was a decision-making tool used by organisations to understand whether their carbon emission reductions targets were on track and could be used to manage their exposure to external carbon pricing schemes and to assist in making business decisions and investments. The Carbon and Energy Manager explained that an internal or shadow price on carbon would create a theoretical or assumed cost per tonne of carbon emissions. In September 2021, BEIS updated their carbon values used for policy appraisal and the new values did not distinguish between traded and non-traded carbon; therefore, it was no longer appropriate or practical for the Council to use two different values for the traded and non-traded sectors. A new template was developed to implement the ICP which had now incorporated the updated carbon values from BEIS.

Arising from the report Members sought clarification on:

- The reasons for the increases expected in the cost of carbon.
The Carbon and Energy Manager explained that when starting decarbonisation, it was more likely that one would start to address those emissions that could be addressed most cost effectively in a short amount of time. However, as time goes forward, decarbonising would be getting harder and more costly.
- Whether the revision of Carbon Value could be carried out more frequently than 5 years.
The Carbon and Energy Manager explained that the evaluation process was done by central government, however the forecast of the annual carbon price was available from BEIS's website.
- The benefit to the Council to put a valuation on carbon and identify a nominal carbon cost.
It was explained that by implementing a virtual cost, the Council could identify benefits, and although the Council was not currently implementing carbon costs, these could become actual costs in the future.

A Member commented that without calculating the carbon costs of projects, the real value in these could not be established.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Accept the revised methodology for allocating a financial value to carbon emissions or savings (internal carbon price), based on updated published values from BEIS.

78. Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework Procurement

The Committee considered a report that sought approval of the Council's participation in the Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework (DEEF). The Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework would be procured by the Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership (operating under the Action on Energy Cambridgeshire Brand), a collaboration between the County Council and all five District Councils; and would enable the delivery of grant funded works and a route to market for those able to privately fund home retrofit work. The Climate Change Officer advised that currently there was around £9m grant funding secured, targeting low-income households in Cambridgeshire and it was expected that future funding opportunities would come forward. The Climate Change Officer draw attention to the challenges to deliver retrofit projects at pace and scale, which included the tight delivery windows for using up the fund and the lack of suppliers to deliver the retrofit. The DEEF would address these challenges and would provide fabric first retrofits, which would include a full assessment of the house and provide a base for reputable suppliers to deliver these improvements.

Arising from the report, Members:

- Sought clarification on the council's responsibility in terms of delivering communication and advertising, and whether this would include the explanation of how the scheme would work.
The Climate Change Officer advised that the communications and advertising would aim to encourage residents to take part in the schemes and there would be a different channel established with the aim to advise people of the 'art of the possible'.
- Commented that it was difficult for people to get into the scheme and there was little help for them to get through the administrative hurdles before their application was approved. The Climate Change Officer advised that the aim would be to provide a streamlined scheme which would provide support for residents, but that the administrative hurdles were in place due to government's strict household eligibility criteria.
- Sought clarification on the qualifying criteria for grant funding.
The Climate Change Officer explained that only those households were eligible where the household income was less than £30k and the resident's home's energy performance was classed as D or lower. The eligibility criteria were set by the Government and the DEEF would seek to have a more streamlined approach when dealing with applications to encourage participation.
- Sought clarification on the way those residents not eligible for grants would be able to benefit from the scheme.
The Climate Change Officer advised that it was expected that more households would become eligible through different types of funding, which were expected to become available in the near future. These households would be able to apply directly for these, then would be able to use the Framework's service to establish the best way to spend those funds.
- Sought clarification on the way suppliers would be assessed to establish their credibility and the way it would be ensured that vulnerable residents were appropriately safeguarded.
The Climate Change Officer advised that there would be various checks and balances in place, for example DBS checks and suppliers would have their qualifications and previous works inspected. Only approved suppliers would be permitted to use the

'Action on Energy Cambridgeshire' branding which would be associated with the scheme.

- Sought clarification on how the new branding would be publicised to enable people to recognise this as a trustworthy source and suggested the publicization in the district council's newsletters.
The officer advised that a Communication Strategy would be developed, which included plans to utilise the available council channels to distribute information on the scheme and the establishment of a website that would be able to provide people with a good source of information.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Climate Change & Energy Service, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Environment and Green Investment Committee, to sign contracts to enable the Council to access the framework following a successful tender.

79. Just Transition Fund Proposals - Flood Management & Biodiversity

The Committee considered a proposal that had been submitted to the Just Transition Fund from the Natural and Historic Environment Service and was approved by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 27 June 2022. The bid included three projects, the March Natural Flood Risk Management, the Flood Mitigation Designs and Solutions, and the Community Led Nature Restoration. The projects would aid management of flood risk and improve biodiversity levels across the county generally, whereas the March project would focus on the natural flood risk management to assist with surface water management and improve green spaces.

Arising from the report, Members:

- Sought clarification about whether the residents of March would be encouraged by Anglian Water and the Council to take preventative action, such as harvesting rainwater to avoid the issue of the surface water mixing together with sewage water. It was advised that although residents would be encouraged to collect rainwater, the issue would not be solved only by harvesting rain due to the exceptional level of surface water in the area.
- Commented that new build houses should be equipped with an inbuilt rain harvesting system.
- Commented that when maintaining water courses a balance should be struck between the maintenance and clearance of blockages and the biodiversity of these.

A Member drew attention to the importance of nature connectiveness and commented that it would be beneficial if this was considered as part of the projects.

It was resolved by a majority to:

Approve the allocation of the funds requested from the Just Transition Fund.

80. Finance Monitoring Report – May 2022-23

The Committee considered the May 2022- 23 Finance Monitoring report.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review, note, and comment upon the report.

81. Finance Monitoring Report – Outturn 2021-22

The Committee considered the Finance Monitoring Outturn position for 2021-22. The officer highlighted the £867k underspend, which included a £360k savings that was set aside and carried over to the next financial quarter.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review, note, and comment upon the report.

82. Environment & Green Investment Committee Agenda Plan and Training Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

The Democratic Services Assistant advised that the Darwin Green Phase 2 and 3 KPIs were both added to the Agenda Plan for September, and the Interim Tree Strategy would be added on to a later date. The Democratic Services Assistant also reminded Members about the upcoming Darwin Green briefing.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- i. review its agenda plan attached at Appendix 1;
- ii. review its training plan attached at Appendix 2;
- iii. review the appointments to outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 3;
- iv. review the appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels as detailed in Appendix 4; and
- v. appoint Councillor Meschini to the London Stansted Corridor Consortium Board;
- vi. note the change in the composition of the County Farms Working Group, which is now a cross committee working group under the auspices of Strategy and Resources and Environment and Green Investment Committees.

The Committee noted its Agenda Plan.

83. Exclusion of Press and Public

It was resolved unanimously that:

the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following item contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

84. Cambridgeshire Private Electricity Network (CPEN) – Increased capital costs

The Committee considered a report relating to the increased capital costs of the Cambridgeshire Private Electricity Network (CPEN).

It was resolved unanimously to agree the report recommendations.