



Committee Name: Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel

Committee Date: 14/02/2023

Report Title: Environmental Strategy General Update

Portfolios:

Councillor Hampton, Cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion

Councillor Giles, cabinet member for community wellbeing

Report from:

Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture

Wards:

All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update CEEEP on currently approved activity relating to:

- Biodiversity Strategy and Development Plan

- The council's corporate climate action plan

- The council's proposed citywide climate action plan

This report focuses on current and near future tactical and strategic workstreams including how they fit into the wider programme, their intended outcomes and progress to date.

Included in this report is a summary of the newly proposed scope and structure of the council's overarching and newly proposed Environmental Programme, and this report is structured according to strategic themes of the new programme.

This report is presented alongside a separate consultation report which seeks CEEEP's comment on the scope of the council's proposed overarching environmental programme, which replaces a workstream previously known as the Environmental Action Plan.

Recommendation:

To provide comment on the update in order to constructively influence ongoing workstreams.

Policy Framework

The Council's 2022-2026 Corporate Plan outlines 5 cross-cutting aims. Aim 2 specifies that:

Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.

Within Aim 2, the Corporate Plan establishes the following priorities:

- *Reduce carbon emissions, protect the environment and adapt to climate change, both in the council's own operations and more widely.*
- *Protect and invest in our parks, green spaces and biodiversity.*
- *Make it easier for residents and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle more and dispose of their waste; and keep the city's streets clean.*
- *Work with partners to increase sustainable transport and improve air quality.*

Aim 3 specifies that:

Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.

Within Aim 3, the Corporate Plan establishes the following priorities:

- *Develop and regenerate areas such as East Norwich and Anglia Square.*
- *Provide and encourage others to provide new homes, open spaces and infrastructure for residents.*
- *Actively manage and invest in our Housing Revenue Account Homes so that they are safe, well maintained, provide modern facilities, and provide energy efficiency.*

Report Details

The Council's Proposed Overarching Environmental Programme

1. During the course of 2022, the Environmental Strategy Team reviewed existing commitments relating to the council's environmental activity and recommended increasing the scope of activity. This was deemed necessary to address the climate and environmental emergencies in a proactive and holistic manner.
2. Following a comprehensive scoping exercise, a full scope environmental programme has been proposed.
3. This Environmental Programme, which is outlined in a separate report to this same CEEEP committee meeting, provides a framework for delivering significant change programmes over the short and medium term (up to 30 years ahead), and redefines the corporate plan task previously known as the *Environmental Action Plan*.
4. The sections below describe workstreams *already* underway and are structured according to the themes of the newly proposed overarching programme.

Biodiversity Strategy and Development Plan Update

5. Following the adoption of the Biodiversity Strategy and Development Plan on 16 November 2022, forward movement has been achieved as reported in the following paragraphs:
 - a) The Biodiversity Working Group (BWG) has met twice to co-develop the Biodiversity Development Plan and ensure join up with the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, with the Environmental Strategy team acting as secretary to the group.
 - b) With regard to the evolving Environmental Management System, registers have been established (relating to biodiversity), for funding, opportunities, risks, compliance requirements and aspects (the ways in which biodiversity can be impacted). These registers will be maintained to ensure the Biodiversity Development Plan is supported by good administrative practices.
 - c) The biodiversity baseline study has been awarded to Norfolk County Council with work being undertaken by a project team comprising of officers from the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) and the Natural Norfolk Team. The study has commenced with input from, and

progress reported to, all members of the BWG. The study is being managed by an officer from the Planning and Regulatory Team with input from the interim Biodiversity Officer. The study will provide a map of existing nature assets and potential opportunities, and will be used as the basis for developing and identifying new assets (cores and corridors) for Norwich's Nature Recovery Network.

- d) A job description for a permanent Biodiversity Strategy Officer has been produced and agreed and is currently being graded.
- e) An active collaboration with Norfolk Wildlife Trust is underway around a 'Wilder Norwich' project, which amongst other things, aims to encourage '1 in 4' people to manage their gardens for biodiversity improvement.
- f) An arts-based project with the working title of 7000+ is being co-developed between the council and the Greenhouse Trust. The aim of the project is to plant 7000+ trees in Norwich by 2030 paid for by residents, business and institutions. The contributors will be encouraged to 'map' the planting of their trees using the Get Talking Norwich platform and to upload pictures and commentary around their trees, on a voluntary basis. Council budgets have been identified which could contribute to the project in its social housing estate.
- g) With regards to biodiversity improvements in the council's social housing estate generally, labour resources have been identified in the form of the Community Payback scheme which has already delivered improvements such as the work completed at the Northfields Estate and Regina Road. This scheme will be used to deliver further improvements in the council estate and the council wishes to thank all members of this scheme for their contributions.
- h) Active engagements with key stakeholders such as Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the Norfolk Nature Recovery Forum, and the Growing Together network are underway to discuss the potential for co-delivering the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy within Norwich.
- i) A new tree strategy, aligned to the Biodiversity Strategy has been drafted. A key objective of the strategy is to increase tree canopy cover in the city by identifying planting opportunities and funding. The target for increasing canopy cover is being discussed and is related to the baseline canopy cover currently being estimated.
- j) A pesticide reduction scheme has been developed and will be trialled and implemented during the growing season of 2023.

6. The Biodiversity Development Plan is on-track and the risk of not delivering the Biodiversity Policy¹ is low.

Council Climate Action Plan – Update

Introduction

7. Active workstreams are currently in progress to enable the drafting, consultation and ultimate adoption of the council's climate action plan in 2023. The newly proposed Council Climate Action Plan replaces the workstream previously known as the Environmental Action Plan.
8. As discussed in paragraph 1 above, a review of the scope of the council's environmental workstreams took place in 2022 and following this review it was agreed to increase the scope of activity.
9. The paragraphs below describe the components of the new climate action plan and the principles which inform them, under two main headings which are (1) GHG Mitigation and (2) Adaption and Resilience.

Update on the Proposed GHG Mitigation Strategic Approach

10. The Council shall continue to measure, reduce and report on emissions sources using the methodology used by the council since 2007, known as National Indicator 185 (NI 185). The continued use of NI 185 enables progress towards the target of net zero by 2030, to be simply determined and understood.
11. In addition to the emissions reported using NI 185, the council has committed to measuring and including all the emission sources it may be able influence through its current scope of operations in the new Climate Action Plan. These newly included emission sources include:
 - Council owned social housing stock
 - Investments including buildings owned and leased by the council
 - All procured goods, services and works
 - Staff commuting and working from home

¹ *Create a city where biodiversity can sustainably recover and thrive, halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030 or sooner*

12. The newly included sources are described by the categories of Scope 3 emissions defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. The council shall measure or estimate these Scope 3 emissions, as far as practically possibly.
13. Following this assessment of the council's emissions, GHG mitigation plans shall be produced for each strategic source of emissions, prioritising reduction strategies with offsetting used where reductions cannot be achieved. Net zero dates for each strategic area of activity will be set, with net zero by 2030 remaining the target date for emissions reported under NI185.

Update on Progress Towards the New GHG Mitigation Plan

14. The full scope of the Councils carbon emissions is currently being audited by Small World Consulting Ltd under the management of the Environmental Strategy Team.
15. This work is mainly complete with the last few pieces of data being collected during January. A carbon footprint report using the same format and emissions scope as previous reports will be published in due course. A report for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 will be published during the summer of 2023.
16. With regard to a comprehensive audit for Scope 3 emissions not previously measured or reported by the council, the entire purchase ledger from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 has been provided to the consultants for an audit of procurement related emissions. This work will be used to inform the proposed GHG mitigation plan for council operations.
17. An estimation of GHG emissions resulting from the council's social housing stock was completed in 2022 along with a high-level carbon reduction plan. This report, produced by the consultant's Delta Simons, will be used to inform the proposed GHG mitigation plan for the council's social housing stock.
18. At the December 2022 cabinet meeting, a paper entitled *Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and HRA Budget 2023/24*, reported that: *'the Council has currently estimated that investment of approximately £290m is required to meet EPC level C by 2030 and reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This sum is included in the HRA Business Plan'*.
19. The same cabinet paper also reported *'£53m to improve energy efficiency and carbon reduction measures is included within the 5-year investment programme (2023/28). This work is crucial in making homes warmer and more affordable for our tenants. The focus will be on a 'fabric first'*

approach, installing cavity, loft and wall insulation, draught proofing and improvements to heating systems. Solar PV systems will also be installed where most effective.'

20. All members of the Environmental Strategy Team are currently training to be retrofit coordinators, a role defined by the UK's code of practice for retrofit, known as PAS 2035. This training provides essential insight and knowledge regarding the establishment of a medium term (up to 25 years) whole building approach to retrofit and is a mandatory standard in all government funded projects.
21. A job description for a permanent Environmental Strategy Officer has been written and is currently being graded. This post will support the development of the Council's Climate Action Plan and implement it following adoption.

Other Updates Regarding Council GHG Mitigation Activity

22. £1.2m of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 funding was agreed in spring 2022 (75% BEIS, 25% NCC HRA) and this project is currently underway delivering external wall insulation to c60 council dwellings with a 'no fines' concrete construction which has poor energy efficiency characteristics.
23. A Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2 bid was submitted in autumn 2022 for £2m of BEIS funding matched with £2m NCC HRA funds. The bid focuses funding on 'light' insulation measures such as loft and wall insulation and solar PV, on a 50/50 basis. If successful NCC will be awarded the funds in Feb/March 2023 with 24 months to complete projects.
24. A procurement route for up to £5m of ECO 4 funding to improve energy efficiency in the council's social housing stock is being developed. This funding is expected to be announced by government in the spring by which time a service provider is expected to be in place.
25. The £620k air source heat pump (ASHP) installation on City Hall, funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund, is completed but yet to be commissioned whilst power supply infrastructure for City Hall is modernised. This modernisation work is underway with final commissioning of the ASHP expected March/April 2023.
26. A £92k project is underway, funded by CIL, to improve EV charging facilities in a council owned carpark. The project has included a market review of available charge point technology and service providers with EV infrastructure upgrades taking place in Rose Lane. The new charging infrastructure will create a cashflow to the council for the electricity used

- during charging, provide residents with access to charging overnight and provides a solution to EV users overstaying in charge bays beyond their charge period.
27. A project to install a 30kWp with 60 kWh battery storage has been completed at Hurricane way using £65k of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funds. The project also included a £35k upgrade to LED lighting at the depot.
 28. £80k of Salix recycling fund projects are being delivered this FY to improve lighting efficiency in the market, City Hall foyer and corridors and common area lighting at Barnards Yard.
 29. A review of 1500 council operated streetlamps has been completed and a plan to upgrade these to LED technology is being developed which will save the council £100k pa and deliver significant carbon savings.
 30. A bid for £603k of Public Sector Decarbonisation Funds has been submitted for a water source heat pump to augment the Town's Fund project at the Halls.
 31. A scheme to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions at Riverside Leisure using c£80k of Salix funds in the 23/24 FY is being considered. The scheme is exploring options for solar PV and improved controls.
 32. The Environmental Strategy Team is supporting Norwich Regeneration Ltd in development of social and private housing at Mile Cross and Threescore with ideation around low impact housing and infrastructure design.

Update on City Wide GHG Mitigation Activity

33. Norwich's Climate Commission has been successfully established during 2022 as an independent expert organisation and climate action delivery partner to the council. The Commission has established independent workstreams including a community energy workgroup known as 'Our Power'. NCC's Environmental Strategy Manager is an invited attendee of Commission meetings and the Environmental Strategy Team will continue to provide secretariat services to the commission for a further 12 months from 1st April 2023. An award of £25k has been made by the council to the Commission to support its ongoing activities. The Commission is supporting the development of the council's environmental programme in the role of expert advisor.

34. A bid for £3.7m of Sustainable Warmth Grant funding was received by the council in 2022 from BEIS to deliver energy efficiency improvements to c300 private owned dwellings in the city. The project is underway with 'sign-up' being supported by the Our Power group.
35. The council partnered with BEIS in 2022 to undertake a Heat Network Development Study to determine the feasibility of large-scale low carbon heat networks in the city. Several areas of the city have been identified as viable in terms of the concentration of heat consumption.
36. The County Council announced in December 2022 the installation of 40+ kerbside EV charge points in high population density areas of the city. This project is the result of the Charge Collective project of which NCC is an active party.
37. The County Council has received £0.5m of funding from DfT to develop a proposal for a Zero Emissions Transport City (ZETC). Government has been slow to announce guidance for the implementation funding stage and so the County Council are using the £0.5m to collect transport data. The council has contributed to this exercise.
38. The Environmental Strategy Team supported two funding bids made by the Business Improvement District for projects to improve the environmental performance of the BID.
39. During 2022 proposals for a new agenda for the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) were made, culminating a series of facilitated workshops aiming to find consensus amongst member local authorities around climate action; attended by the council's Environmental Strategy Manager. The process has been successful with an agreed strategy for forward movement focusing on domestic retrofit, community energy and transport solutions.
40. The Environmental Strategy Team commissioned a report from the consultancy firm Synfo Ltd in 2022 to research and propose a new post-gas era high level development model for the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area. The study has developed an energy consumption model for the area including the electrification of heat and transport to understand risks that exist in terms of existing infrastructure capacity to meet the development's future demand.

The study includes solutions to decarbonizing the development in the form of low and zero carbon smart energy infrastructure and dwellings. Interviews with solution providers are part of the study with the aim of bringing together strategic partnerships able to facilitate an exemplar low

carbon community at East Norwich. Knowledge sharing from this study will accelerate the council's plans to decarbonise its social housing stock.

41. Discussions are taking place with the Green Finance Institute, a third sector organisation proposing large scale finance solutions at the citywide scale. As discussed at Budget Scrutiny on 2 February 2023, it is recognised that the council will need to consider a range of finance mechanisms to enable our environmental objectives to be met, including both the city-wide climate action plan, and the council's corporate climate action plan. The Green Finance Institute's proposed finance solutions form part of the arrangements being considered for the citywide response to climate change, which will be led and coordinated by the council. Alongside this, other viable financing mechanisms will be investigated and reviewed, including examples of best practice from other local authorities.

Property and Economic Development Implications

42.NA

Financial and Resources

43.NA

Legal

44.NA

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	NA
Health, Social and Economic Impact	NA
Crime and Disorder	NA
Children and Adults Safeguarding	NA
Environmental Impact	NA

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
NA	NA	NA

Other Options Considered

45.NA

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

46.NA

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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