



Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel

16:00 to 17:40

12 December 2023

Present: Councillors Hampton (chair), Champion and Fox,

Apologies: Councillors Lubbock and Padda

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

A member sought confirmation that a statement from Asher Minns, Co-Chair of the Norwich Climate Commission and Executive Director, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of East Anglia, had been included in the minutes. The statement was included under item 3, paragraph 6, second sentence, as follows:

“Asher Minns advised against complacency in that the broad provided an ecosystem that was slow draining and could absorb river water but needed to be enhanced to mitigate against rising sea levels and storms.”

The member also sought clarification on the projected mortality rate for deaths from heat related deaths, which are set out in a table contained in the presentation, and it was noted that these refer to the total number of deaths projected to occur in Norwich for each year to 2050.

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023.

3. Update on City-Wide Climate Action

The Environmental Strategy Manager presented the report which updated the panel on the development of a Climate Action Strategy and Plan for Norwich and on the actions, set out in the strategy, that were already underway, as follows: Heat Network Development, Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) and the East Norwich Energy supplementary planning document (SPD).

During discussion the Environmental Strategy Manager referred to the report and answered questions. There was provision for the designation of areas for district heat networks under the Energy Act 2023 (s 255). Part of the pilot had been to map out potential heat network zones. The government was being cautious about its introduction, especially where zones crossed over local authority boundaries, and further consultation and details were expected in early to mid-2024. District heating

could be from any low carbon source but most likely from ground source heat pumps. Members also noted the work around the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) to plan for future energy consumption scenarios relating to decarbonisation countywide and the engagement of local authorities with UKPN and the development of an interactive model that enabled them to model their own scenarios. The Environmental Strategy Manager confirmed that the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) was working on the development of solar power and its contribution to the network and the costs. It was noted that there were multiple decarbonisation projects going forward in the city and that the LAEP was informed of these through engagement with the Norwich Climate Commission.

Discussion ensued on the development of the council's Climate Action Strategy and Plan. The Environmental Strategy Manager said that the full public consultation would probably take place after the local elections in May 2024. Consultation with the public would commence at the Science Festival (23 and 24 February 2024). It was noted that the UK's strategy was in alignment to the Paris Agreement, but it was acknowledged that a lack of wider global commitment increased the risk of temperatures rising by 3 degrees. The council's draft strategy would be available at the Science Festival and the proposed actions to ensure that the target was reached would be available for comment and discussion. The Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture confirmed that this consultation, as with the engagement on the Corporate Plan, would use all tools to ensure that the views of all demographics were captured. The public engagement at the Science Fair would likely not be representative of the city in general but there would be wider engagement. The Environmental Strategy Manager confirmed that all groups on the database had been invited to attend the Forum for the Science Fair.

The Environmental Strategy Officer then presented the second part of the report (from paragraph 9 onwards) which updated members on the Norfolk Net Zero Communities project (funded by Innovate UK Fast Followers' funding); the Norwich Climate Commission's Community Energy Champion project; the integration of council services to signpost vulnerable residents to advice and support on fuel poverty to the Green Doctors, a programme funded and run by Groundwork East; that the Sustainable Food Norwich Partnership had been awarded membership of the national network, Sustainable Food Places; and the council's Solar Together and Switch and Save collective auctions. During discussion the Environmental Strategy Manager confirmed that the new strategy would incorporate a comprehensive measurement framework to assess all activities being undertaken, including food sustainability.

The panel noted that there had been an open invitation to anyone who wanted to attend the Sustainable Food Network event at Blackfriars Hall in November and that the Community Enabling Team had engaged community groups to attend. Members expressed concern that community groups interested in growing food had not been contacted and that other councillors had not been aware of the event. During discussion members suggested that community groups should be assisted to grow food in parks and other open spaces. The Environmental Strategy Manager confirmed that there were discussions internally about the promotion of food production in parks and the wider discussion on biodiversity. There was a fund of £2,500 to provide seeds to community groups. The choice of seeds would be for climate resilient plants suitable for several years. A member referred to a site at

Rose Land and stressed the importance of balancing protection of the environment and increased biodiversity, alongside the delivery of housing development.

RESOLVED to note the report.

4. Corporate Plan - Consultation with Members on the Climate and Environment Aspects of the Plan

The Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture introduced the consultants engaged by the council to facilitate the engagement work on the emerging Corporate Plan to 2029, and this was one of many opportunities that members had to provide feed into the process. The draft Corporate Plan would be considered by the scrutiny committee in January 2024.

The consultants then asked questions of members and recorded their responses for consideration in the development of the plan.

The following is a summary of some of the points made by members during this session:

- Focus on environment should be central to everything that the council does. This requires a clear message to ensure institutional change throughout the organisation, from recruitment to the council and team training.
- Tangible outcomes in the 5-year Corporate Plan to promote civic pride and engagement, including innovative projects and creative ways of engagement with people.
- Wider promotion of environmental and retrofitting schemes to ensure that they reach new audiences rather than just people who were already aware of such schemes.
- Concern that funding constraints for small grants dictated the shape of projects to meet the criteria of the funding, which was not necessarily in accordance with the council's long-term objectives, and created a risk that outcomes were not sustainable. It was noted that the council had been successful in securing funding and that there were other benefits from decarbonisation projects, such as addressing fuel poverty.

During discussion, members noted the importance of ensuring that young people were adequately represented in the consultation. The Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture said that the youth group under the 2040 City Vision had been specifically engaged and confirmed that that consultation responses would be weighted appropriately to ensure that the outcome reflected the demography of the city.

RESOLVED to note.

CHAIR