



Climate and environment emergency executive panel

16:00 to 17:20

31 August 2021

Present: Councillors Hampton (chair, following appointment), Stonard (vice chair, following appointment), Carlo, Giles (substitute for Councillor Oliver), Lubbock, and Osborn

Apologies: Councillors Oliver and Thomas (Va)

1. Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Hampton as chair for the ensuing civic year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Stonard as chair for the ensuing civic year.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2021.

5. City Vision Sustainability Group Overview

(Anthony Hudson, Founder and Creative Director at Hudson Architects and Emma Smith, strategy officer (Norwich City Council) attended the meeting for this item.)

(Copies of the presentation were circulated to members after the meeting and it is available on the council's website with the agenda papers for this meeting.)

Emma Smith, strategy officer and Anthony Hudson gave a presentation on the work of the City Vision Sustainability Group, of which they were both members together with Asher Minns (Tyndall Centre) and Paul McCarthy (chair, Norwich BID) who had sent apologies as they were unable to attend this meeting. The members of this group also included the council's environmental strategy manager. The presentation gave a broad overview of the composition of the group and its proposal to set up a Climate Commission for the city. Anthony Hudson commented on the establishment of the Commission at a local level, as an independent group that would report back

to the City Vision and Covid-19 Recovery Group and comprise commissioners from a wide range of interests from private and public sector, and social led enterprises. The Tyndall Centre, through Asher Minns, had connections with Andy Gouldson, chair of the Leeds Climate Commission, who was advising on the process. The strategy officer advised members on the timescale leading to the launch of the Commission in November 2021 to coincide with COP26. Members had a role in promoting the Commission in their wards and in feeding back what was happening in their wards.

During discussion members commended the work of the City Vision Sustainability Group and welcomed the proposal to establish a Norwich Climate Commission.

The strategy officer, together with Anthony Hudson and the head of strategy, engagement and culture, answered members' questions.

Members were advised that information packs would be provided to members and information made available on e-Councillor once details had been finalised. Further information on the governance arrangements for the establishment of climate commissions and the role of commissioners was available on the Place-Based Climate Action Network (PCAN) website¹. The commissions should be collaborative groups and have an advisory role to promote the target of zero carbon by 2050 and showcase schemes that went well. The number of commissioners on climate commissions varied from 15 to 30, and they represented a wide range of interests that included grass roots activists to politicians and educationalists. Sub groups could be formed if there was a lot of interest. The areas of interest that should be represented included travel, energy suppliers, buildings operations, household practices, education, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and people involved in the economic aspects of climate change. Members were advised that the use of "sceptic" in the presentation reflected a desire for commissioners to be prepared to challenge ideas and proposals rather than any other connotation.

The panel was also interested in how members would be informed of the work of the commission going forward and how recommendations from the commission would feed into the democratic process of the council. Officers would report to the panel as appropriate and update members through e-Councillor. The City Vision partnership would consider the communications strategy when establishing the commission.

Members were interested about democratic involvement in the climate commission. It was noted that there were councillors on existing climate commissions. There was an expectation that the commission would publish an annual report to monitor its progress which would be considered by the City Vision 2040 and Covid-19 Recovery Group and the council or cabinet as appropriate. It was expected that the commission would develop a strategy identifying where the best evidence was and provide recommendations on carbon reduction that could be picked up by its partners. Members also noted that officers were involved in this work and would feed into the council at service level. An audit was being conducted to identify gaps in the council's response to the climate emergency and provide a broad picture of the council's roadmap for the direction of travel subject to resources being available. The creation of the commission was part of this work. Members were assured that

¹ <https://www.pcancities.org.uk/climate-commissions>

retrofitting would no doubt feature as an action. It was acknowledged that government funding was necessary at a local level to increase carbon reduction and a member questioned how this would be achieved if the commission should not be used to lobby. Members were advised that the strength of being part of a network (PCAN) was that it could provide evidence to government on the need for funding. The commission was very much about local action but could signpost and feed into other organisations.

During discussion a member suggested that there were some policies that the council should stop doing or supporting. Members noted that the commission would be aware of the IPCC report and the concern that the climate emergency should be addressed in the next decade. The commission would be independent and should be as ambitious as possible to reduce carbon emissions in transport, energy and buildings and to overcome barriers, such as political or geographical, to effect this change.

Members noted that the City Vision Sustainability Working Group would consider the establishment of an advisory board to oversee the establishment of the commission at its September meeting. The LEP was represented on the working group. Norfolk County Council had been informed of the proposal to establish a climate commission in Norwich.

RESOLVED to thank Anthony Hudson and Emma Smith, strategy officer, for attending the meeting and their presentation and note the proposal to establish a Climate Commission for Norwich.

6. Community Renewal Fund Bids - Update

(Copies of the presentation were circulated to members after the meeting and is available on the council's website with the agenda papers for this meeting.)

Richard Willson, environmental strategy manager, gave a presentation to update members on Community Renewal Fund (CRF) bids and advised members. The government had been expected to announce the outcome of its assessment of bids in July 2021. However, the council had not received any confirmation to date that any of its bids had been successful.

During the presentation, the environmental strategy manager explained that the focus of the CRF100 Day Community Challenge bid for £500,000 was on Mancroft, Heathgate, Mile Cross and Lakenham. These areas had been selected because of the communities' high levels of inequalities and need. In addition, each area had resident-led groups that have demonstrated a desire to take on green spaces or community challenges, with the community engagement team reporting over 20 different start-up projects or enquiries since the start of 2021. Further details of the bid and this project were available from Kate Price, neighbourhood and neighbourhood enabling manager (kateprice@norwich.gov.uk).

Members were also advised that the bids for Sustainable Hydrogen Infrastructure for Transport (SHIFT) was being made through the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership. This project would focus on the HGV fleet requirements of all the councils in Norfolk and sought to identify ways in which green hydrogen via electrolysis could be created locally (via the use of stranded assets like disused landfills) to fuel fleets

without the need for significant and costly grid reinforcement. The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership was also seeking CRF Community Energy Kickstarter funding. This bid aimed to identify the barriers to community energy schemes, create green jobs, and promote localised energy systems. A ready-made community energy programme, developed by local experts, would enable community energy to finally become established in Norfolk. This study would identify suitable assets in Norfolk for solar private wire.

During discussion, the environmental strategy manager and the head of strategy engagement and culture answered members' questions. Members were advised of the 100 Day Community Challenge bid proposed to employ eight paid community engagement officers by the end of the current financial year. The areas targeted had multiple indices of deprivation. The constraints of the funding meant that the neighbourhood team would need to deliver the project in a short timescale and in order to do this, it was necessary to make use of existing networks. Information about the use of hydrogen to fuel HGVs obtained during the SHIFT project would provide the foundation for future bids into the Shared Prosperity fund and other funding streams.

RESOLVED to note the progress of the CRF bids and thank Richard Willson, environmental strategy manager for the presentation.

CHAIR