



Committee Name: Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel

Committee Date: 12/12/2023

Report Title: Update on city-wide climate action.

Portfolio: Councillor Hampton, Cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion

Report from: Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To update CEEEP on progress towards developing a Climate Action Strategy for Norwich, as well as progress on specific actions already underway that will fall under the strategy.

Recommendation

To review and comment on the updates provided.

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.*

Report Details

1. Over the last 12 months, the council has been working to develop a Climate Action Strategy and Plan for Norwich (hereafter ‘the Strategy’). This Strategy focuses on reducing Norwich’s emissions *as a whole*, setting out steps to achieve the city’s 2045 net-zero target. An operational carbon reduction programme for the Council’s emissions will follow. The generic themes of the Strategy have been consulted on with SLT and members during October 2023, with feedback and comments now being incorporated into work to draft the strategy. Work is now underway to develop a final draft of the strategy, which will be brought to CEEEP at the earliest possible date.
2. The council has formally engaged Norwich Climate Commission to assist in the development of the strategy to ensure it is sufficient to meet its aims.
3. The suggested key priority areas of the strategy are as follows; these are outlined so that feedback regarding scope and sufficiency can contribute to the evolution of the strategy.
 - 3.1. *The council as leader and coordinator of climate action and nature recovery*
 - 3.2. *The council as an enabler of climate action i.e. enabling retrofit, low-carbon transport, etc.*
 - 3.3. *The council leading nature recovery in the city*
 - 3.4. *The council enabling the city to effectively adapt to the impacts of climate change.*
 - 3.5. *The council enabling community wealth building, promotion of equality and maximisation social value generation, in the delivery of these policies.*
 - 3.6. *The council developing an effective performance review framework for citywide environmental action.*
4. The Council will be holding a public consultation event at the Norwich Science Festival on 23 and 24 February. This early consultation will seek feedback from the public on the sufficiency of scope of the Strategy and further ideas ahead of arriving at a final draft. There will then be a full public consultation on a highly developed draft of the Strategy later in 2024.
5. A number of potential actions that will be set out in the Strategy are already underway. The following paragraphs give insight and an update on these actions.
6. **Heat Network Development** – during 2022 and 2023 the council engaged in a pilot project with the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) to determine the feasibility of creating formal *Heat Network Zones* in Norwich; 27 other UK cities were involved in the pilot. The council acted as the stakeholder coordinator to facilitate data flows to DESNZ to investigate the density of heat consumption across the city.

The pilot projects have resulted in provisions being made in the Energy Act 2023 to promote the implementation of formal Heat Network Zones in UK cities. Heat Network Zones will be recognised as part of a new planning regime, requiring new development and certain existing buildings to connect to low carbon heat networks. The obligations placed upon local authorities are currently uncertain, with a consultation containing further information expected early-to-mid 2024. The aim of the regulations is to increase the amount of heat provided by heat networks in the UK from around 3% currently, to 20% by 2050.

The Council will continue to enable the development of heat networks in the city, as an action of the Strategy

- 7. Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)** – the Council is working with UK Power Networks (UKPN), Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, as part of a county wide Local Area Planning Exercise. The aim of the LAEP is to understand future energy consumption scenarios relating to decarbonisation, so that local electricity networks can be strengthened in line with anticipated future demand.

UKPN have put in place a new team to engage with local authorities regarding their decarbonisation programmes and have developed an interactive model to enable local authorities to model their own scenarios. Officers of the council and the council's consultants have started to use the model in order to develop a comprehensive brief for a LAEP, including for the urban area of the city (which does extend into neighboring local authorities), the East Norwich Strategic Redevelopment Area and the A11 growth corridor.

A collaborative exercise including strategic planners at Norfolk County Council is developing a brief and funding bid for the LAEP, which is expected to commence during 2024.

- 8. East Norwich Energy SPD** – A draft energy section of the East Norwich Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been drafted by council officers in collaboration with strategic planners at Norfolk County Council, in line with Greater Norwich Local Plan policy. The new draft builds on concepts developed as part of a report produced by the council's consultant Synfo Ltd, which investigated sustainable energy options for East Norwich. This section of the SPD sets out policies, principles and guidance for delivering sustainable energy at the East Norwich Strategic Development Area.
- 9. Fast Followers Norfolk Net Zero Communities** – The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership has been awarded Innovate UK "Fast Followers" funding to undertake a two-year Norfolk Net Zero Communities project. Focusing predominantly on retrofit and sustainable transport, the project seeks to identify the "non-technical" barriers hindering the adoption of sustainable behaviours and to begin thinking about how we might co-create solutions to overcome these. Emphasising a place-

based, community-tailored approach, the project aims to listen to and connect communities to gain and share insights and experiences. While not directly providing funding, the initiative aims to link individuals with existing financial resources and guide them through the process of making tangible changes, promoting visible progress in communities.

Eaton has been chosen as our defined community for the project, predominantly due to its position as Norwich's most affluent ward. We feel that the potential learning from Eaton is greatest as we can begin to understand why, even if people *can* afford to change (i.e. retrofit their house), they still might be reluctant to. Eaton also has a unique housing stock, covering a range of archetypes, with learning again transferable across the city as a result. The outcomes of the project will help further inform the Council's theory of change model as we seek to encourage behaviour change across the city. Initial engagement work with residents' associations is due to being shortly.

10. **Climate Commission's Our Power "Community Energy Champions"** – The Norwich Climate Commission, under the guise of their "Our Power" sub-group, continue to plan for a "Community Energy Champion" project. This project seeks to provide reliable advice to underserved communities in Norwich concerning retrofit and energy efficiency. With a strong emphasis on community engagement, the project aims to build trust within certain communities to ensure that the advice given has a meaningful impact. Moreover, the aim is to encourage communities to unite for collective action, such as group-buying materials or spreading knowledge and best practice. The Commission are currently looking to recruit a Project Manager to oversee the project, and are seeking further funding to upscale.
11. **Groundwork Green Doctors** – The Council has been approached by Groundwork East, who plan to launch their "Green Doctors" programme in Norwich, pending agreed (external) funding. The Green Doctors programme offers free and impartial advice to support individuals address issues such as difficulties in paying energy bills, managing fuel debt, concerns about staying warm, and health-related problems associated with living conditions. While this programme will be run entirely by Groundwork, the Council will play a key role in signposting vulnerable individuals and ensuring that the work is integrated with existing services. More information about Green Doctors can be found here: <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/greendoctor/>
12. **Sustainable Food Norwich** – The Council is supporting the new Sustainable Food Norwich (SFN) partnership, which has recently been awarded membership of Sustainable Food Places, a national network of over 90 local partnerships aimed at making local, healthy and sustainable food available to all. SFN has recently been formed, and is currently developing a strategy that aligns to Sustainable Food Places 6 themes (Food Governance & Strategy; Good Food Movement; Healthy Food for All; Sustainable Food Economy; Catering &

Procurement; Food for the Planet). SFN held a well-attended event at Blackfriars Hall on 21 November with key local stakeholders to begin understanding what is already happening within the city and how existing initiatives and groups can be integrated effectively (i.e. paragraph 11). More information can be found at: www.sustainablefoodnorwich.org.uk.

13. **Solar Together and Switch and Save** – The Council continues to run the effective Solar Together and Switch and Save collective auction schemes. While the numbers are not yet available, the 2023 Solar Together action has had high levels of interest with a significant number of registrations that will hopefully translate into installations. The Switch and Save scheme has been less consistent due to the current state of energy market, with auctions not always being held due to the inability to secure a better price. However, the June 2023 auction did see residents offered a fixed price tariff below the (then current) price cap. The next auction takes place 9th January, with sign-up closing on the 8th. All tariffs secured under Switch and Save are 100% renewable.

Implications and Next Steps

14. Comments and input from CEEEP will be taken into account and fed into the continued development of the strategy, and the ideas and actions that underpin it. We will continue to consult with the Norwich Climate Commission to gain their expert input on certain issues. Public consultation will begin at the Norwich Science Festival, where we will seek feedback from the public on the sufficiency of scope of the Strategy and further ideas ahead of arriving at a final draft. There will then be a full public consultation on a highly developed draft of the Strategy later in 2024.

Property and Economic Development Implications

15. There are no direct property/economic development implications of this report.

Financial and Resources

16. There are no direct financial/resource implications of this report.

Legal

17. There are no direct legal implications of this report.

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	The measures and recommendations outlined in this report will contribute to a substantial reduction in the overall carbon footprint of Norwich, either directly or through enabling further action.

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
NA	NA	NA

Other Options Considered: NA

Reasons for the decision/recommendation: NA

Background papers: NA

Appendices:

Contact Officer: Environmental Strategy Officer

Name: Ben Spratling

Email address: benspratling@norwich.gov.uk