



Climate and environment emergency executive panel

16:00 to 17:10

14 February 2023

Present: Councillors Hampton (chair), Carlo, Champion, Driver (substitute for Councillor Stutely), Lubbock and Oliver

Apologies: Councillor Stutely (vice chair) and Padda

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 (subject to the following correction of an omission which was discovered after the meeting, inserting Councillor Oliver's name to the list of members present).

3. Norwich Climate Commission: One Year Progress Report and Future Plans

The chair said that Asher Minns, Co-Chair of the Norwich Climate Commission, had sent his apologies for this meeting, arrangements would be made for him to attend a future meeting of the panel.

RESOLVED to note that this item will be deferred to a future meeting.

4. Environmental Strategy General Update

The environmental strategy manager introduced the report.

The chair invited members of the panel to ask questions on the report.

During discussion members considered the development of the Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan and how it would be embedded in all council departments and services, particularly Citywide Services and Housing. The environmental services manager explained that these services were represented on the Biodiversity Working Group (BWG), which as part of the development of the delivery plan would include discussions on how teams could be aligned with the strategy. A member also asked how councillors would receive assurance that the plan was embedded throughout the council and its services and was advised that this would be part of the constitutional process which was subject to wider discussion outside this meeting. If

members were concerned about specific works, they could raise it through the councillor enquiry system.

The environmental strategy manager acknowledged that water conservation had been an omission from the section on action management and thanked the member who raised it. Specific work on Nutrient Neutrality mitigation was ongoing and proposals had to mitigate this and release sites for development had been considered at cabinet (14 December 2022).

In reply to a member's question, the environmental strategy manager confirmed that the council's Environmental Strategy aimed to reach national targets set out in the Environment Act 2021, and where possible better them. The working group was bringing together areas where the council could influence at local level, through collaboration and joined up working with partner authorities. He also referred to the county council's funding from the Department of Transport and said that works would be programmed in once government guidance had been received.

A member commented on the Wilder Norwich project and suggested that the figure of '1 in 4' people to manage their gardens for biodiversity improvement was an arbitrary one. The environmental strategy manager said that the Norfolk Wildlife Trust had brought this initiative to the council. He was confident that there was scientific evidence to support the premise that 1 in 4 created a critical mass.

A member commented on the "enormous task" to achieve carbon reduction by 84 per cent by 2040, and 8 per cent year on year, and expressed her concern that the review of the existing Environmental Strategy action plan would mean that some items were removed from the programme. The environmental strategy manager assured members that no elements of the action plan would be omitted. He commented that in collating data, a "root and branch" approach was being undertaken to back cast to previous years, and in the process, streamline it. He also referred to the audit of the scope of the council's carbon emissions by professional consultants and said that he did not anticipate that the outcome would differ.

A member commented that the panel's terms of reference included consideration of the Integrated Waste Strategy. The head of strategy, engagement and culture apologised that the head of environmental services was unavailable for this meeting and suggested that the panel could consider the Integrated Waste Strategy at a future meeting.

Discussion ensued on offsetting carbon emissions when Net Zero had been achieved. A member referred to the replacement of paper agendas and said that some energy was incurred to use electronic versions. The environmental strategy manager said that it was proposed to integrate environmental and socio-economic activity, such as the planting of trees and other benefits to improve resilience.

The chair referred to the proposals set out in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report "Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and HRA Budget 2023/24" (Cabinet, 14 December 2022) and said projects to improve EPC (energy performance certificates) in council houses would be carried out when the council had the funding available. The head of strategy, engagement and culture said that it was necessary to understand the funding and ensure that the budget provision was included in the correct year. The capital programme could be amended in year. The

council needed the support of central government. The environmental strategy manager said that the council should be proud of the works that it had undertaken to improve its housing stock, the majority was at least EPC C, with some at D and E, and was in a good place to develop the retrofit plan. A member also pointed out that the council had a responsibility to enforce standards in private rented properties. She pointed out that her understanding was that there were 740 properties in the city with an EPC standard of F and G, and that these should be brought up to at least C and D.

The chair said that she was impressed with the many strands of work that were being undertaken and thanked the officers.

RESOLVED to note the report.

5. Environmental Programme 2023 – 2030 Consultation

The environmental strategy manager presented the report with slides. (A copy of the [presentation](#) is available on the council's website.)

The chair thanked the environmental strategy manager for the presentation and said that the Norwich Climate Commission had provided good feedback on the Environmental Programme.

A member commented that the proposals looked “fantastic” and asked that if Norwich achieved its targets, what difference would people see, and was the priority to save the planet or population. The environmental strategy manager said that both planet and population were important. It was important to improve conditions for people and reduce our impact on the environment. He pointed out that the threat to environmental damage from the UK did not equate to China and the USA. The UK had led the Industrial Revolution with the burning of coal, unlike China and the USA where the impact of industrialisation was relatively new.

The panel considered the lessons that had been learned from the pandemic where there had been a reduction in carbon emissions. The environmental strategy manager said that during this period the council had reduced emissions from transportation as people did not need to travel and had undertaken procurement of a new heating system. He commented that environmental impact of people working at home cut emissions by reducing commuting, but it was necessary to heat the whole of City Hall despite fewer people in the building and officers, working from home, needed to heat their homes.

During discussion on the circular economy, the panel was advised that Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) had set up an embryonic [website](#) to promote it. In reply to a member's question about capital funding and resources to provide elements of the programme, the environmental strategy manager said that he defended the approach that was being taken to develop and execute the programme as it required a change to the way things had been done since the Industrial Revolution. Some carbon reduction measures produced cost savings by doing less not more. He pointed out that it was important to unblock funding and then develop the pipeline. A member commented that the issue of funding first approach followed by a proposed decision and then consultation and referred to the introduction in road charging in Cambridge. There was local opposition because the public transport was

not in place, however, there would not be cheaper fares until the road charging was in place to pay for it.

Discussion ensued on targets. The environmental strategy manager answered a member's question and confirmed that targets would be reviewed as part of development of the new programme, and that targets would remain at no later than 2030. He could not second guess the outcome of the consultant's work but considered that it was unlikely that the council would be bringing that date of 2030 forward. The target for social housing would be reviewed as part of this. He acknowledged that there were some gaps in targets around waste which would be addressed. There would be an opportunity to comment in the public consultation. Targets had to be "stretching" but also achievable otherwise people would not subscribe to them. When setting targets, resources and future resources were identified to deliver them.

In reply to a question, the environmental strategy manager said that aviation was included in the programme because there was an airport in Norwich.

Discussion ensued on extreme weather conditions. It was noted that the council was working with the Tyndall Centre to make plans on how to address climate scenarios. Climate science predicated an increase in extreme weather events as an impact of climate change.

The panel also considered the importance of the communication plan to ensure that residents could relate to the programme.

RESOLVED to note members comments on the scope of the proposed Environmental Programme.

6. Question referred from Council 29 November 2022

The chair referred to the question and answer that had been referred to the panel by Council (29 November 2022) and asked Councillor Carlo if she was satisfied following the discussion at this meeting or had any further questions.

Councillor Carlo said that she considered that the rather than using data for average emissions per capita it would be helpful to use a range of data. She explained that parts of the city, where there were higher levels of deprivation, were below average for emissions per capita. Her concern was that areas that produced above average emissions per capita "were being let off the hook", and not taking action to reduce their emissions from activities such as consumption, flying and driving.

During discussion members noted that there was a correlation between income and emissions. The environmental strategy manager referred to the second of his slides, addressing economic and social values, and the key principle of the programme to ensure that minimum living standards were met without increasing emissions.

RESOLVED to note.

CHAIR