



CABINET

Tuesday, 05 December 2023

Subject	Environment Task Group - Quarterly Update
Cabinet Member	Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
Report Author(s)	Paul Mackie Lead Officer, Climate Change & Environment paul.mackie@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
Director	Nick Khan Strategic Director nick.khan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet on the current status and work of the cross-party Environment Task, chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment.

Options:

Not applicable

Recommendation/s:

1. That this report from the Environment Task Group be accepted and approved.
2. That Cabinet confirm that the Group is to continue to deliver the task it was set.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

The Environment Task Group is a cross-party group chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment and reports direct to Cabinet.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

The work of the Environment Task Group directly supports the Council's 'Our Direction' and delivers on the commitment "delivering positive climate, nature, and environmental impacts through the decisions we make and actions we take" to ensure this is progressively influencing all the Council's policies and strategies.

Environmental:

The Environment Task Group through the issues it is considering and monitoring will have a direct and far-reaching effect on the Council's environmental agenda and priorities.

Equalities and Diversity:

There are no specific equalities or diversity impacts arising from this report. The work of the Environment Task Group directly and through its influence the work of the Council to respond to the Climate and Nature Emergencies will however impact on all those who live and work in East Suffolk or visit the area.

Financial:

There are no specific Financial impacts arising from this update report.

Human Resources:

There are no Human Resources impacts arising from this update report.

ICT:

There are no ICT impacts arising from this update report.

Legal:

There are no Legal impacts arising from this update report.

Risk:

There are no new Risks arising from this update report.

External Consultees: None

Our Direction 2028 Priorities

The priorities of Our Direction 2028 are supported by this proposal:	Priorities
Environmental Impact	
Continued commitment to net zero by 2030	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting sustainable transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Restoring ecosystems and biodiversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Support, promote and implement green tech	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work in partnership to manage coastal adaptation and resilience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Focus on reduction, re-use and recycling of materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Encourage food self-sufficiency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Preserve and maintain the district's beauty and heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>FORMATION</p> <p>The Environment Task Group (ETG) has been re-formed under this administration and held its first meeting in July 2023. Further information on its role is in section 3.</p>

2 Summary of Environment-related activity since it was re-formed

2.1 The Environment Task Group (ETG) has been re-formed under this administration and held its first meeting in July 2023.

The ETG is a task group of Cabinet, comprised of nine cross-party Members nominated by their parties. All members of the group share a common passion for protecting our environment in all of its forms and work in collaboration.

Cllr Smith-Lyte, Cabinet Member for the Environment is Chair of the group.

The group has reviewed and agreed its terms of reference, which are as follows:

- a) To make recommendations to Cabinet on areas for improvement following the review of existing policies which impact on the environment and to identify and make recommendations on developing new environmental policies, where required, which will help to protect and enhance the environment.
- b) To recommend to Cabinet appropriate action plans and targets to help deliver the Council's environmental ambitions, including becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- c) To consider and comment on the business case for investment and project delivery plans developed as part of the environment action plan before consideration by Cabinet.
- d) To monitor progress with delivering the action plans and achieving targets and report on progress to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- e) To consider government consultation documents relating to environmental matters and assist Cabinet in formulating its response.
- f) For members of the Task Group to act as Environmental Champions for the East Suffolk Council and their parish councils, leading by example and advocating for good environmental stewardship.
- g) To identify areas for further research and invite presentations, workshops and discussions with experts in a wide range of environmental issues, as appropriate, to help inform the Council's policies and action plans.
- h) To consider the best way of engaging with key partners of the Council on environmental issues.
- i) To consider and help formulate a communication strategy to promote the Council's activities relating to environmental issues.

The re-formed group met on 12 July 2023 and agreed to hold monthly meetings over this administration's term of office.

2.2	<p>The group discussed and agreed the following areas of interest, which will be refined further in December 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educating & empowering the public ▪ Boosting biodiversity ▪ Climate change action & net zero ▪ Low carbon homes & Planning policy ▪ Sustainable agricultural practices ▪ Water quality & availability ▪ Energy efficiency ▪ Green Schools - for nature & climate ▪ Improving soil quality ▪ Reducing waste, increasing recycling ▪ New partnerships with key organisations ▪ Low carbon transport ▪ Increasing funding & resources ▪ Lobbying ▪ Sustainable food production ▪ Decarbonisation ▪ Reducing food waste ▪ Calling out greenwashing
2.3	<p>To date, the ETG has invited presentations from officers from ESC Housing and the Suffolk Warmer Homes, Healthy People teams to discuss the progress, challenges and opportunities relating to property energy retrofits and is forming potential recommendations related to this crucial topic.</p> <p>At the December meeting, the group will hear from the ESC Procurement team on how the environmental impact of the goods and services we purchase is factored-in to the current Procurement Policy and processes and will discuss the potential opportunities for strengthening these key considerations.</p>

3 Reason/s for recommendation	
3.1	<p>It has been agreed that the Environment Task Group would provide quarterly updates on its work to Cabinet.</p>
3.2	<p>As the need to react further and faster to the climate and nature emergencies become increasingly apparent the Group will continue to have a significant role considering and supporting initiatives and providing opinions to Cabinet on any matters referred to it. For this reason, Cabinet is invited to confirm it is delivering the task it has been set and to give any further guidance it considers appropriate.</p>

Appendices

Appendices:
None.

Background reference papers:
None.