



<b>Committee</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	04/06/2024
<b>Subject</b>	East Suffolk Council UK100 membership
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Sally Noble, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment Councillor Tom Daly, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change & Energy
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Key Decision?	No
Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN

## Purpose/Summary

The purpose of this report is to:

Provide information to assist Members in deciding whether to join the UK100 network by signing the UK100 pledge.

## Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

Agree to join the UK100 network and sign East Suffolk Council up to the UK100 pledge.

## Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

<b>Environmental Impact</b>	This report relates to the delivery of the environmental impact theme of Our Direction 2028.
<b>Sustainable Housing</b>	This report indirectly relates to the delivery of priorities within the Sustainable Housing theme of Our Direction 2028.
<b>Tackling Inequalities</b>	This report indirectly relates to the delivery of priorities within the Tackling Inequalities theme of Our Direction 2028.
<b>Thriving Economy</b>	This report indirectly relates to the delivery of priorities within the Thriving Economy theme of Our Direction 2028.
<b>Our Foundations / governance of the organisation</b>	This report indirectly relates to governance for the delivery of Our Direction 2028.

## Justification for recommendations

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Our Direction 2028 is the key document for the Council in setting the direction of East Suffolk Council. Following on from significant consultation and further development and finalisation of Our Direction 2028, the Strategic Plan was presented to Council for its approval at Full Council on 22 November 2023.
- 1.2. The Our Direction 2028 vision is 'Our aim is to promote a bright, green, open, free, and fair future for all East Suffolk'. Our Direction 2028 has four core themes which includes an 'Environmental Impact theme' which set its vision as 'delivering positive climate, nature, and environmental impacts through the decisions we make and actions we take'.
- 1.3. Within the Environmental Impact Theme there are eight priority topics:
  - a. Continued commitment to net zero by 2030.
  - b. Supporting sustainable transport.
  - c. Restoring ecosystems and biodiversity.
  - d. Support, promote and implement green tech.
  - e. Work in partnership to manage coastal adaptation and resilience.
  - f. Focus on reduction, re-use and recycling of materials.
  - g. Encourage food self-sufficiency.
  - h. Preserve and maintain the district's beauty and heritage.
- 1.4. **ESC's ongoing net zero commitment**

On 24 July 2019 (Full Council agenda item 9(a)), the Council resolved unanimously to:

  - Declare a climate emergency
  - Set up a Cross Party Task Group, commencing by October 2019, to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with ambition to make East Suffolk Council (including all buildings and services) carbon neutral by 2030.
  - To work with Suffolk County Council and other partners across the county and region, including the LEP and the Public Sector Leaders, towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.
  - To work with the government to:

- a) deliver its 25-year Environmental Plan, and
- b) increase the powers and resources available to local authorities in order to make the 2030 target easier to achieve. The Environment Task Group was formed as a cross-party Task Group

**1.5.** As we have pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030 – which also means we will look for environmental benefit in everything we do – this includes radical changes to our vehicle fleets, business mileage usage plus energy used by council buildings and leisure centres to ensure they contribute to our carbon neutral aims. We have also implemented digital solutions to further minimise our carbon footprint.

ESC declared a climate emergency to reinforce our commitment to the environment. This commitment was reinforced by the environment being a key principle of the previous and current strategic plans, underpinning our work as an authority.

As ESC produces less than 1% of Suffolk’s carbon emissions, our focus has been on our most powerful role – engaging with the public and using our powers, duties and networks to encourage climate positive behaviours.

Our focus on restoring nature and increasing biodiversity has also been a key area of work, as this plays a fundamental role in the response to climate change, so is closely interlinked.

**1.6. Legislation related to this theme**

There are a number of pieces of Government legislation and policy in place to support the delivery of East Suffolk's climate aspirations and objectives, which are:

- UK Climate Change Act 2008: Legally binding 2050 net zero target.
- Biodiversity Net Gain: mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to be delivered by all development, introduced through the 2021 Environment Act and came into force in January 2024 and phasing through stages of implementation starting with smaller developments.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies: Associated with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery to be prepared by Suffolk County Council with a supporting role for district councils.
- Building Regulations: Part L changes deliver a 30% improvement on energy efficiency above previous 2013 standards. Future Homes Standard would represent 75-80% improvement.
- Transport: Ban on combustion engines in new cars from 2035. ‘Decarbonising Transport’ (2021) understood that decarbonisation will be informing next round of Local Transport Plans (prepared by SCC).

**1.7.** There are further pieces of Government legislation and policy in place to support the delivery of East Suffolk's climate aspirations and objectives, key examples of which are:

- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Potential 2023 Procurement Act secondary legislation.
- Habitats regulations 2010.
- Water Resources Regulations 2015.
- Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016.
- 25 Year Environment Plan.

**1.8. Collaborations and partnerships with other organisations:** As an ambitious council, despite limits to the resources, funding and powers available to District Authorities, East Suffolk Council publicly committed to collaborate with other local and national organisations to urgently address climate change.

Examples include working with partners to address important national issues such as low carbon transport and decarbonising private homes.

East Suffolk Council publicly supports the 2030 net zero target for Suffolk as a whole by tackling emissions from the wider sectors of transport, business, industry and households. To do this we are an active partner in the delivery of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, such as by helping households install energy reduction measure use through the 'Warmer Homes' programme, co-funding the Solar Together scheme and supporting business to decarbonise through our net zero grant programme. East Suffolk Council is also committed supporting the delivery of HM Government's 25 year Environment Plan

#### **Delivering the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan**

East Suffolk Council has been working with other authorities since 2007 as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership.

In 2019, all Suffolk authorities declared a climate emergency and a net zero target of 2030 was set. The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group (SPSL) gave approval to develop the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, which was published in 2021. SPSL then approve annual funding for projects to deliver a programme of work to tackle the climate emergency in Suffolk, which is now being delivered.

The Suffolk Climate Change Energy & Environment Board (SCCEEB) and its subgroups were formed to deliver the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan and report to Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) via the portfolio holders and Suffolk Chief Officers Leadership Team (SCOLT) groups.

## 2. Proposal

- 2.1. UK100 is a network of local government leaders focused on tackling the climate emergency through the promotion of rapid action across a spectrum of climate change mitigation and adaptation work. Further detail can be found at [www.uk100.org](http://www.uk100.org).
- 2.2. Joining the network will enable the Council to work directly with other Councils facing the same climate challenges. It will also enable the Council to become part of the Countryside Climate Network which amplifies the rural voice in advocating national policy to tackle climate change. It will also enable the Council direct access to climate research, campaigns, publications, innovative funding models and private sector expertise.
- 2.3. In order to join the UK100 and the Countryside Climate Network (CCN), the Leader of the Council to sign the Net Zero pledge (see appendix). The Net Zero pledge entails committing to a 2030 target for Council emissions and a target for 2050 (or before) for area wide emissions **but it should be noted as highlighted above that ESC has previously publicly committed to these targets.**
- 2.4. Once membership is completed, the Council's Leader, or designated portfolio holder responsible for climate change, join UK100's quarterly meetings and other networking events, supported by officers.
- 2.5. UK100 would publicise the Council's membership.

## 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. Signing-up to the UK100 pledge will not have any additional financial implications in addition to those already committed to publicly, such as the ESC 2030 target. There is no fee for UK100 membership.

## 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1. There are no additional legal implications from signing-up to the UK100 pledge.

## 5. Risk Implications

- 5.1. There are no additional legal implications from signing-up to the UK100 pledge.

## 6. Options

- a. Sign-up to the UK100 pledge.
- b. Don't sign-up to the UK100 pledge.

## 7. Recommendation

That Cabinet gives approval for the Council to join UK100 by signing up to the UK100 pledge.

## 8. Reasons for Recommendation

Responding to the climate and nature emergencies continues to be a key pillar of the Council's strategic direction. As set out in Our Direction 2028, 'We are committed to achieving net zero as Council by 2030 and working collaboratively to deliver this for Suffolk, focussing and investing in the transition while protecting our core services'.

Climate change is a broad and significant challenge for all Local Authorities, which can only be addressed through open, proactive collaboration, both internally and with key partner organisations, such as through the UK100 network. On its own, East Suffolk cannot solve the challenge but can play an important role in finding solutions and leading by example.

The proposal in this report reaffirms the Council's commitment to clear action on climate change and is a demonstration of the Council's leadership.

### Areas of consideration comments

**Section 151 Officer comments:**

No additional comment

**Monitoring Officer comments:**

No additional comment

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:**

No implications

**Safeguarding:**

No implications

**Crime and Disorder:**

No implications

**Corporate Services implications:**

*(i.e., Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Digital, Customer Services, Asset Management)*

No additional implications to Corporate Services beyond those to outlined in the Our Direction 2028 strategy.

**Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:**

A public consultation for the Our Direction 2028 strategy was carried out, which included ESC's continued commitment to net zero as an organisation and County.

**Appendices:**

<b>Appendix A</b>	UK100 Membership Pledge
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**Background reference papers:**

None