



## CABINET

Tuesday, 05 April 2022

<b>Subject</b>	Environment Task Group - Quarterly Update
<b>Report by</b>	Cllr James Mallinder Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Andrew Jarvis Strategic Director andrew.jarvis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01394 444323

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

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet on the work of the cross-party Environment Task, chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, since its last report on 4 January 2022. Confirmation is also sought that the Group is continuing to deliver on the task it was set to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and other harmful emissions.

### **Options:**

Not applicable

### **Recommendations:**

1. That this report from the Environment Task Group be accepted and approved.
2. That it be confirmed that the Environment Task Group is to continue to deliver the task it was set to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and investigate positive environmental policy.

## 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 Strategic Plan and delivering on the corporate commitment to "put the environment at the heart of everything we do" is progressively influencing all the Council's policies and strategies.

### **Environmental:**

The Environment Task Group through the issues it is considering and monitoring is having 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 Emergency 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

## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

XXX	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b></p> <p>The Environment Task Group continues to be a valuable forum in which to consider and debate environmental issues and to help deliver on the Council’s commitment to put the environment at the heart of everything we do. The environmental work done by Council and the resultant spending is directly impacting on the local economy and the Council is increasingly engaging with businesses engaged in renewable and low carbon energy, sustainable development and wider environmental protection work. Several initiatives the Task Group has worked on or has supported have involved community groups, for example environmental promotion, biodiversity projects, tree planting, action on plastic and as further projects are delivered it is confidently predicted that there will be an increasing feeling of community pride in what has been delivered. Financial Sustainability is a key consideration in the work of the Task Group, some carbon saving changes requires investment but many also result in coincidental cost savings, for example, energy cost savings/income from solar power generation on council buildings and savings on chemical and grass cutting costs. The Group have been supportive of the role digital technology can play in reducing carbon emission savings, for example, through the wider enablement of home working and video conferencing and the consequent reduction in travel. It is suggested that the Environment Task Group is good example of collaborative working and that in the comparatively short time it has been working it has helped the delivery of the Council environment priorities significantly. This is expected to continue as further significant challenges arise, for example in helping to formulate the Council’s response to the nation Resources and Waste Strategy.</p>			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

<b>1 Background facts</b>	
1.1	<p><b>FORMATION</b></p> <p>On 24 July 2019 (Full Council agenda item 9(a)), the Council resolved unanimously to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declare a climate emergency</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• To work with the government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a) deliver its 25-year Environmental Plan, and</li> <li>• b) increase the powers and resources available to local authorities in order to make the 2030 target easier to achieve.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>656 The Environment Task Group was formed as a cross-party Task Group</p>

## 2 In context of the East Suffolk Council Strategic Plan

2.1	The Council's Strategic Plan sets out its vision to deliver the highest possible quality of life for everyone who lives, works in or visits the district. The five themes of the Strategic Plan are: Growing our Economy; Enabling our Communities; Remaining Financially Sustainable; Delivering Digital Transformation; and Caring for our Environment.
2.2	Within the theme of Caring for our Environment, the Council is committed to lead by example, seeking environmental benefit in everything we do, working with communities for biodiversity and optimising the use of digital solutions to reduce environmental impacts; to minimise waste, promote reuse and maximise recycling; to explore opportunities to invest in renewable energy solutions as a council and encourage others to do the same; and to use our influence and regulatory functions to protect our natural environment and coastline.
2.3	The Strategic Plan recognises the interconnectivity between the five Themes of the Plan, with actions arising under each theme having the potential to contribute towards any or all of the other themes.

## 3 Summary of Environment Task Group activity since last report

3.1	<p>THE ETG has met once (12 January 2022) since its last report to Cabinet on 4 January 2022 when it discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fireworks Policy Consultation</li><li>• Motion for the Ocean</li><li>• Waste water pollution</li></ul> <p>In terms of actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An 8 week public consultation seeking views on whether or not the council should change its policy on permitting fireworks displays on council land is to be launched in late March 2022, the results of which are intended to inform a decision by Cabinet on whether to make any changes to the policy on 5 July 2022.</li><li>• An internal audit of existing ocean protection work will be undertaken to provide a basis for Members to consider the position the Council would be able to take in the event of a formal Motion for the Ocean being submitted to Full Council.</li></ul>
3.2	<p><b>East Suffolk Climate Action Plan</b></p> <p>Since 2008, the Council has conducted its own internal Annual Greenhouse Gas (AGHG) Report to quantify the emissions emanating from the activities and estates of the council, including the fuel and energy consumed by its fleet, built assets and business mileage, with our approach having been validated independently by Groundwork East.</p> <p>This AGHG report enables the council to identify those services and assets that have the largest impacts in terms of their emissions and what the trends over time</p>

	<p>are, and in turn enables the council to prioritise actions. It will also help us to track progress towards our 20230 carbon neutrality goal.</p> <p>Pending the development of a codified Climate Action Plan, the AGHG report has nonetheless enabled targeted action to be taken, for example the HVO interim fuel solution project to reduce fleet emissions which typically represented around 40% of ESC emissions, with a future key focus to be the redevelopment of the Felixstowe leisure facilities given the current Felixstowe Leisure Centre alone typically accounting for 10% of ESC emissions.</p> <p>These actions and others that are already underway and ongoing, and that contribute to our carbon neutrality and environmental ambitions will, once the new Lead Officer (see point 3.17) is in post, be translated into the formal Climate Action Plan later in the year.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Alternative Vehicle fuel – an interim fuel solution to reduce fleet emissions</b></p> <p>As many of the suppliers of HVO do not develop the product themselves the supply chain for this product is particularly elongated. Current issues with the costs of all fuels being extremely volatile due to the conflict in Eastern Europe has resulted in an extremely aggressive market at present. This is currently causing us to experience a delay with the final procurement of HVO.</p> <p>The Council’s procurement team are currently working to resolve this issue before the arrival of new fleet in April, which will entail the replacement of all remaining Euro 5 vehicles (which cannot accept HVO) with Euro 6 compliant vehicles (which can accept HVO).</p>
3.4	<p><b>Members’ Green Training Programme</b></p> <p>A programme of sessions to update and inform Elected Members about a range of environmental themes, services and issues is currently under development for inclusion as part of the wider Member’s Training. The intention is to provide Members with the information they need in the course of their engagements with their constituents on environmental issues.</p> <p>Topics that are intended for coverage include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Annual Greenhouse Gas Report</li> <li>• Waste reduction and recycling</li> <li>• The Suffolk Coast &amp; Heaths AONB</li> <li>• Tree Preservation Orders and Tree Wardens</li> <li>• Planning and the Environment</li> <li>• Electric vehicle charging infrastructure</li> <li>• The Greenprint Forum</li> <li>• Nature and verges</li> <li>• Cycling &amp; Walking Strategy</li> </ul> <p>The programme has already commenced, with a session on Enviro-Crime already having been delivered by Environmental Protection Manger Andrew Reynolds on 3 February, with AONB Manager Simon Amstutz to deliver a session about the AONB on 31 March. Members are encouraged to register for these sessions as they become available.</p>

**3.5 Greenprint Quiet Lanes**

As of March 2022, 199 lanes in 66 parishes countywide have so far been designated under the project, of which approximately 116 lanes are in 29 parishes in East Suffolk alone, with the intention of improve connectivity with existing bridleways and footpaths for active and vulnerable travellers and encouraging sustainable rural mobility whilst also adding to the visitor attraction of the rural economy for those wishing to enjoy rural Suffolk on foot or bike.

The impact of the project has already started to become noticed both within Suffolk, with enquiries also having been received from a number of other local authorities from around the country; it had originally been envisaged that the Suffolk project would provide a template for others to follow. Whilst the full publicity campaign is yet to be launched, Suffolk’s Quiet Lanes has already received a brief mention at the beginning of BBC Escape to the Country on 1 March 2022 in addition to positive regional TV coverage last year.

Within Suffolk, there are a number of links being by this project made with other work streams, including the Suffolk-wide Travel Behaviour Change Steering Group, the Visitor Economy workstream of the Suffolk Growth Partnership, and the emerging East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy.

Quiet Lanes Suffolk received its initial funding secured in 2019 by the Greenprint Forum from the former East Suffolk Partnership, with a significant boost to funding subsequently secured from SCC enabling what began as an East Suffolk community-driven project to become a county-wide project demonstrating replicability. Community support has so far been very positive with almost all lanes reaching the formal public consultation stage going on to be formally designated.

**3.6 Staff engagement**

The Council’s Health and Wellbeing Group organised two voluntary activities for members of staff to participate in the Council’s practical conservation work alongside the Countryside Team from Norse in early February. Six members of staff attended a tree planting session at Woods Meadow, planting an estimated 250 trees, with a further four attending the heathland conservation session at Upper Hollesley Common. A separate session held on behalf of the Greenprint Forum at Upper Hollesley Common attracted eleven volunteers.

**3.7 Air Quality**

The Environmental Protection Team have recently recruited an Air Quality Technical Officer on a fixed term 1-year contract to review and update the Council's Air Quality Strategy and assist with technical aspects of the Council's legal obligations with regard to Local Air Quality Management.

**Planning**

<p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<p><b>Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document</b></p> <p>The Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document providing guidance on a range of topics including energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, sustainable transport and use of materials to support the implementation of the Council’s adopted Local Plan policies is due to go to Cabinet on 5 April. In the course of the two-stage public consultation a total of 127 comments were received and taken into consideration in drafting the SPD. Once adopted, the Sustainable Construction SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.</p> <p><b>Walking and Cycling Strategy</b></p> <p>The consultation for the draft East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy has now closed. The response rate was very high with over 1000 comments received. The planning policy team is now assessing the comments and considering alterations to the document. The current draft is available to view here <a href="#">East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy   Draft 2021 (arcgis.com)</a>. Any updates relating to the strategy following the assessments of the comments will be provided upon the website.</p>
<p>3.10</p>	<p><b>Home Energy Audit Pilot</b></p> <p>On behalf of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, ESC has teamed up with Groundwork East and Suffolk County Council to undertake a home energy audit pilot to develop a process of assessing and identifying recommendations for domestic energy efficiency and renewable measures that would be appropriate for the domestic, able-to-pay market. The core purpose of the pilot is to explore the viability of developing a model that could then be scaled up as a new service from the Partnership, offering to that wider demographic of Suffolk households. The home energy audits are now complete and we are currently awaiting the close report from Groundwork prior to considering next steps.</p>
<p>3.11</p>	<p><b>Treebilee</b></p> <p>As part of the Treebilee scheme launched by HRH The Prince of Wales to encourage the planting of trees to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, East Suffolk Council launched its own branch of the Queen’s Green Canopy in February. The project will form a lasting memorial in the form of 200 new oak trees to be planted around the district, with 186 of them being donated to 125 parish councils, including 2 parishes who lost trees during Storm Eunice, with each parish council also receiving a commemorative plaque. A primary school has also requested a tree and a plaque, and any spares have been requested by a local community group. All plaques have been claimed and all 200 trees that were purchased will be planted.</p> <p>There will be a ceremonial tree planting on 11 March at Langer Park with the Town and County Council and the Chairman of ESC will hold a planting ceremony at Woods Meadow on 15 March with Oulton PC.</p>

3.12	<p><b>Deben redevelopment Passivhaus project</b></p> <p>The project at the Former Deben High School site in Felixstowe has moved into Phase 3 – Residential delivery. The demolition phase completed in December 2021. Hamson Barron Smith (HBS) have been appointed as the Project Development Managers and are assisting the housing team with their in-house consultancy services.</p> <p>Following the appointment of HBS, they were asked to carry out an initial gap analysis to establish what further information would be required to take the current information (planning package) to a sufficient level of detail to issue a robust tender package for a main contractor. This work established a number of workstreams which are being progressed concurrently and will complete in April ready for a Main Contractor to be procured via National Framework.</p> <p>A sales and marketing agent has also been appointed and will be marketing the properties throughout the construction phase. A number of launch events, including targeted days for ‘First time buyers’ and ‘An introduction to living in a PassiveHaus’ are proposed to promote the uptake of homes.</p> <p>ESC Officers continue to liaise with local residents and community groups regarding the progress of the development. HBS will be contacting all neighbouring residents inviting them to participate in engagement events / workshops to provide updates and understand any concerns about the proposed development.</p> <p>A project risk register is maintained and updated to reflect progress. Currently the team are working to mitigate risks which may lead to delays or overspend. At this stage, the most significant risks are associated with the detail design, ensuring the planning approval is deliverable within site constraints and within budget.</p> <p>Start on site is scheduled for summer 2022 with homes being delivered in phases between 2023/24.</p>
3.13	<p><b>Low carbon hydrogen</b></p> <p>The Council’s vision is to establish as the regional and potentially national hub for the generation, distribution, innovation, and adoption of low carbon hydrogen as part of the collective ambition of the private and public sector to achieve net zero by 2030. The <b>key objectives are as follows</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To identify a suitable site(s) within the district to locate low-carbon hydrogen demonstrator projects.</li> <li>2. To establish East Suffolk as a test bed for a range of low carbon hydrogen facilities</li> <li>3. To develop the alignment between existing and potential hydrogen projects across East Suffolk and the wider region to form the foundations of a hydrogen hub.</li> </ol> <p>The low carbon hydrogen ambitions for East Suffolk are closely aligned with other major initiatives and developments. These include Freeport East, which will involve</p>

	<p>the development of a Green Energy Hub, the proposed Sizewell C development, and ABP's significant outer harbour development which is supported by the development of the Powerpark. If realised, these projects might span between 30 MW to 100 MW from 2030 as they scale, and electrolyser costs fall.</p> <p>ESC is leading on local co-ordination with low-carbon hydrogen developers (and partners) to support collaboration with the aim of establishing ES a regional green hydrogen hub.</p>
3.14	<p><b>East Suffolk Business Festival</b></p> <p>As part of the East Suffolk Business Festival held in February 2022, a number of webinar+Q&amp;A sessions were held online to promote environmentally positive business practices. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could an electric cargo bike benefit your business or community? 43 businesses supported</li> <li>• Apps, STARS and data: happier &amp; healthier employees through sustainable workplace travel in the digital age. 32 businesses supported.</li> <li>• Introduction to Carbon Literacy. 69 businesses supported.</li> <li>• Net Zero Jargon Buster Webinar (Suffolk Chamber of Commerce event). 60 businesses supported.</li> </ul>
3.15	<p><b>Lead Officer – Environment &amp; Climate Change</b></p> <p>East Suffolk Council has created the new post of Lead Officer – Environment &amp; Climate Change to coordinate its environmental sustainability work across all of its services and estates and accelerate the Council's response to climate change. This new senior post will report to Strategic Director Nick Khan and will be the Council's central lead for environmental and climate change work and will further develop and accelerate the Council's policies and strategies in this area. The post will also lead engagement with key external stakeholders and lead this Council's contribution to the delivery of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan. The post was advertised in late February and interviews are due to be held in late March.</p>
3.16	<p><b>Communication of wider activities of the Council with regards to the environment</b></p> <p>The ETG regularly hears from internal and external speakers on environmental projects that the council is leading on or contributing towards.</p> <p>To help communicate progress on the environmental agenda to a wider audience, even where the ETG itself has not played a central role in driving particular projects, in order to raise the profile of these wider activities, this progress is being collated and publicised on the ETG's webpage <a href="#">Work so far » East Suffolk Council</a>.</p>

#### 4 Reason/s for recommendation

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| 4.1 | It has been agreed that the Environment Task Group would provide quarterly updates on its work to Cabinet. The Group has been performing well and considers it is fulfilling the role set and the tasks allocated.   |
| 4.2 | As the need to react further and faster to the climate emergency becomes 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 was set and to give any further guidance it considers appropriate. |

## Appendices

### Appendices:

None.

### Background reference papers:

None.