



CABINET

Tuesday, 04 January 2022

Subject	Environment Task Group - Quarterly Update
Report by	Councillor James Mallinder Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
Supporting Officer	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 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 work of the cross-party Environment Task, chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, since its last report on 5 October 2021. 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

Recommendation/s:

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
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Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
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"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
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"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
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"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
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"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
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	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</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

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>FORMATION</p> <p>On 24 July 2019 (Full Council agenda item 9(a)), the Council resolved unanimously to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 656 The Environment Task Group was formed as a cross-party Task Group

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 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 (13 October 2021) since its last report to Cabinet on 5 October 2021 when it discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fireworks Policy Consultation• Letter to Defra on CEE Bill – for approval• ESC 2020/21 Greenhouse Gas Report & update on Climate Action Plan <p>In terms of actions:</p>
3.2	<p>Alternative Vehicle fuel – an interim fuel solution to reduce fleet emissions</p> <p>The Head of Operations is now overseeing the procurement of a supply of certified palm oil free Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil fuel and is currently out to tender for a supplier.</p> <p>It is anticipated that compatible existing vehicles on the fleet will begin to use HVO from the beginning of 2022, following a procurement process that will, as a prerequisite, specify that the fuel is certified free of palm oil under the International Sustainability & Carbon Certification programme.</p>
3.3	<p>Biodiversity and nature</p> <p>East Suffolk House (ESH) enhancements</p> <p>Further work has been carried out to enhance provision for nature and the ability for members of staff working from the site to enjoy the surroundings and wildlife attracted to it, with the addition of a new planted outdoor seating area completed in September.</p>

	<p>The work highlights the importance of sharing our outdoor spaces with nature and can act as an example to other land managers.</p> <p>On 3 December, Cllr Mallinder, council officers and Greener Growth showcased this work undertaken at Riduna Park, in a webinar entitled Bringing Business and Biodiversity Together to provide inspiration and ideas to a business audience around sharing their premises with wildlife. The webinar was held as part of a wider programme coordinated by the New Anglia LEP, "Cleaner Growth for Business" aimed at encouraging adoption of the green agenda by the business community across Suffolk.</p> <p>3.4 Greenprint small grants scheme Nature First</p> <p>The Greenprint Forum launched its small grant scheme, "Nature First", funded by ESC, in summer 2021, to support community projects that promote and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>It has so far awarded a total of £8265.19 to 11 projects.</p> <p>Examples include a town-level campaign to raise awareness of the needs of hedgehogs in Saxmundham; a project working with householders to provide additional nesting opportunities for swifts in Tuddenham St Martin; and a new wildlife educational area at a community farm to engage pre-school and school age children in learning about the wildlife on the farm through pond dipping, bug hunting and floral ID in Rushmere St Andrew.</p> <p>The fund remains open for further bids from community groups.</p> <p>3.5 Greenprint Forum conference on farming</p> <p>A public forum was held online on 19 November on the topic of sustainable farming, to showcase local and regional farmers and growers outstanding in the field of successful and sustainable, wildlife friendly food production to share their best practice and inform and inspire others, with additional contributions from Suffolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.</p>
<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document</p> <p>A Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document has been drafted to provide 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. A public consultation on the draft SPD was held during the autumn and closed on 13 December.</p> <p>Once adopted, the Sustainable Construction SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.</p> <p>Walking and Cycling Strategy</p> <p>The 1st draft of the 2nd stage document of the new Walking and Cycling Strategy for East Suffolk opened for public consultation on 1 November, closing on 10 January. The document, which is presented in an innovative, interactive format online, gives an overview of current situation as well as recommendations for improvements and seeks further feedback on recommendations contained within the document. As well as opening the consultation up to responses from the</p>

	<p>general public, the Planning Policy Team have also been seeking to proactively engage with other external stakeholders to receive feedback and amend the final Strategy accordingly.</p>
3.8	<p>Resource and Waste Strategy</p> <p>The Environment Bill completed its passage through Parliament and became the Environment Act 2021 in November and is expected to have a fundamental impact on the delivery of services and the council’s resources to achieve this.</p> <p>In addition to maintaining the collection of those recyclable waste streams already being collected (card, paper, plastics, and metals), the Act will require local authorities to also collect glass and food waste for recycling, with significant local decisions likely to be required by April 2022 in order to prepare for the potential need for implementation from April 2023.</p> <p>Research to assess the viability of delivery on anticipated requirements of RAWs has been undertaken by the SWP which indicates that either a co-mingled dry recyclate plus separate glass collection system, or an alternate weekly separate-stream collection system keeping glass, paper & card, plastics, and metal separate during collection, would be viable in principle with potential for c. 10% increase in local recycling rates. However significant issues lie ahead with likely higher operating and capital costs and resource implications and added complexity for service users and our delivery partners. This will require further discussion internally including via the ETG.</p> <p>In order to assist with the development of the waste collection service in compliance with the requirements of the Act, and to assist with the development of the Local Authority Trading Company set to be created in 2023 to discharge operational services currently carried out by Norse, a Waste Strategy Business Improvement Manager and a Waste Contracts Specialist have been recruited to the Council’s Operations Team.</p>
3.9	<p>Home Energy Audit Pilot</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.</p>
3.10	<p>Trebilee</p> <p>2022 heralds a year-long Platinum Jubilee celebration throughout the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and around the world as communities come together to celebrate The Queen’s historic reign of 70 years.</p>

	<p>East Suffolk Council is delighted to play a part in this extraordinary moment in the history of the United Kingdom, providing opportunities for residents in the district to honour and celebrate this glorious event.</p> <p>One aspect of the celebrations is to provide a lasting memorial of 2022, with a project that we are calling 'Treebilee'. The Council are purchasing 200 English Oak Trees one of which we will donate to each Town and Parish Council to plant and nurture.</p> <p>All town and parish councils in the district have been written to and the trees will be available for them to collect from key locations in the district in February. The tree will come with instructions for planting and care, biodegradable tree ties and protectors and a commemorative plaque.</p>
3.11	<p>Help for private sector housing residents</p> <p>Through Suffolk's Warm Home Healthy People project, administered by ESC's Private Sector Housing Team on behalf of all Suffolk districts, funding has been secured by Suffolk councils to cover the full cost of installing insulation. The grants are available to all homeowners in Suffolk with a total household income of less than £30,000 per year. Funding may also be available for landlords whose tenants and properties meet the terms of the funding which is provided by the government.</p>
3.12	<p>Correspondence with Westminster</p> <p>In October, the ETG wrote to Defra urging the Government to use primary legislation to ensure that the principles of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill relating to the UK reducing its contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions in line with keeping the global mean temperature rise within 1.5 degrees C compared to pre-industrial levels and to halt and reverse the loss of nature and put it back on the path to recovery by 2030.</p>
3.13	<p>Communication of wider activities of the Council with regards to the environment</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 Work so far » East Suffolk Council.</p>

4 Reason/s for recommendation

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.