



# Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee – Draft Minutes

**Monday 11 September 2023**

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| Venue:    | Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon PE29 3TN   |  |
| Time:     | 10.00 to 12.00   |  |
| Present:  | Councillor Bridget Smith<br>Councillor Martin Goodearl<br>Councillor Ishfaq Hussain<br>Councillor Mike Todd-Jones<br>Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray<br>Councillor Lorna Dupre | Chair and Member for South Cambridgeshire District Council<br>East Cambridgeshire District Council<br>Peterborough City Council<br>Cambridge City Council<br>Huntingdonshire District Council<br>Cambridgeshire County Council |
| Apologies | Mayor Dr Nik Johnson<br>Councillor Nigel Simons<br>Councillor Dee Laws<br>Ms Belinda Clarke<br>Ms Tina Barsby  | CPCA Mayor<br>Peterborough City Council<br>Fenland District Council<br>Business Board Representative<br>Business Board Representative  |

## Minutes:

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| <b>1</b>  | <b>Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</b>  |
| 1.1       | Apologies were received from Ms Belinda Clarke, Ms Tina Barsby, Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, Cllr Dee Laws, and Cllr Nigel Simons who was substituted by Cllr Hussain. |
| 1.2       | There were no declarations of interest.   |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Minutes of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee meeting on 12 June 2023 and Action Log</b>  |
| 2.1       | The minutes of the meeting on 12 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.   |
| 2.2       | The Action Log was noted by the Committee.  |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Public Questions</b>   |
| 3.1       | No public questions had been received.  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Combined Authority Forward Plan</b>  |
| 4.1       | The Combined Authority Forward Plan was noted by the Committee.   |

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| <p><b>5.</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> | <p><b>Directorate Highlight Report</b></p> <p>Steve Cox, Interim Executive Director – Place &amp; Connectivity, introduced the report which provided a general update on the key activities of the Place and Connectivity Directorate in relation to Environment and Sustainable Communities, which were not covered in other reports to the meeting. It also provided information on some key developments, risks and opportunities that had emerged.</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Members felt it would be preferable to have a shared net zero target across the CPCA area as currently Cambridgeshire stood at 2045, East Cambridgeshire at 2035 and Huntingdonshire at 2040 (for internal council operations) despite it being the highest emitting district in the area (mainly due to transport emissions because of the major roads that dissected the county.) These differences led to a lot of confusion and Members felt that it was important to have targets in common as well as an understanding of the data and what could be done.</li> <li>b) Politics and the different priorities of the constituent councils had led to the variance in targets but the CPCA could play its part to encourage more alignment. As part of having a much better shared understanding of net zero a funding request to enhance climate data and monitoring had been submitted to Board and also the Climate summit being held in November would be an opportunity to bring people together to discuss issues and develop a consistent approach.</li> <li>c) Members felt that there had been very little information shared about the summit and wanted to know who had been invited and would be involved with the summit, and what was going to be covered. In addition, it would be useful to have a document ready for the summit which listed all the different targets. Officers would share more information about the summit under item 8 on the agenda: The Climate Partnership Update</li> <li>d) Officers confirmed that the funding request to the CA Board for data analysis on the accuracy of climate and monitoring data was £100,000</li> </ol> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee resolved to note the report.</li> </ol> <p><u>ACTIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Officers to create a document with all the targets for Net Zero across the region for the Climate summit.</li> <li>2. Officers to share with members information on the Climate Summit.</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>6.</b></p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> | <p><b>Affordable Housing Programme – Update on Implementation</b></p> <p>Azma Ahmad-Pearce, Housing Programme Manager introduced the report which updated the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on the progress of the Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) 2017-2022. This was an ongoing project which had ended but had a tail end. Completions were anticipated by the end of 2025.</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) There was a claw back clause in all of the CPCA’s projects which meant that if a property had been sold through shared ownership, over and above the threshold price, a mechanism kicked in which allowed the CPCA to get money back or reduce the amount of grant paid. This explained the differential in the CPCA funding and paid to date figures shown for the Wicken site in Appendix 1.</li> <li>b) Members had difficulty navigating the appendix because of the layout and would have preferred to have it ordered by date of completion with a line reference number included. Officers had been asked by previous Housing Committee members to strip the information down to a bare minimum but would work with current members to find a way forward and an acceptable format.</li> <li>c) MAN GPM were the company that put in the bid for the Alconbury Weald site but the contractors were Crest Nicolson and it was them and their subcontractors who there had been problems with.</li> </ol>   |

- d) CKH, the lead partner on the HUSK or Garage sites had contacted officers about party wall issues but once these had been dealt with the project would commence.

**RESOLVED**

1. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee resolved to note the report.

**ACTION:**

1. Officers to share with members an adapted layout for the AHP – Approved and Started on Site Schemes documents (shown as Appendix 1 and 2) before bringing them back to the November Committee.

**7. Housing Loans Update**

7.1 Nick Sweeney, Residential Development Manager introduced the report which sought to inform the Committee of the current position concerning receipt of loan repayments that were required to fund the 2021-2022 Affordable Housing Programme.

7.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- a) The most recent report from the monitoring surveyor, received the week previously, indicated that all the units at the Histon Road site would be completed by 30 September but that it would be very tight. The loan should be repaid by then or very soon after as there was also an option for the developer to repay the loan by alternative means with a second funder on the scene to pay back the CPCA. Officers were quite confident that this would not be required and that there would not be a default on the loan.
- b) The internal review on loans to developers would take place when the matter of the loan had been concluded. It was not yet decided who would undertake the review but they would be independent of the Housing team.
- c) There was a caveat in the introductory paragraph of the Monitoring Surveyor's report restricting the use of the document for the sole purposes of the borrowers, perhaps because of some commercially sensitive elements. Officers would check with the author and share the report, or parts of it, if able to do so.

**RESOLVED:**

1. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee resolved to note the current position in respect of outstanding loan repayments required to fund the 2021-2022 Affordable Housing Programme.

**ACTION:**

1. Officers to check if the independent monitoring surveyor's report could be shared with committee members.

**8 Climate Partnership Update**

8.1 Adrian Cannard, Strategic Planning Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on the Climate Partnership and associated actions. The Climate Partnership met on 19 June 2023 and the report set out the key issue arising from that meeting.

8.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- a) The date of the Climate Partnership Summit was 9 November 2023 and all members would shortly be receiving a holding invite for this event.
- b) The content for the Summit would be across three themes: (1) Pathway to Net Zero, (2) How to adapt to the future, and (3) How to make sure everyone received the right opportunities.

- c) Officers were planning to hold a number of panel events at the Summit which the Oxford Cambridge pan-regional partnership could be involved in.
- d) A bid had been made to the CA Board to fund the Summit through treasury management savings.
- e) The new corporate performance report would be coming to the Committee's next meeting in November and the monitoring of the progress on the Climate Action Plan 2022-2025 would be included within this.
- f) The CA had been meeting with the communication leads from the other constituent councils, through the Comms group, to discuss how best to promote the retrofit skills bootcamps that were being procured.
- g) Officers asked the Committee to note that the key funding for the Climate and Nature funding was a one-off block of monies ending either this financial year or the next one and suggested there was a case for extending these two blocks of funding; perhaps to be further discussed as part of the review of the budget and MTFP, asked for in the finance agenda item. The extension of these funding blocks would allow many of the innovative external groups such as Fenland Soil, to continue their work and also support the work of the Local Nature Partnership which was a charity currently supported by capacity funding.
- h) Natural Cambridgeshire had been working with the CA on the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and it was an ambition to double nature as the CA area was one of the county areas with the least proportion of wildlife rich areas. The Chair discussed inviting the Chair of Natural Cambridgeshire to the next meeting so the committee could hear directly from them what they could offer, how they wished to work with the CPCA and what their funding requirements going forward would be.
- i) Natural Cambridgeshire were running the Fund for Nature on behalf of the CPCA and having appraised the expressions of the interest received had identified three to put forward. Information on what the projects involved, and the amount of funding needed would be presented at the next natural Cambridgeshire meeting.
- j) The Combined Authority had been very clear about the importance of the Ely North improvements, but no formal response or date had been received from government. Officers would continue to lobby for this.
- k) Members asked officers for more detailed information to be included on the Climate Partnership Group page of the website for example more details about the Climate Summit, minutes of the Partnership meetings and contact details for those who wanted to engage with the work of the Partnership.
- l) The Authority had an EV Charging Strategy for the roll out of electric charging points. Although there was always new technology coming to the fore many of the charging points could be easily changed and upgraded. The main cost was getting the electricity connection correct.
- m) Additional government funding from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability Fund had been secured which would equip the Authority with the skills and ambition to scale up their plans when it came to their charging strategy. A paper on LEVI would be presented at the Transport and Infrastructure meeting on Wednesday.
- n) Because of the road network covering a large part of the CPCA area, transport emissions were a hugely significant factor in the attempt to reach NetZero and tackling this through a move to electric vehicles, and making it the best experience it possibly could be for residents, should be a priority.
- o) Active Travel referred principally to cycling and walking.

RESOLVED:

The Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee unanimously resolved to:

1. To note the updates from the June meeting of the Climate Partnership

ACTIONS

1. Officers to invite the Chair of Natural Cambridgeshire to the November meeting.
2. Officers to review the Climate Partnership Group page of the website and update it so that it was much more of a 'live' page with up-to-date information.

3. The LEVI report going to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Wednesday 13 September to be shared with the Committee.

## 9 Budget and Performance Report – Sept 23

9.1 Tim Greenwood, Finance Manager, introduced the report which provided an update of the financial position for 2023/24 and an analysis against the 2023/24 budget up to the period ending July 2023. It also provided the Committee with an opportunity to review the multi-year budgets within their remit and provide a steer to be considered as part of the development of the 2024-25 Medium Term Financial Plan. Rob Emery, Assistant Director Finance was also in attendance to address the Committee and answer their questions.

9.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- a) The Care Home Retrofit programme was a 50/50 match funding programme. There had been a number of expressions of interest received from care homes but in exploring whether there had been any barriers to applying, a number of homes had said they weren't intending to invest this year because of financial pressures and therefore a match-funded grant was of no interest. Officers were looking at exploring options, such as staged payments, which could ease the process and mitigate the need for upfront match funding.
- b) The Net Zero Villages programme was small scale funding to communities of up to £20k of investment in schemes such as Net Zero projects, EV chargers and planting schemes. The Programme had not yet been launched but as it was not matched funding it was likely that all the monies would be taken up. CA officers were talking with officers from constituent councils about their own similar schemes to see if they could complement one another.
- c) Members asked for an update on the Net Zero villages and the Care Home Retrofit Programme at their next meeting.
- d) There was an error in the table of appendix 1 of the report which showed the HUG2 capital programme ending in 2023/24. This was not the case as the funding agreement from Government ran until March 2025
- e) Officers were working on updating the baseline MTFP to reflect the current situation rather than that of six to twelve months ago when the budgets in the report were set. This could be due to the impact of inflation or new funding announcements from Government. A re-costed MTFP would be presented at the November meeting and would also include proposals for improvements, savings or opportunities based on any steer given by the Committee.
- f) The CPCA was enabling and facilitating environmental work with a number of partners that had crucial parts to play in tackling Climate Change and which relied, at present, on time limited funding. Officers would welcome the Committee's views on future funding levels and proposals for how the money should be allocated. The Chair also asked members to benchmark the funding against the Climate Commission's recommendations.
- g) It was highlighted that the core function of the Climate Partnership Group should be to advise the Committee on their climate budgets.
- h) The Life Belt City Portrait was a data visualisation project looking at the new low carbon economy in the context of Cambridge City.

### RESOLVED:

That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee:

1. Note the financial position of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Division for the financial year 23/24 to July 2023.
2. Review and comment on the current Environment and Sustainable Communities budgets within the Combined Authority's Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme.

### ACTIONS:

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|           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Officers to provide an update at the next meeting on the Net-Zero Villages and the Care Home Retrofit Programme.</li> <li>2. Committee members to email Steve Cox, Executive Director for Place and Connectivity, or Rob Emery, Assistant Director Finance with their proposals for the MTFP</li> <li>3. Officers to provide a link to the Life Belt Climate Portrait to members.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee Agenda Plan</b>  |
| 10.1      | <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee Agenda Plan be noted.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Exclusion of the Press and Public</b>  |
|           | <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee resolved to remain in public session</li> </ol>   |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Affordable Housing Programme – Heylo Swap from SN Developments to Vistry Units</b>   |
| 12.1      | Azma Ahmad-Pearce, Housing Programme Manager, introduced the report which updated the Committee on the Heylo swap from SN Developments to Vistry units, as part of the progress of the Affordable Housing Programme 2017-2022   |
| 12.2      | <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) It was disappointing for the residents of Haddenham but it was a commercial decision and the CPCA acted only in a bank rolling capacity with limited control over the situation.</li> <li>b) Members were happy to see that in terms of geography, most of the properties would still be in East Cambridgeshire.</li> </ol> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To agree to terminate the Heylo Grant funding agreement (GFA) to acquire units from SN Developments with CPCA (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority), dated 28 January 2022.</li> <li>2. To approve the site swap from New Road Haddeham (11 units) to the Vistry (12 units) and to approve the use of the allocated funding of £528,750 for these units.</li> </ol> |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b>   |
| 13.1      | The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 13 November 2023.  |

Meeting Ended: 11.32am