

Agenda Item 4b

Minutes of a meeting of the Operational Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Monday 19 June 2023 at 4:30pm

PRESENT

Cllr Julia Huffer (Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Charlotte Cane (Substitute for Cllr Mark Inskip)
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann
Cllr Kelli Pettitt
Cllr Alan Sharp (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr John Trapp (Substitute for Cllr Christine Colbert)
Cllr Lucius Vellacott
Cllr Mary Wade
Cllr Christine Whelan

OFFICERS

Isabel Edgar – Director, Operations
Lewis Bage – Communities & Partnerships Manager
Tracy Couper - Democratic Services Manager
Stephanie Jones – Communities & Partnerships Support Officer
Richard Kay – Strategic Planning Manager
Anne Wareham – Senior Accountant

IN ATTENDANCE

Angela Haylock – CEO Voluntary Community Action East Cambridgeshire (VCAEC)
Annalise Lister – Communications Manager
Melanie Wright – Communications Officer
Karen Wright – ICT Manager

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A public question was submitted by Jethro Gauld, Chair East Cambs Climate Action Network (CAN) regarding the District Council's Environment Plan 2023/24, and the question and response are detailed in Appendix 1 to these Minutes.

4. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Christine Colbert and Mark Inskip, with Cllrs Charlotte Cane and John Trapp acting as Substitute Members.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of Personal Interests were made by Councillors as follows:

Agenda Item 7: ECDC Environment Plan

Councillor Holtzmann as a member of East Cambridgeshire CAN

Councillor Cane as a member of the National Trust and Wildlife Trust

Councillor C Whelan as a member of the National Trust

6. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

7. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

8. **VCAEC – UPDATE**

The Committee received a presentation by Angela Haylock, Chief Executive of VCAEC giving an overview of activities in 2022/23 and the first two months of the current year, a copy of which has been circulated to Members of the Committee.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Overview for VCAEC 2022/23
- Overview of the first 2 months 2023
- Current issues and risks
- Future aspirations

Ms Haylock reported that she had recently become CEO from her position as Deputy, replacing Mark Goldsack. She had a background of 30 years in the voluntary sector and had recently delivered safeguarding training for this Council. Ms Haylock also highlighted the move of premises to Centre E in Ely.

She summarised the key activities of the VCAEC which included:

Community transport scheme
Helping Hands gardening scheme
Volunteer Centre membership services

Ms Haylock stated that following the move to Centre E, VCAEC were using their own website for advertising and recruiting volunteers, as the national 'Do-it' website was no longer meeting their needs. Moving forward, the priorities for the service was to recruit more volunteers for the car and gardening schemes; seek funding to meet rising operating costs and secure the viability of the service; and further development of the website.

Members commended the excellent community work of the VCAEC. In response to a question by a Member regarding the 'Ely-centric' nature of the service and possible extension to other towns in the District and larger villages such as Burwell, Ms Haylock reported that the volunteer car and gardening schemes had both regular users and volunteers in Soham and Littleport, Burwell and Haddenham. However, funding/cost constraints meant that the opening of another hub was not viable at present.

The Chairman thanked Angela Haylock for her presentation.

9. ECDC ENVIRONMENT PLAN JUNE 2023

The Committee considered a report, Y7 previously circulated, containing the fully refreshed 4th edition of the Environment Plan.

The Strategic Planning Manager, Richard Kay, introduced himself to the new Members of the Council and explained that part of his role included overseeing the production and implementation of the annual Environment Plan.

He referred to the various informal Member briefing sessions on the subject since May, and the Environment Plan Member Seminar held on 13 June.

In introducing the item, he explained that our fourth annual Environment Plan covered a variety of matters relating to climate change and the natural environment. The Plan examined what our greenhouse gas emissions were, whether that be across the district or arising directly from East Cambridgeshire District Council. It set out a pathway for how we, as an organisation, could cut our emissions to net zero by 2035/36, which Members will note was a full five years earlier than previously planned for. It set out a summary of our aspirations and actions to bolster the natural environment, some of which were directly on our own land, but much of it was working in partnership across the district and across the county.

It included a set of Top 20 actions on what we proposed to do and reported on how we had done.

Those Top 20 Actions covered four themes:

1. Reducing our own emissions, as an organisation
2. How we are going to support nature recovery in the district
3. How we are going to support our communities and residents to take action
4. What training, policies or accreditation are we seeking to achieve over the coming 12 months

The Strategic Planning Manager explained these individual themes in more detail and stated that, whilst there were four overarching themes, there was one strong theme running through it all this year: widespread engagement.

The Top 20 actions, when taken as a whole, were about generating interest, raising awareness and facilitating direct action for everyone. They were purposefully not just focused on specialist or professional or technical audiences.

Whilst it was important that we work with those specialist partners, such as the Wildlife Trust, or the Climate Commission, if we were to make a real difference here in East Cambridgeshire, all of our communities and residents had to be enthused to do their bit, learn what they could do, have fun in doing it, and then see real change close to home or right at home.

The report also sought endorsement, in principle, of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and agreement that, as and when any of the Council's policies were updated, we try to align that policy to the relevant Goals. In addition, the report set out an update on staffing resources from para 3.11 and, in particular, highlighted the action Management Team was taking to bolster our ecology expertise.

The Chairman and Members of the Committee commended this excellent report and the recommendations in the report were moved by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Vellacott.

Councillor Holtzmann then moved the following amendment, which had been circulated at the Committee, and was seconded by Councillor Cane:

add additional recommendation:

- (C) Instruct officers to draft a full plan that details how to achieve a reduction of at least 80% in carbon emissions for all the council's operations by 2030. This plan should define specific goals addressing Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, identify methods by which to reduce carbon emissions, define specific actions to implement the needed changes and lay out milestones and annual targets to achieve the targeted carbon emissions reductions by 2030.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes. In relation to the response to one of these questions, a Member commented that, since 70% of the £100K Budget related to salary costs, it seemed surprising that it was not possible to allocate it to individual Budget lines. In response to another follow-up question by a Member regarding refuse round configuration modelling, the Director Operations reported that no modelling based upon a different location of depot closer to the waste disposal site had been undertaken at present, pending further national government information on the requirements on authorities arising from the Environment Act. However, a desk study was likely to be undertaken in the future of alternative locations.

The Chairman then asked the Strategic Planning Manager to provide a technical assessment regarding the amendment. He commented that this would be theoretically possible but was likely to need significant additional resource to achieve.

The proposer of the amendment commended the goal to achieve an 80% reduction by 2030 and stated that the intention of the amendment was not to produce a complete detailed plan immediately, but to produce a clear step by

step approach for the individual targets, commencing with the easier areas to achieve.

The Chairman expressed her support for the principle of the amendment but highlighted that the focus of the current year's Plan was engagement and it was important not to dilute this. Therefore, she suggested that consideration could be given to making the amendment the focus of the Plan for 2024/25. The Chairman would be happy to meet with Members to discuss building this in for the future. The Vice-Chairman endorsed the Chairman's comments and approach.

The seconder of the amendment commented that she would rather have the approach in the amendment next year, rather than not at all, but 7 years to 2030 was not a long lead-in period, so work needed to commence on a plan. This did not need to be detailed from the commencement but could become more detailed over time.

The Chairman highlighted the fact that this was a small Council with a small Team for this programme, and the focus for the current year needed to be engagement to ensure that organisations, communities and individuals 'did their bit' within the District. The seconder of the amendment acknowledged the measures being undertaken by this Council to reduce its carbon emissions and wanted similar detail in the Plan relating to other areas. The proposer of the amendment concurred with the seconder and acknowledged that this would not be a 1 year process but wanted officers to commence work on drafting a plan which would develop over time.

In that connection, the Chairman queried if the proposer and seconder of the amendment would accept inclusion of the first sentence only at this stage. The proposer and seconder of the amendment agreed to this approach, as a result of which the proposer and seconder of the motion agreed to the inclusion of the first sentence of the amendment in their motion. Whereby,

It was resolved unanimously:

1. That the Council's fourth Environment Plan, dated June 2023 (as attached at Appendix A to the submitted report) be approved.
2. That the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and seeking alignment of the Council's policies and priorities, as and when these are update, with the overall ambition of the Goals be endorsed.
3. That officers be instructed to draft a full plan that details how to achieve a reduction of at least 80% in carbon emissions for all the Council's operations by 2030.

10. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered a report, Y8 previously circulated, regarding the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies and containing the annual reports of Outside Bodies within the remit of this Committee. Candidates had

been nominated to serve as the Council's representatives for the next four years, as a result of the list being supplied to the two Group Leaders following the District Council Elections.

The Democratic Services Manager referred to the revised Appendix 1 to the report circulated to Members of the Committee and highlighted that, for all but two of the Outside Bodies, there were more candidates than positions available. This meant that voting would need to take place for the contested positions.

The Democratic Services Manager then conducted the voting process for each of the contested places, resulting in the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies as detailed in Appendix 3 to these Minutes. In the case of the Community Safety Partnership, Councillors Whelan and Ambrose-Smith each gave an address in support of their nominations and Councillor Whelan also gave an address in support of her nomination for the Paradise Centre, Ely Management Committee.

It was resolved:

1. That approval be given to the representatives to the Outside Bodies within the responsibility of Operational Services Committee as detailed at Appendix 3 to these Minutes.
2. That the annual reports from Council representatives on Outside Bodies within the responsibility of the Operational Services Committee as detailed at Appendix 2 to the submitted report be noted.

11. YOUTH ACTION PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, Y9 previously circulated, containing an update report on progress against the East Cambridgeshire Youth Action Plan.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

A Member raised a follow-up question on whether the Council could underwrite the Summer Youth Events Programme so that the Programme could be advertised at an earlier stage to enable effective promotion within Parishes, bearing in mind that most Parish Magazines were published monthly at best. The Chairman suggested that this could be considered as part of the Budget-setting process in February each year and the Vice-Chairman concurred with the view that sufficient lead-in time was required to enable Schools to promote the events. The Communities & Partnerships Manager agreed to include the issue in the next update report.

Councillor Vellacott addressed the Committee on the plan in his capacity as the youngest Councillor on this Council and also nationally at present as follows:

'Colleagues, do you think East Cambridgeshire gives young people a purpose? I played for my local cricket team. I sang in a choir – I'll spare you the evidence

of that. I spent three years in the Royal Air Force Air Cadets and would like to have spent longer if not for the intense bureaucracy... I had two jobs and bought my little red car. I got involved in politics. These things took me from a difficult time, a time where I felt quite lost as we all do from time to time, into having a clear direction, and that has led me here in turn.

Well, I believe East Cambridgeshire is giving young people a purpose, and now we need to unlock that potential. This is one of the main things I came here to do – speak on behalf of a range of young people as UK's youngest District Cllr to achieve what works for them.

The YAP might seem procedural, at a glance, but I believe it is one of a local authority's most vital documents. I thank officers for preparing such an informative report. Its key areas, like safety, activities and careers, these are fundamentals for young people across the United Kingdom – which I believe to be a country of incredible opportunity.

The YAP is based mostly around the excellent ECDC Youth Webpages. I request that councillors across chamber take to social media to share the youth webpages this evening as a consolidated effort. The data-based information on these pages makes them essential for engaging with and informing young people in the district.

The impact of COVID was perhaps disproportionate for the youth and the elderly. I am pleased the Council has conducted research from 326 under-18s on this. At a time in our lives where we needed a purpose and to settle into a structured routine to prepare for the future, this was interrupted, and any actions of this Council concerning young people should bear that in mind at all times. The recovery – despite a large time gap – is still ongoing for all ages.

I believe that we are all individuals more than we are members of groupings in society, but young people are united in the need to maintain friendships. It is key to success and stability as we transition to adult life. Not all parents are willing taxi services – mine worked too hard to do that – so any transport policies by any local authority must consider how young people will use them safely and reliably. This, alongside environmental concerns, is being brilliantly addressed by officers as showcased in the report.

But discouraging road use will inevitably adversely impact young people and families, who I am surrounded by daily, excited to obtain their freedom, particularly in the city they love, and all political parties and authorities should bear these impacts in mind after the results of the GCP Making Connections Consultation going forward.

Moving on, I will be happy to work with the council on Youth Safety. Young people need not enforcement but direction if they are to make positive decisions.

The use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol and other substances by young people is an experiment many try, that is a fact. The Eyes and Ears training for schools is a

useful tool but the method of its delivery is of paramount importance. Materials advising young people on issues such as drugs, hate crime and anti-social behaviour should be directed at the right age groups in a way which does not patronise young people. It must consider a factual but balanced presentation of opposing views, explained from first principles.

This is a call I have heard from students of all political persuasions and none, and of all backgrounds and upbringings. They are sat in PSHE lessons being lectured about how the world is and how they must act, until they get fed up and ultimately stop listening... or if you're me, they go away and stand for election.

But the single most important thing, is that Young People need to feel valued by their communities. It is essential, and members would be shocked, stunned, by how little encouragement is needed to put young people on track for a great life. We need a purpose, even a temporary one. So let me commend the Council's work on spaces and activities for our young people.

It is our duty as councillors to deliver feedback and promote local spaces like skateparks, cadet squadrons, volunteer roles, sports clubs and more, and to make these as accessible as possible for everyone, financially and practically.

The initiatives for youth healthcare in the plan are on the right track. Young people experience a great deal of pressure in the modern world, much of it imposed on them, and particularly in recovery from COVID, so the council is right to identify and promote mental health services. I feel that consultation with GP surgeries will aid this into the future.

We on this committee should also consider how we can support young people into part-time work. This has enabled so many people I have met, myself included, to form their own freedom and learn the discipline and skills which will serve them well for life. 'Job Ready' training is being rolled out, and it would be a good idea to work alongside schools for these essential life skills. At the moment, this uses the excellent ECDC Youth Webpages but we must have a consolidated effort to get the word out there.

Young people really don't often think of asking their District Council for advice and support – we must change that as a Council, cross-party and alongside our officers, and this report shows we are doing just that.

I therefore ask all councillors – please write to your parish councils, please tell your colleagues and friends and young people in your patches. The District Council is listening to you. The District Council will help you find your purpose.'

Another Member referred to the need for consistent use of terminology in the Action Plan in respect of the Youth Webpages and for those pages to be more prominently and easily accessible on the Council's website. A Member also queried the appropriateness of the first question in the Youth Survey and the Communities & Partnerships Support Officer agreed to look at removing that question.

Members commended the action plan and a Member encouraged all Councillors to get involved with the Youth engagement events, as it was important for young people to see the Council as an organisation that wanted to hear from them and deliver activities for them.

It was resolved:

That the East Cambridgeshire Youth Action Plan progress update be noted.

12. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report, Y10 previously circulated, containing details of the 2022/23 outturn financial position for Services under the remit of this Committee.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

Following-up from these questions, a Member commented that a much more detailed breakdown of the overspend on Refuse Collection was required than 'cost of living crisis'. The member also stated that it was unsatisfactory that there was no data on the resources diverted from Street Cleansing to Refuse Collection. The Member considered that a better breakdown of the £500K additional expenditure provided to the service was required, to give more accurate monitoring of the pressures and their nature, e.g. ongoing or one-off. The Director Operations stated that this breakdown had been provided in the report to Council in February requesting the additional expenditure of up to £500K and predominantly related to fuel costs, fleet maintenance and Agency costs due to staff sickness/absence/vacancies. The Director Operations noted that if the Council used an external refuse contractor, they would not provide a full breakdown of costs. Additionally, extra costs also had been experienced by many other authorities both locally and nationally. However, there would be an opportunity to review resources and financial matters in the light of the new Environment Act implementation. The Member commented that if such information was provided to the Council, a summary should be included in the Budget Monitoring report, to assist Member understanding and monitoring. The Director Operations commented that it was not unusual for a contractor to request a variation in contract in the light of unforeseen changes in costs. The Chairman highlighted that the public report to full Council contained more detailed figures. Another Member supported the view that it would be useful for new Councillors to have more detailed figures to assist their understanding. The Senior Accountant agreed to take this matter away for further consideration.

In response to a further question by a Member, it was confirmed that payment to GLL relating to The Hive Leisure Centre, Ely, had reverted to a management fee.

It was resolved:

1. That the 2022/23 revenue overspend on Operational Services Committee of £742,047 when compared to its approved budget of £5,818,175 be noted.
2. That the capital programme outturn of £995,721, an underspend of £2,710,130 when compared to its revised Capital budget, be noted.

13. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan.

It was resolved:

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC

It was resolved unanimously:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, & 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

15. ECSS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – TWELVE MONTHS TO MARCH 2023

The Committee received a report containing a summary of the management accounts for the 2022/23 financial year.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were circulated to Members of the Committee.

Further follow-up questions were asked by Members and responded to by officers.

It was resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

16. ECSS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Committee received the Minutes of the ECSS Board Meeting held on 2 March 2023.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were circulated to Members of the Committee.

Further follow-up questions were asked by Members and responded to by officers.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6:45pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:

**OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2023
PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**Jethro Gauld, Chair
Eastcamb CAN**

"The East Cambs Climate Action Network broadly supports the District Council's Environment Plan for 2023-24. We welcome the more ambitious target of Net Zero by 2035 and praise the efforts of council officers to identify opportunities for action and implement them such as the recent installation of EV chargers and the council's solar scheme. In response to the draft environment plan we have some questions:

1. On climate, the environment plan focuses mostly on scope 1 and scope 2 emissions and on the council's own activities. How can the council help East Cambridgeshire as a whole transition away from fossil fuels to a zero carbon economy? Bearing in mind the big three sources of emissions are transport, buildings and land use <https://eastcambscan.org/climate-crisis/>

Response: It is agreed that the Environment Plan is focussed on what emissions the Council is directly responsible for, and how it wants to reduce them and by when. More generally the Plan is about how the Council is trying to support the wider community, whether it be reducing their emissions or boosting the natural environment.

We recognise that our direct emissions (at just over 1,200 tonnes CO2) are a tiny fraction of the district as a whole (at just over 1,200,000 tonnes CO2). But, as a local authority, we have a clear responsibility to try to influence climate reductions across the geographical area.

We have made a start on that, but recognise there is much, much more to do.

For example, on the three big emitting themes you identify:

- ***On Transport – we've progressed a number of cycling, walking and bus related strategies, and have committed considerable funds to improving cycling routes across the district.***
- ***On Buildings – we've allocated around £2m this year to help retrofit poorly performing (non-gas) homes.***
- ***On Land Use – we're putting in place measures to maximise the potential of Biodiversity Net Gain through the planning system, which should see some land converted from being heavy emitting land to carbon neutral or even carbon capture land.***

But this year we want to do more with our community, and find out more about what they think we should, as a district, target and by when. That's why, subject to Committee approval this evening, we've included Action 18 in the Environment Plan, which is to develop with the community a collectively generated set of targets for East Cambridgeshire as a whole.

We really hope EastCambsCAN will embrace this opportunity to help establish a truly district-wide vision and set of targets, ones which the whole community can get behind and support, and ones which this Council will try its very best to help with delivering.

2. How is progress towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions being measured and will the council be publishing a summary document detailing the pathway to net zero?

Response: For the Council's emissions, the Environment Plan sets out in detail where our emissions arise, what the trends are for those emissions, what targets towards net-zero we have set, and how we think we can get there. We don't intend to publish anything even more detailed on that, but we are committed to an annual such update, as we have done for four years now.

District wide, once we have established a set of district wide targets, the Council would like to work with EastCambsCAN and others to set out a pathway to achieve that. Of course, actual delivery will depend on collective support across the district, from home owners and businesses, as well as from the like of this Council and EastCambsCAN.

3. It is good to see the council recognising the importance of Biodiversity and the incoming regulatory changes under Biodiversity Net Gain. Will sufficient resources be allocated to allow the council to provide appropriate ecological advice and, in a development context, enforcement?

The Committee Report on the agenda this evening, which introduces the Environment Plan, recognises the need for greater ecological advice, and sets out a commitment to boost that resource.

4. Our group feel that the issues raised by the Environment Plan, and the plan itself, should be publicised among residents in a way in which they feel empowered to feed into the process. The Monthly Earth Cafes we run with provide one possible forum for this, would council officers and councillors be willing to attend the August 17th Earth Café as speakers to discuss the Environment plan with local residents? This would also be an opportunity for councillors and council officers to draw on local expertise for example just within our group- there is a Director of Policy, for a national woodland conservation organisation, a former UN head of research for dealing with the behaviour in wildlife crime. We also have numerous local environmental organisations each with their own expertise so it is encouraging to see some of them mentioned in the report."

Yes, it is agreed that achieving rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and reversing the decline in nature, needs widespread community understanding of the issues, and their support and collective action. The proposed new set of Top 20 actions in the Environment Plan for the coming year have purposefully been skewed in that direction.

Officers would be very happy to attend the August 17th Earth Café, and perhaps utilise that event as a kick-off for the aforementioned district wide target setting. The Council recognises it is far from an expert on all these complex matters, and is very happy to engage, support and learn from as wide an audience as possible, and we've been very happy to support the strengthening of EastCambsCAN as an organisation over the past couple of years.

**OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
19 JUNE 2023
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE**

Questions received from Cllr Christine Whelan

Item 7 – ECDC Environment Plan 2023

<p>Top actions 3.8: Great to see that there are new orchards planted across the district. What was the planned maintenance of these trees after the problem of the maze not being properly maintained. Have there been any problems with the maintenance of these orchards?</p>	<p>The Community Orchard Programme was based on the principle that East Cambridgeshire District Council would provide the trees, stakes and other essential materials, but that the receiving community group would be responsible for the planting and maintenance. In applying for and receiving the trees, the community group had to agree to the following specific terms (as well as more general generic terms and conditions):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formal permission to plant from the landowner. If the council is the land owner please contact climatechange@eastcambs.gov.uk and we can check permissions for you.</i> • <i>Enough space to accommodate your chosen amount of trees - each tree should be between 4-5 meters apart</i> • <i>A commitment to watering the trees regularly for the first two years of life and more during the dry summer months</i> • <i>A sunny spot - fruit trees need 6-8 hours of sunlight per day on average, so avoid heavily shaded areas</i> • <i>Soil that is not vulnerable to flooding and has good drainage</i> • <i>To be able to provide an opportunity to get the public/community involved in the creation or restoration of the orchard</i> • <i>A community commitment to maintaining and nurturing your orchard for generations to come</i> • <i>Be ready to plant around the end of January/beginning of February once the trees are delivered</i> • <i>All planted trees will be included in the Queen's Jubilee Canopy project.</i> <p>In assessing applications, the Natural Environment and Climate Change Senior Officer of the Council did a proportionate assessment as to whether it was likely from the application details received that the above conditions would be complied with. For some applications, this</p>
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	<p>required further information being requested from the applicant.</p> <p>It is accepted that, in practice, it is taken on trust that the community groups that received the trees do comply with the above terms. Anecdotally, we have received no complaints about poor maintenance of the trees. Through occasional random visits where staff members may be in the vicinity of the trees for other purposes, there is no apparent widespread failure of trees. For example, of the 10 fruit trees planted in the grounds of Ely College in winter 2021/22, nine were in bloom in Spring 2023 with just one tree appearing to be struggling.</p>
<p>3.10 top 20 actions: Water stations – where is the plan for these to be installed, how many are being planned? What is the design like and how intrusive will they be? Has the carbon cost to these stations been considered and how will these be supplied? How will these stations be maintained?</p>	<p>No specific locations or designs of the water stations have yet been agreed. The location of such stations is likely to be in areas of recognised high footfall, but also within easy access to an existing water supply. For example, it is likely stations will be close to, but outside of, an existing public toilet, where water supply can be accessed easily, cheaply and with low carbon cost (because of limited pipework or ground works being needed). The precise designs will depend on the location to be installed and will need to be both aesthetically unobtrusive but also robust to withstand any anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>It is recognised that the manufacturing and installation of a water filling station will have a carbon implication, and this will need to be considered, if at all possible, when considering the procurement of such installations. However, it is worth noting that, following multiple international research, bottled water has a carbon footprint of at least 300 times that of tap water, and often up to 1,000 times that of tap water. In CO2 terms, that can be up to 1kg of emissions per bottle, whereas tap water is as little as 1 or 2 grams for the same volume. Bottled water also creates waste, which, even if recycled, results in further environmental impact.</p> <p>Whilst, like most items, it is very hard to find out what the carbon footprint of the water filling station to be purchased is, it is reasonable to assume that the ‘payback’ of that footprint would be relatively quick, considering each time it is used it could be saving up to 1kg of CO2. For example, numerous studies have indicated a typical kitchen appliance (fridge, washing machine, dishwasher) have a manufacturing carbon footprint of c300-400kg CO2. If a water dispenser is similar (and there’s no reason to think otherwise), then within a few hundred refills, the carbon impact of the machine would likely have been ‘paid back’, meaning all future refills would be saving up to 1kg CO2 per filling.</p>

3.20 Green team update:

The saving in electricity use by changing these machines sounds good, but replacing working equipment utilises resources unnecessarily. What is the carbon cost of the new machines including the early scrapping of the existing machines? What is the payback period for the change in machines? How much use is made of these machines and. If the new machine has already been installed, what is the change in usage?

It is fully agreed that replacing working machines for what may be considered a more environmentally friendly machine, may have considerable unintended environmental impacts. This is a consequence of the carbon emissions arising from the manufacturing and distribution of the new machine (i.e. the 'embodied carbon' of the new machine).

As a general rule, it is almost always better to use a machine until its 'end of life', and then choose an environmentally friendly new machine, rather than scrapping a machine early before its end of useful life.

However, in the case of the vending machine, this was clearly evident not to be the case.

Following simple monitoring of energy use, it was found that, over a three month period, the vending machine was responsible for c500kg of CO2 via electricity consumption (which allows for the fact that some electricity is renewably produced in the national grid). Over just one year, this would equate to 2 tonnes CO2.

In choosing a new machine, the manufactures label indicated typical c680kwh/annum electricity consumption, which compared with c6,000kWh/annum that the old machine was monitored to be using.

In the 1.5 months of using the new vending machine, actual monitoring of electricity consumption identifies electricity use is down almost 90% per day, and therefore has an annual carbon footprint of just c200kg (compared with 2,000kg of the old machine).

Like the water refill stations question, the 'embodied carbon' of the new machine is unknown, but, if compared with domestic appliances of 300-400kg CO2 embodied carbon, and we assume the vending machine is double in size of one of those (in practice, it is probably less than that), then the 'payback' of the new machine, in carbon terms, would be well under 6 months.

However, the old vending machine was not actually scrapped in any event, but returned to the supplier, either for refurbishment or recycling. This may, therefore, mean the payback is even sooner.

Overall, on a worst case basis, we think the carbon payback would be under 6 months, and quite probably much quicker than that. And, the new machine saves around £1,800 in electricity bills, per year. Consequently,

	<p>in this case, it was appropriate, from a carbon perspective (as well as financial), to replace the machine.</p> <p>In terms of staff usage, there is a regular turnover of products, and a range of customers from frequent to infrequent users. However, we do not have precise user details.</p>
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Questions received from Cllr Charlotte Cane

Item 7 – ECDC Environment Plan 2023

<p>Draft Plan: What are our annual target reductions to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2025/26 and 80% by 2030/31?</p>	<p>We do not have annual target reductions, because there are many seasonal and annual variables that would mean to do so would be misleading when it comes to reporting performance. What is important is to set reasonable milestones towards net zero (we've gone for every five years), and monitor trends towards each. We do, however, report actual annual emissions, so we can see which elements are performing better than others. It is not common practice for any business or organisation to set itself annual emission target reductions.</p>
<p>Why so much focus on tree planting rather than grassland and meadows? We mention wetland creation and grassland meadows but there are no targets or commitments to increase these.</p>	<p>We have run a successful tree orchard programme and are planning a similar oak tree based initiative. These are actions that the local community can relatively easily undertake, and cost relatively small sums. A local community would find it much harder (and costlier) to create wetlands and grasslands.</p> <p>However, wetlands and grasslands are vital habitats to enhance and expand, which is why the Nature Recovery Network strategy adopted by Council in Nov 2022 (and referred to in the Environment Plan) sets out nine priority areas for nature recovery and habitat restoration, of which just one is primarily woodland focussed (south of Newmarket) and the other eight are wetland/river corridor/grassland based. The overall focus of the Council's nature recovery plans are, therefore, wetland creation and grasslands, not tree planting, and achieving that will primarily be working with large landowners and through the planning system, rather than directly on our own (very limited) land.</p>
<p>Commitments for 2023/24: 3 – what IT improvements, training etc are being put in place to reduce paper?</p>	<p>Using the staff intranet, monitoring data and tips have started to be added and advertised to staff, and will be expanded over time. (Link here, but this only works when logged into the internal staff intranet system, and not accessible to the general public - https://intranet.eastcambs.gov.uk/council/ecdc-green-team/paper-campaign).</p> <p>The Green Team has paper reduction as one of its key activities, and will be developing tips and ideas throughout the year.</p>

	<p>Staff and Members are encouraged to raise ideas for how they could use less paper, especially in services where consumption of paper is high, such as planning and democratic services.</p>
<p>4 – how do you capture member travel emissions? Not all of our travel is claimable and not all of us claim when it is claimable.</p>	<p>Member travel emissions are captured via Member expenses claims. In the not yet published staff and member Travel Plan, it is noted that many Councillors do not make any expenses claims at all, and hence no emissions recorded, though of course all Members will likely to undertake at least some vehicle trips for Council purposes.</p> <p>In order for Member emissions to be recorded as accurately as possible, Members are encouraged to claim their due expenses.</p> <p>Alternatively, if Members do not want to claim any expenses, but do want their emissions recording (whilst undertaking council business), then an alternative option would be to compile total miles taken and the type of vehicle used, and send that total figure to the Strategic Planning Manager each April, whom can add it to the emissions calculated via the expenses claims.</p>
<p>7 – there is a lot of concern about such single species initiatives – are our shortlisted species chosen to <i>achieve benefits for multiple species under the overarching aim of protecting one flagship species?</i> Are they all animals or do they include plant species?</p>	<p>The purpose of this project is to engage the vast majority of people who would not necessarily be engaged by, say, the protection of, and rarely seen, rare species. And, in any event, those rare species are, more often than not, the subject of far more resources than we could ever deploy, and by far greater experts in the field of nature conservation than the Council is.</p> <p>If we can find a cheap, accessible, engaging way to reach families with a nature based project, then the project will be a success, and hopefully trigger those families into a wider curiosity of nature, and activities to support nature.</p> <p>This project, and the bird/bat box one, is trying to utilise the space a council can be good at (supporting and engaging with our communities, and all households in those communities) and which other organisations may struggle to, or aim not to, reach, whilst leaving the more professional, expensive and technical nature recovery to those organisations that are better skilled in that field than we are.</p> <p>The chosen species will all be animals, will be native to East Cambridgeshire, will be recognisable to the public, and be ones which the public can reasonably play a part in helping or potentially seeing in the wild.</p> <p>When the chosen species is known, by public vote, the actual programme of works, promotions, education and other events will have a focus not only on that animal itself, but the habitat</p>

	<p>that supports it. In that way, much wider benefits can be derived, but still having the flagship resident-friendly animal as the promotional tool. For example, if toads win, then we can promote suitable ponds / wetlands for breeding in. If barn owls win, we can support field margin management to support hunting grounds. If bees win, we can promote native nectar rich flowering plants. And so on. The benefits will be much wider than the species, but we gain the 'loveable' species that the general public can get behind and support.</p> <p>The project should not be seen as a just a pure single species recovery project. It's an engagement project, with the potential for wide ranging benefits.</p> <p>If the Council went for the alternative (e.g. Bittern recovery), it would be costly to do anything and the vast majority of the population couldn't do anything to support it, and only a very tiny minority would ever see one. It would have virtually no engagement or educational potential, and only likely appeal to those that are already heavily engaged in nature.</p> <p>If the council went for a 'habitat creation' based project, it's unlikely to gain the wider community appeal, because there isn't the flagship species to get behind.</p>
<p>8 – why 75 of the same type of slow growing very large trees? How many of our schools and Parish Councils have sufficient land to plant a tree 30m away from buildings? How many sites does East Cambs own where they could plant a tree 30m from buildings?</p>	<p>The Environment Plan sets out why oaks have been chosen. If the Council wants to promote fast growing trees in order to capture carbon the quickest, then an alternative could be chosen. But no British tree supports greater wildlife, is more resilient to climate change, or is more 'British' in our culture than an oak tree. Hence, it's preference for this particular year.</p> <p>That said, we recognise the benefits and majestic nature of an oak actually results in limitations of where it can be planted. If communities are unable to accommodate all 75, the first fall back will be to utilise the remainder of the trees on our own land, perhaps as a 'Coronation Avenue' or similar. Failing that, we would open up any remaining trees to private land owners, perhaps encouraging the creation of an avenue of oak trees on a field age, that is visible to the public.</p>
<p>14 – the ECSS management accounts show a reduction in recycling rates over recent years – what does ECSS plan to do differently to increase recycling?</p>	<p>Our recycling rate has seen a drop of 2% since 2019/20 (59% vs 57% in 2021/22), although for the past 2 years it has stagnated at 57% rather than reduced. This is a trend seen nationally, with England's recycling rate dropping by 1.7% to 44%. ECDC outperforms this and achieved a top 25 position for our recycling rate compared with all other authorities in England which was committed to through ECSS' Service Delivery and Business Plans last year. We continue to be committed to achieve a 60% recycling rate. At the same time, we also recognise the importance of the waste hierarchy, acknowledging that reducing waste has a bigger impact on</p>

	<p>the environment than recycling more. The waste service's KPIs now include a target for reduction of waste. Encouragingly, in the last 4 years we have seen a drop of 10kgs per household in the amount of residual waste produced and we plan to further reduce this.</p> <p>ECSS' Street Smart project has identified these areas through it's Safe and Green workstream. However, the Council is still waiting on DEFRA to provide information on the implications of the Environment Act, this will provide a mechanism for reducing waste and capturing more for recycling.</p> <p>We are currently working with RECAP partners on Metal Matters – giving residents information on why it is important to put metal in their recycling bin not their black bag. We have further campaigns which are outlined in the RECAP communications plan.</p>
<p>P54 – how much of the £100,000 allocated goes on staff costs, and how has this changed as a proportion since 2020?</p>	<p>Approximately 70% of the £100,000 budget for 23/24 is forecast to spent on salary costs. This has increased from c30% in 2020/21, as a consequence of employing a full time Climate Change and Natural Environment Officer. However, the reason for appointing to such a post was not only so that we could do more projects directly (rather than commission) but to enable some time to bid for funding. For example, last year, we successfully bid for £180,000 'pride of place' funds, to be spent over the next two years. In addition, the Council has for last year and this, set aside additional capital funds for solar panel deployment.</p>

Item 9 – Youth Action Plan Progress Update

<p>This summer's youth engagement events are still not finalised, making it harder to advertise them through village magazines and schools. What do we need to change to allow youth engagement events to be planned in good time to advertise them widely?</p>	<p>The multi-agency youth events are in addition to the work set out in the Youth Action Plan, Item 9.</p> <p>The events are externally funded and therefore could not be finalised until external funding had been secured. External funding has now been secured and arrangements are now being finalised.</p> <p>A communications plan is being developed to promote the events.</p> <p>One of the external funding bids required that funds had to be spent within three months of receipt therefore the funding application could not have been submitted any earlier.</p>
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Item 10 – Budget Monitoring Report

<p>P3 Refuse Collection: Why does the explanation say ‘so called “cost of living crisis” ‘? Is the report suggesting that there is no cost of living crisis? And why explain it all as cost of living when the extra fee was made up of many cost pressures, from overtime and agency due to vacancies and sickness, increased vehicle maintenance, restructuring staff terms and conditions. Only a part of it was due to the cost of living crisis.</p>	<p>‘Cost of Living crisis’ was a phrase used to describe the general financial and economic environment.</p>
<p>Appendix 1: Why do we show recycling spend on budget, when ECSS shows a lower cost due to lower volumes?</p>	<p>ECDC pays ECSS the contract value / management fee agreed in advance of the year, with in addition this year, the additional payment agreed by Council on 21st February 2023. Any differences in ECSS resources is a matter for ECSS management accounts and not ECDC.</p>
<p>Street Cleansing is shown as on budget when we are told resource was taken from street cleansing to deliver refuse collection. I understand that we don’t capture re-deployed resources and plan to in future. But surely ECSS management must have a reasonable idea of what resources were redeployed – even if it’s only say 80% accurate it would give a better figure than shown here. Please can we see ECSS’s estimate for the costs redeployed from street cleansing to refuse collection, or some kind of summary of their management records about the redeployment?</p>	<p>ECSS does not collect this data.</p>
<p>Please can we have the best available split of the spend between recycling, refuse collection and street cleansing. It would appear that recycling and street cleansing should show an underspend making the overspend on refuse</p>	<p>As outlined in the ECSS business case a review of resources is being carried out that assesses resources against services and will be reported the ECSS Board.</p>

collection even higher than reported here.	
We are told the Climate Change spend was brought back to budget by a transfer from reserves. Putting reserve transfers through to smooth budgets in the reporting, without at least showing those reserve movements makes these reports very difficult to understand and use. Are there any other lines where there have been reserve movements, if so please can we have details of those?	No
Why did we underspend a Climate Change grant and have to return £28k?	Two of the projects that were submitted for the grant funding, although approved by Salix, when it came to implementation, were not technically achievable. There were no other projects that meet with Salix conditions, of cost to carbon saving ratio.
Why did we allocate the full £100k Climate Change budget to the Thermal Camera imaging line, when the camera only cost £2k?	The full £100K was put against "Other expenses" as there wasn't a detailed plan on where the expenditure would be used at the start of the year.
Was the £393 for apple trees the cost of trees for the orchards? If so, have we really only planted apple orchards? And if that is the case, were they different varieties of apples? How many are still growing?	For the 28 new community orchards, the orchards were mixed fruits (not just apples). Of the apple trees, they were a mix of traditional Cambridgeshire species (rather than mass produced modern varieties). Please see other Member question for a detailed response on maintenance of trees planted
Appendix 2: Why has the 2 nd round of the Conservation Area Schemes slipped by a further year and what is being done to make this happen?	This balance is required to provide partnership funding towards a larger Heritage Lottery Scheme currently being worked on by Ely Cathedral for enhancements to the entire cathedral precinct.
What is the impact on disabled people of the slow delivery of disabled facilities? How are we helping to mitigate the impact? What are we doing to bring this back to planned levels of delivery?	We have not undertaken a review directly with our clients. However, it is accepted that slow delivery increases the risk of injury to an individual and this can have implications for hospital admission. It can impact on the persons' mental health and cause social isolation depending on the type of adaptation required. It can also raise the expectation of what can be delivered under the grant and the expectation of how the adaptation is going to change their life.

	<p>To mitigate delays to delivery, we have already undergone a process improvement review, and put in place the findings. Currently contractors did for work against a set or criteria, however this is being replaced with a procurement framework, to speed up evaluation and vetting of contractors, and secure the contractor to complete our requirements. It will also provide us with a comprehensive set of KPI's to monitor performance. We anticipate this to be in place by September 2023. The contractor market remains very competitive and securing contractors is challenging.</p> <p>We used to have direct access the DWP system that holds all the info for Housing benefit and council tax claims to be able to see clients that are on passporting benefits proof of award.</p> <p>DWP have now taken this facility away from us. So this will have an impact on costs and time to the service. We now have to apply to ARP for a request of information. There are still bedding in issues with the new service and this is also building in delays. Therefore, it is quicker for us to visit the client and scan their paperwork in their homes but this has cost implications to the service and take officer time away from other tasks. We have two members of staff that are trained as Trusted Assessors which are taking OT referrals direct from the helpline. This means that people are not sitting waiting on the OT waiting list for an assessment by the OT. We are taking simple bathrooms and stairlift cases.</p>
<p>Why is our capital income £2.7m less than the revised budget?</p>	<p>This is funding, not income. You only fund what you spend.</p>

Questions received from Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann

Item 7 – ECDC Environment Plan 2023

<p>The environmental plan lays out the significant impacts that land use, land use change and forestry have on carbon emissions in the district. The proposed actions makes some inroad in developing policy around biodiversity with regards to upcoming legal duties and requirements, but those concern council owned land and the planning system. How does the council plan to use its capabilities to help</p>	<p>Land use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) is the source of the greatest amount of emissions across East Cambridgeshire, so it is right that attention is put to that source. Of course, such emissions are not directly the responsibility of the Council (because we do not have a farm estate, unlike the County Council), but, as the question suggests, we can try to influence it. The main direct action of the Council, to help reduce LULUCF emissions, is through encouraging, implementing and enforcing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the planning system. This has the potential to reduce LULUCF emissions through the conversion of farmland to nature rich land (grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, etc) all of which, if applied properly, can result in such parcels of</p>
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<p>reduce wider LULUCF emissions?</p>	<p>land changing from net emitters of carbon, to net carbon capture. The farmers then sell the BNG credits to property developers. Officers are directly talking to farmers about the potential of BNG.</p> <p>More indirectly, the Council participates in (or is learning from) a variety of activities working with farmers to reduce emissions from land, whether that be different crop production, different watering arrangements; overwintering arrangements, etc. Overall, LULUCF emissions are a very 'live' issue for both researchers and the farming industry, albeit a somewhat extremely difficult challenge when trying to balance out the competing demands of food production and the need to reduce carbon emissions / increase carbon capture.</p>
<p>The environmental plan lays out the significant impacts that transport has on carbon emissions in the district. The Environmental Plan has one action point on EV infrastructure, but it contains no concrete commitments or targets. What concrete actions is the council going to take to increase public transport provision and improve cycling infrastructure?</p>	<p>The Council continues to work with the CPCA as they progress their Bus Service Improvement Plan, Bus Network Review and Bus Reform work and to lobby for increases and improvements to bus and rail provision. The Council recently commissioned Sustrans to produce a further 5 cycling route feasibility studies and to further develop studies produced last year.</p>
<p>P25</p> <p>When is the council planning to bring procurement beyond paper into its scoped assessment?</p>	<p>The vast majority of products the Council purchases each year will have a carbon emissions implication arising from them (from their manufacturing and distribution). Unless these products are fuel or electricity, they are likely to be what are known as 'Scope 3' emissions (in simple terms, emissions arising from the manufacturing and distribution). We presently do not count such emissions in our overall carbon emissions (carbon footprint) reporting. The primary reason for this is that the information as to the scale of those emissions for each item purchased is not readily available, although the market-place is slowly changing and some companies do report on the emissions arising from the manufacturing of the products they sell.</p> <p>For ECDC to increase the amount of reporting on scope 3 emissions, it will require it to update its procurement policy so that officers purchasing items are required to seek, if possible, suppliers that provide such information and then, in deciding which supplier/product to purchase, weigh up the carbon emissions arising alongside the wider cost-benefits of the product. It would also then require the purchasing officer to collate the total</p>

	<p>emissions arising from the purchase, and report that to the Strategic Planning Team for inclusion in the carbon footprint calculations of the council. At present, the Council's procurement policy and best practice advice does not refer to any of these measures, and consequently 'scope 3' emissions arising are predominantly not calculated or reported.</p> <p>To answer the question directly, there is no currently scheduled date to update the procurement policy or associated advice notes.</p>
<p>P32</p> <p>The report states: "We think it is possible to reduce our emissions from electricity sources by up to c75 tonnes CO2e per annum." How much solar capacity does the council need to install to meet that target?</p>	<p>Our total electricity emissions were 95 tonnes CO2e in 2021/22. We think it is possible to reduce that down to somewhere around 20 tonnes within 4 years, through a combination of (i) our own solar panel deployment; (ii) reducing electricity use (e.g. removing inefficient appliances) and (iii) the further decarbonisation of the national grid.</p> <p>For example, the £50,000 deployment of solar panels on E Space North earlier this year, is aimed at reducing emission from that building of between 5-10 tonnes. The changing of the staff vending machine should save 2 tonnes. Decarbonising of the grid might save up to 20 tonnes (that's speculative, and could be higher or lower). We have £100,000 for more solar panels this year, which could save 10-15 tonnes. These examples alone should get us half way to the target. Reaching the full target will be challenging, but plausible.</p> <p>Ironically, it might be the case that we purposefully do not meet the electricity reduction target, because we choose to increase electricity use over direct fossil fuel use. For example, (to illustrate the point only) if we switched from gas heating to air source heat pumps, our electricity use ('scope 2') would actually go up, but our fuel use ('scope 1') would go down. Overall, this would have a higher carbon saving, it would just be reported in different lines. We therefore need to have a degree of flexibility in where we seek to cut emissions.</p>
<p>The report states: "Wider efficiency savings, helped by widespread staff and councillor awareness raising and carbon literacy training. This could save up to c50 tonnes CO2e each year." How has this number been estimated?</p>	<p>This part of the 2025/26 overall target is somewhat a speculative target, and purposefully reported as 'up to'. It should also be read in the context of the paragraph as a whole, which seeks a c520 tonnes CO2 reduction overall, but lists four areas of savings, three of which are 'up to' targets. If the entire 'up to' targets were hit, the full saving would be 575 tonnes CO2, hence some slippage is allowed for.</p>

	<p>Nevertheless, 50 tonnes is less than 5% of the council's entire emissions. It is not inconceivable that a well-educated staff base, combined with a corporate-wide desire to root out emission savings where possible, should not lead to an up to 5% reduction in overall emissions, whether that be the way vehicles are driven by staff, the way utilities are used, and the way heating/lighting/air condition is efficiently used by staff. In simple terms, it will require behavioural change by a staff base willing to do so, and educated to understand how to do so.</p>
<p>The report states: "Ending all use of heating oil (c20 tonnes CO2e saving) and gas use (c50 tonnes CO2e saving)." To achieve this by 2030 significant retrofits will have to be made to council buildings. What plans are in place to ensure those retrofits will have been delivered by 2030?</p>	<p>There are no specific plans in place for these measures at this stage. However, by establishing the targets now, seven years in advance, ensures that when such appliances reach end of life in the next seven years, they are not simply replaced like-for-like with gas/oil based machines.</p> <p>There will be a cost to implementing this target, albeit we are hopeful some/all could be grant funded. It is worth noting that, by 2025, there will be widespread banning of new gas installations in new buildings, so there will be a significant national ramping up of skills and associated deployment of non-fossil fuel based appliances across the country in the period 2025-30. By 2030, installing electric based heating systems will become the norm, with gas/oil based replacements becoming less and less common. 2030/31 seems a reasonable estimates as to by when the Council will have made the switch.</p>
<p>The report states: "Further widespread efficiency savings, targeting another c150 tonnes CO2e savings each." What actions are included in this and how will they be achieved?</p>	<p>The source of such savings is likely to be arising from our fleet vehicles. Our fleet vehicles are currently responsible for around 900 tonnes of CO2, whereas the target reductions are 400 tonnes by 2025/26 and a further 250 tonnes by 2030/31, for a total saving of 650 tonnes, meaning our fleet vehicles will still be responsible for 250 tonnes CO2. It is entirely plausible that we could do much better than that, if there are 'widespread efficiency savings' associated with the use of our fleet vehicles, which would go towards meeting the 150 tonnes target referred in the question.</p> <p>It is also worth noting the final bullet point in the 2030/31 target, which acknowledges that, if the 2030/31 target is not met through the measures highlighted in bullets 1-4, then the Council has the option of commencing carbon offsetting. This is, however, a 'last resort' option, and should be avoided if at all possible.</p>

<p>The report states: “Further targeting our fleet vehicles [...] so most, if not all, are powered by low carbon means, with some being electric charged vehicles. This should see a further c250 tonnes CO2 reduction.” How many vehicles would have to be replaced with electric vehicles to make that reduction?</p>	<p>This is tricky to answer, and depends on the efficiency of electric vehicles by 2030/31, and the degree of decarbonisation in the national grid. If the national grid is still heavily dependent on coal/gas by 2030/31, then electric vehicles will continue to have a relatively high carbon footprint (albeit not as high as diesel). But if the national grid is close to being decarbonized (or, at the very least, vehicles are charged during periods when the grid is decarbonized), then electric vehicles could have a very low emissions level, and moving to them would make a significant carbon saving. It may also depend on whether or not we deploy large scale solar panels ourselves, to charge the vehicles directly.</p> <p>As it stands today, moving to HVO fuel rather than electric is likely to result in the greatest emission savings (because the national grid still relies heavily on gas, and quite often on coal), but that balance will shift over time, and possibly quite quickly, and especially so once the grid becomes ‘smarter’.</p> <p>To answer the question directly, it is unknown how many vehicles, and it would be inappropriate to estimate at this stage due to the variables given above. However, the early candidates for our fleet vehicles becoming electric are likely to be our small vans which, ideally, are then ‘smart’ charged when the grid is decarbonized or charged by our own solar panels, and hence have very low emissions arising.</p> <p>Overall, the point to make is that we need to be flexible with precisely how we hit the targets in 7-12 years time, as there is rapid technological and market changes arising. It would be inappropriate to fix now, what solution we will deploy in seven years time.</p>
<p>Climate Action Plan</p> <p>How is the budget of £100,000 allocated to the different climate actions?</p>	<p>The Strategic Planning Manager is responsible for overseeing the budget, and the allocation of funds to projects. Actual allocation can depend on the degree of grants we are successful at securing.</p>
<p>Action 5</p> <p>How much of the budget will be used to subcontract Palace Green Homes?</p>	<p>The budget to pay for Action 5 is from the ‘Pride of Place’ Grant we secured in 2022/23 (for spend in 2023-25). None of the Council’s own £100,000 budget is intended for this project. We have not yet formally agreed arrangements with PGH to deliver this project, but PGH has indicated its willingness to support this project ‘in kind’ (such as dedicating the land and helping clearance). Once the site is cleared, the actual installation costs will be met from the Pride of Place funds, but it is not yet</p>

	determined who the actual contractor will be. In any event, we want to work with the local community first, to find out what they would like for the area, and therefore co-create the new community area with them. Depending on what that desired solution is, will then dictate who the best contractor could be.
What competencies and qualifications does Palace Green Homes have to plan and deliver a nature improvement program?	It is not presently intended that PGH will have this role, or at least not be the primary lead. PGHs role will primarily be at the initial clearance, and then be a partner (with wider community stakeholders) in helping decide what the site could be transformed into. But, see also previous question/answer.
Are there plans to engage a consultancy with relevant expertise?	Potentially, yes, but only if that would add value. It partly depends on what the local community seek for the site.
How will the funding allocated to the number of sites?	As a very rough estimate, the PGH site is likely to require something like £15-25k of the budget, leaving £15-25k for another site (or two).
How will a second site be chosen?	We will be opening up suggestions from parish councils as to where such a second site could be. It need not be ECDC-based land. As long as the land was publicly accessible, we would consider it.
Action 6: How will this scheme be funded? How much is it expected to cost?	<p>Financially, the bird/bat box scheme is a low-cost project. The intention is that the installation of such boxes are done voluntarily, by homeowners and businesses.</p> <p>From time to time, we may do free box give-aways or promotions, as part of maintaining momentum and communications, but these will be low cost, and predominantly be staff time.</p> <p>There is the potential to secure grants to help with the campaign, to help with greater give-aways or run 'build your own' workshops, for example. This will depend on the degree of appetite national bodies might have to support the concept, which is unknown at present as we have not launched the scheme or approached such bodies.</p>
Over which time frame will it be implemented?	This will be determined at launch date, but it is very much a long-term project, probably at least 5-10 years. Forest for Peterborough (aim: 1 tree planted per person), for example, set its target over 20 years. Our project success and speed will very much depend on the degree of momentum the project develops with the public, the degree of communications we give and which it self-

	<p>generates, and the degree of interest and promotion external groups (eg schools, bird-based charities) give to the project.</p> <p>Essential to the success will be the ease of which people can record their bird/bat box installations and send it to ECDC, and that is something we want to get right before we launch. It needs to be photo 'click and send', rather than form-filling in!</p>
<p>What support is in place to make sure that the right sort of boxes are installed in the right places to maximise impact?</p>	<p>On launching, we will provide advice on these sorts of measures, albeit there is plenty of advice on the internet, so we won't attempt to reinvent the wheel. For example: https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/nestboxes/nestboxes-for-small-birds/making-and-placing-a-bird-box/</p>
<p>Has there been an assessment on the impact of those bird and bat boxes, e.g. is this the best action we can take to help bird and bat populations? Does it need to be supplemented with other interventions to really make a difference?</p>	<p>The purpose of this project is not designed to be the 'best action' for nature recovery, in a pure sense. The project is intentionally designed as a way of engaging a much wider population that perhaps would otherwise be engaged, and of differing age groups. For just a few pounds, a simple bird box can be installed, and there is a reasonably high degree of its succeeding (not necessarily every year). By having such a simple, cheap, garden-based project, the hope is that more people will take an interest in nature. And, via the various communications alongside it, we can do communications to help spread wider nature support messages.</p> <p>Higher impact, from a pure nature perspective, may well be projects around habitat creation, or focusing on a specific declining rare species, but such projects are out of reach and out of mind of the vast majority of the population. We need projects where everyone can get involved, and feel directly part of restoring nature. And, in any event, the more specialist projects are being done by those much better than the Council to do so (eg RSPB, Wildlife Trust, National Trust, on their specific dedicated reserves).</p>
<p>Action 8: Will the new Trees and Woodland Strategy have provision to ensure resources for the management of trees, especially watering of newly planted trees on council land?</p>	<p>The management and maintenance of trees will be part of the updated Strategy.</p>

<p>Standard planning requires developers to maintain trees for five years before adoption by the council. What enforcement is there in place to make sure that developers live up to their responsibilities?</p>	<p>The Council has a dedicated planning enforcement team. However, ensuring all planning conditions are met does require a degree of reporting by the local community, where breaches appear to have taken place. Members are encouraged to report any potential breaches they notice, and encourage members of the community to do likewise. Details at: https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement-report-breach</p>
<p>The Trees and Woodland Strategy currently states that a significant fraction of the trees planted were replacement trees for trees that has to be felled. What was the actual net gain in trees since the adoption of the tree strategy? Will there be targets to increase the net gain?</p>	<p>We do not have that statistic readily available. Each year, an element of tree planting will be on the basis of replacement trees, though each year the parks and open spaces team do seek new opportunities to plant trees where possible. However, we are not a major landowner, so we limited as to the scale of tree planting we can do. The new strategy will look to quantify some of these issues.</p>
<p>Will the oak trees to be gifted come with support for establishment and maintenance?</p>	<p>Whilst we have not established the terms and conditions yet, they are likely to be very similar to the terms and conditions we applied to the free orchard planting programme (see Member question on this topic elsewhere in the Member Questions list). In short, such responsibility will be with the receiver, not the District Council, but we will undertake proportionate due diligence to test whether such maintenance is likely to occur.</p>
<p>Action 12: How many chargers does ECDC plan to install until June 2024?</p>	<p>Beyond those recently installed, we have no specific plans in place for additional installations. Any additional installations are likely dependent on grant funding.</p>
<p>How does this compare to neighbouring councils?</p>	<p>We have not undertaken any direct peer comparison of neighboring council plans for future installations.</p>
<p>Action 16: The Investors in the Environment Scheme highest tier certification requires a 2% reduction of CO2 per year. This seems rather unambitious. What inspiration has the Council gained from this scheme?</p>	<p>We agree this is unambitious, and were surprised ourselves to see that as a benchmark liE uses. However, this is a very small part of the liE process. liE is not designed purely as a 'carbon saving' accreditation scheme, but a much wider environmental accreditation covering matters such as waste, engagement, utilities, community projects, travel, corporate support (demonstration of) and nature. When taken as a whole, the liE accreditation does require significant</p>

	<p>environmental commitment and ambition from an organization, even if the carbon savings element is a somewhat disappointingly low bar to pass. The Council is certainly not targeting a 2% reduction per year, and instead has far more ambitious targets as set out in the Environment Plan.</p>
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Questions received from Cllr Lucius Vellacott

Item 7 – ECDC Environment Plan 2023

<p>1. On Point 15 of our 20 aims for 2023/24, the delivery of environment training to all councillors and staff, who will be delivering this training and what are its contents expected to look like?</p>	<p>Whilst the precise arrangements have not been established, it is expected that the training will be delivered in-house by a combination of the Strategic Planning Manager and the Climate Change and Natural Environment Senior Officer. We are accredited to deliver such training, and those completing the course will be entitled to a nationally recognised certificate. There will be no cost, other than staff time. Training will be a maximum of one full day, with up to c15 participants on each day. We'll likely run the course one day every month, on a 'sign up' first come first served basis. Members will be permitted to attend the staff sessions, if that is preferable. However, we are likely to run a special Member event, split over a couple of evenings, in acknowledgment that many Members may not be able to attend day-time training. We'll try to find two evenings which do not clash with Member diaries. In terms of content, it is approximately split in half: first, bringing all staff/members to a common understanding of the issues; second, raising greater awareness of what opportunities all staff have, no matter their role, to take action and make a difference. The course is tailored to local government, and its roles and opportunities. We will trial the course on the c15 'Green Team' staff in probably September, then roll-out the course to all staff from October and run the course once a month for about nine months. Being a 'climate literate' organisation is not only directly beneficial in itself but is evidenced to be attractive to future employees. Being a 'climate literate' employee, is beneficial to an employee's general skills base and their CV.</p>
<p>2. Turning to Appendix 1, what is the plan of action in the event that energy use in our buildings does not</p>	<p>Communicating real data is an important element of awareness raising and taking action. However, officers are also conscious of not</p>

<p>drop as expected? Will officers communicate progress on this particular point to Councillors and illustrate helpful steps to get back on track?</p>	<p>bombarding staff / Members with detail, and not being able to 'see the wood for the trees'. Thus, the Environment Plan summarises over a few pages the main emissions data. However, we have extensive spreadsheets detailing 226 different sources of our emissions, and what those emissions are. It's an interesting question, therefore, as to the scale of information provided to Members and staff. This is perhaps something which could be explored in the carbon literacy training sessions. In the meantime, if any member wants detailed data, either the entire spreadsheets of data or a specific emissions source (eg a specific building), then please let officers know. In the meantime, officers use the data to monitor trends, and see if individual buildings are going in the right direction (energy wise). If not, we try to work out why and what we could do. In simple terms, it is about: plan, monitor and manage (and repeat).</p>
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Questions received from Cllr John Trapp

Item 7 – ECDC Environment Plan 2023

<p>Has any modelling been done on the location of the fleet of refuse vehicles to minimise travel to collection rounds, and to the dump?</p>	<p>Modelling of waste collection rounds have been based on all rounds starting from Portly Hill Depot, Littleport.</p>
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Item 10 – Budget Monitoring Report

<p>page 2: I note that IT costs have increased; has any consideration been given to moving to freeware, as many Dutch councils have done?</p>	<p>A small number of open source software is used to support the service, however due to security vulnerabilities, it is important that we have service contracts in place, covering both maintenance and support</p>
<p>page 3: what is the agreement on the fee from GLL for the Leisure Centre?</p>	<p>GLL pay the Council a Management Fee for the Hive. Due to COVID, for past three years this was calculated on an Open Book basis, but the arrangement has now reverted back to payment of a Management Fee.</p>

OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES 2023-24

ORGANISATION	REQUIRED REPRESENTATIVES	APPOINTMENT(S)	ECDC CONTACT OFFICER
Cambridgeshire County Council Adults and Health Committee	1 Lead Member and 1 Substitute	Cllr Keith Horgan (<i>as Lead Member</i>) Cllr James Lay (<i>as Substitute</i>)	Environmental Services Manager: Liz Knox
Cambridgeshire Health & Wellbeing Board	1	Cllr Keith Horgan	Environmental Services Manager: Liz Knox
Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel	1 Lead Member and 1 Substitute	Cllr Alan Sharp (<i>as Lead Member</i>) Cllr Julia Huffer (<i>as Substitute</i>)	Communities & Partnerships Manager: Lewis Bage
Citizens Advice West Suffolk	1 Lead Member and 1 Substitute	Cllr James Lay (<i>as Lead Member</i>) Cllr Julia Huffer (<i>as Substitute</i>)	Communities & Partnerships Manager: Lewis Bage
Community Safety Partnership	1 Lead Member, 1 Member, and 2 Substitutes	Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith (<i>as Lead Member</i>) Cllr James Lay (<i>as Member</i>) Cllr Keith Horgan (<i>as Substitute</i>) Cllr Alan Sharp (<i>as Substitute</i>)	Neighbourhood & Community Safety Team Leader: Emma Graves
Historic England – Heritage Champion	1	Cllr Lucius Vellacott	Conservation Officer: Christopher Partrick
Paradise Centre Management Committee, Ely	1	Cllr Martin Goodearl	Leisure & Active Lifestyles Manager: (vacancy)
RECAP Board	1	Cllr Julia Huffer	Environmental Services Manager: Liz Knox

Sanctuary Housing Services Ltd – East Cambridgeshire Management Committee	2	Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith Cllr Alan Sharp	Housing & Community Advice Manager: Angela Parmenter
Soham and District Sports Association	2	Cllr Ian Bovingdon Cllr Lucius Vellacott	Leisure & Active Lifestyles Manager: (vacancy)