

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	14 November 2023		
TITLE:	Norfolk Net Zero Communities project		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Monitoring		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Climate Change and Biodiversity		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Ged Greaves, Climate Change Manager		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
<p>On behalf of The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP), Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) has been successful in securing £300,000 of government funding to run a two-year pilot project called 'Norfolk Net Zero Communities'.</p> <p>A report to the Panel's meeting on 29 August 2023 provided an overview of the project, how it may benefit the borough and how the community would be identified.</p> <p>This report provides an update on the selection process and Norfolk project.</p> <p>The Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Manager, Jonathan Ward, will provide a short presentation on the project.</p>
KEY ISSUES:
The project assists with the council's climate change policy and community leadership activities to reduce carbon emissions for the geographical borough.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
The Environment and Community Panel is asked to note progress with the project.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Environment and Community Panel note progress with the project and receive periodic update reports.
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
To support a project that will contribute towards a reduction in the borough's carbon emissions.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On behalf of The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP), Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) has been successful in securing £300,000 of government funding to run a two-year "Norfolk Net Zero Communities".
- 1.2 This innovative pilot project is one of only 21 successful locations across the country. It will support one community in each of the seven Norfolk districts, working with householders and local community organisations to explore ways to decarbonise homes and travel to help tackle climate change across Norfolk.

- 1.3 A competitive process saw 21 local authorities receive a total of £6m from Fast Followers to help their areas increase innovation all with the aim of achieving Net Zero. The projects cover urban areas like Birmingham and Edinburgh and rural areas like Devon and the Outer Hebrides and, like Norfolk's programme, all are designed to overcome non-technical barriers like public engagement or procurement.

2. Norfolk Net Zero Communities

- 2.1 Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) are the lead authority to deliver the project working with all NCCP partner agencies across Norfolk, which include Breckland Council, Broadland Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the East of England LGA, the Broads Authority and the University of East Anglia through The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.
- 2.2 The funding will be used to help build skills and accelerate progress towards Net Zero. The two-year project will see the Partnership work with residents and businesses and set-up a unique programme aimed at testing how barriers can be overcome in order to make a step change in reducing emissions.
- 2.3 Working closely with all NCCP partners the project will focus on low carbon net zero adaptations such as retrofitting homes, community energy schemes and greener transport, in the local economy, construction, heating, technology, logistics, land management and tourism industries. This will create a spotlight on climate change with the aim of creating more green jobs and a shift to Net Zero.
- 2.4 The Partnership will need to consider which areas within the county to engage with the project. The project will work with selected communities on non-technical barriers such as:
- Financing
 - Capacity, capability and skills
 - Consumer engagement and behaviour change
 - Policy and regulation
 - System governance
 - Common data standards for open source and interoperability
 - Ability to influence strategic grid reinforcement
- 2.5 The project's intended benefits are:

Citizen preparedness for net zero

- Understand knowledge base of our citizens
- Test propensity to move to and invest in net zero:
 - For travel (Transport)
 - At home (Retrofit)
- Co-produce net zero marketing based on community intelligence
- Build a Norfolk (NCCP) net zero information digital hub/resource:
 - Contextualise national advice for local people
 - Create trusted go-to site for Norfolk citizens
 - Provide signposting to local net zero sector/supply chain
 - Provide signposting to net zero investment advice.

Clean growth

- Scoping of local net zero supply chains
- Signposting opportunities to do business
- Supplier awareness
- Supplier skills development
- Link with other New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Norfolk Investment Framework, Norfolk County Council skills-focused commissions presently underway
- Create demand for jobs in the clean growth sector.

2.6 The project's intended outcomes are to:

- Enable citizens' net zero options to be easily understood and info/advice navigable.
- Co-produce key messages and engagement with citizens to bring clarity to the topic of what net zero living can mean in practice.
- Stimulate consumer demand.
- Ignite Norfolk's clean growth business sector to meet the higher consumer demand.
- Adopt a place-based approach to identify specific barriers for specific cohorts of the population (energy, housing, transport) through the establishment of a network of 'Norfolk Net Zero Communities'.
- Measure, test and ultimately reduce territorial emissions.
- Share learning via Norfolk Net Zero Communities Network, business networks and other exemplar UK places with proven transferrable products and services pertinent to Norfolk.

3. Selection methodology

3.1 Norfolk Climate Change Partnership collectively will need to identify the communities that will become involved in the project although individual districts will select their specific community. The criteria for identifying communities is not fixed but could consider socio-economic data such as housing age, tenure, deprivation, transportation, type of heating system, size of community, etc. Given the need to complete the project within two years and limited resources, an important factor will be the readiness for the community to engage with net zero activities.

3.2 To maximise learning across the overall project, it is beneficial for a variety of different communities to be taken forward across the county.

3.3 Given the project's time constraints, the local process has involved:

- An email to BCKLWN councillors from the Cabinet Portfolio - Climate Change and Biodiversity.
- Information circulated to parish councils outlining the project, an information gathering proforma and expression of interest.
- Selection of the community was undertaken by the Cabinet Portfolio - Climate Change and Biodiversity, Chief Executive and Climate Change Manager.
- Analysis of population data from Census 2021
- Analysis of data held on the Place Based Carbon Calculator website <https://www.carbon.place/#8/51.482/-0.151>

3.4 The information proforma requested details of local groups, activities, plans and local intentions and challenges to address climate change. These details are also useful to inform the refresh of the borough council's climate change strategy in 2024.

- 3.5 A total of 22 responses were received:
- 21 parish council responses
 - 1 borough ward response
- 3.6 The supporting analysis considered public accessible websites and data including:
- Public transport stops and frequency of service
 - Domestic Energy Performance Certificate ratings
 - Total emission grades
 - Gas and electricity consumption
 - Census 2021 population data
- 3.7 Following analysis and dialogue with local elected representatives, a potential community has been identified and dialogue is underway to confirm further stakeholder support prior to public announcement of the selection. Following confirmation of all of the Norfolk communities, a formal announcement and project launch is planned by the lead body.
- 3.8 Learning from the project will be shared across the county and will feature within the project's communications plan. Opportunities for further areas to participate alongside the project will be explored but will be limited by resources.
- 3.9 A project steering group has been formed including climate change officers from local authorities across Norfolk.

4. Corporate priorities

The project contributes to the following priority within the current Corporate Business Plan; "Protecting and enhancing the environment including tackling climate change".

The emerging corporate strategy considered at Corporate Performance Panel on 16 October 2023 and for consideration at Cabinet on 31 October 2023 includes a priority to "Protect our environment". The project will contribute to the delivery of its actions.

5. Financial implications

The project is externally funded by the Government's Innovate UK fund for 2 years. Officer resources will be required to facilitate local activities and liaison with elected members and Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council are the accountable body for the funding, employ the Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Officer and will procure supporting advice and support for the project.

6. Any other implications/risks

None.

7. Equal opportunity considerations

None.

8. Environmental considerations

The project assists with the council's climate change policy and community leadership activities to reduce carbon emissions for the geographical borough.

9. Consultation

Cabinet portfolio holder and Chief Executive.

10. Conclusion

The Environment and Community Panel note progress and receive periodic update reports.

11. Background papers

None.