

Environment & Emergency Committee

Present: **Committee Members**
Cllrs Bolanz (elected Chairperson), Banks, Goodman, and Simonis

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Environmental Project Officer

Absent: Cllrs Dunford, Pitt and S. Smith

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment & Emergency committee** held on **10th September 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present. No member of the public wished to address the Council.

059 In the absence of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson it was Proposed and Seconded the Cllr Bolanz be elected to Chair the meeting of the Environment and Emergency Committee.

060 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Dunford, Pitt, and S Smith.

ACTIONS

061 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

062 **Minutes**

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Environment and Emergency Committee meeting held on 2nd July 2024 as a true and accurate record.

063 **Action List**

Members received and noted the action list for the committee.

The Environmental Project Officer provided some updates on work to be undertaken at St Neots Old Cemetery as part of the Biodiversity for All grant. It was highlighted that the number of pathways around the unmown sections of the old cemetery will be reduced to provide enhanced space for nature and biodiversity. It was agreed advisory signage would be erected with QR codes providing information as to what was happening and why there would be less cutting of paths.

RESOLVED to remove implementation of LED light replacement at the Eatons Centre as this was now on ongoing operational matter for the Priory and Eatons Centre General Manager.

RESOLVED to remove the ongoing review of previously conducted energy audits from the action list, subject to the approval of new up to date details audits being resolved.

064 Baseline Carbon Emissions

The Environmental Project Officer introduced a report outlining the Council's baseline carbon emissions, which they had calculated across the Council's operations. It was explained that the information was provided for information at this stage and that it will be used to help inform the Council's priorities and actions.

A Member commented that the information was quite eye-opening and shifts where the Council's focus and actions may need to be. The baseline data showed that total emissions were 119.19 tons, with staff commuting, material use (including venue food and drink) as the key contributors.

A request was asked that a percentage breakdown for each scope was added to the data. Members noted the report and thanked the Environmental Project Officer for the work producing it.

065 Energy Audits

The committee had previously requested that the Environmental Project Officer obtain quotations for new energy assessment audits for the council's buildings and operations, that these were sufficiently detailed, captured useable data and that examples were provided to show what a report would look like.

The Environmental Project Officer presented three quotations, highlighting their recommended preferred company.

The preferred quote is substantially lower in cost than alternative quotes, with a user-friendly report and the company will work with the Council to ensure that the information and data the Council need is provided in a useable format. However, the level of detail in the report would not be as high as the more expensive quotes. It was not felt that there was a cost benefit for the higher quotes based on Council need.

RESOLVED that the Company C be engaged to undertake energy audits and reporting of Council buildings and operations at a cost of £4,210 from the Carbon revenue project.

066 Vehicle and Operational Equipment Asset Register

A report was presented outlining vehicles owned/operated by the Council and a high-level example of alternative electric vehicles, showing what a complete transition at this point in time might look like. It was not a proposal of the report that the Council look to transition its fleet, particularly given the limitations of alternative electric options at present.

A lot of the vehicle technology is not yet at a level that would meet the council's needs, but the information shows what is on the market now. Idea on what the electric vehicle transition would look like.

Officers will also investigate options around biofuel, hydrogen and the type of mileage vehicles provide.

Members noted the report.

067 Community Orchard

Members received and considered a report from the Environmental Project Officer on the potential to install a small community orchard at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre. c.

A Member raised concern around access and the relationship with the existing and future use of the site and Steve Van de Kerkhove Centre. It was acknowledged that more information and options on the management of a mini orchard would be needed as part of fully considering feasibility. If the committee were minded to support the idea of an orchard officers would investigate further and provide examples and management options to the Operations and Amenities Committee.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Committee recommends to the Operations and Amenities Committee that unallocated trees from the Biodiversity for All Ecology Audit are used to create a community orchard on land located at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre. That the recommendation to the Operations and Amenities Committee is supported with information on options around the management and operation of such a community offering should it be agreed.

068 Carbon Literacy Training

RESOLVED to approve expenditure of £300 for the verification of a bespoke Carbon Literacy course plus £10 per completion certificate from the Carbon Net-Zero revenue budget. (105 4365). Training would be delivered by the Environmental Project Officer to staff and Members.

069 Budget Setting

Members considered the Carbon Net-Zero revenue project budget of £10,000 which was within the committee's remit. Members noted that the Council also holds £23,000 in EMRs for Carbon Net-Zero projects.

Members discussed a potential cost of carrying out an audit of the food and drink procurement system for the Priory Centre, with a focus on using greener, local and more sustainable procurement. The Committee questioned whether this was really an Environment and Emergency cost. Members agreed that the cost of any such audit should come from Priory Centre related budgets, particularly as part of business planning for a re-furbished Priory Centre.

Members agreed that the committee would not, at this stage, look to recommend any increased budgets for the 2025-26 financial year given the level of reserves available to the Council.

The Chairperson invited Members to send any potential costs that might need considering through to the Environmental Project Officer for investigation.

070 Date of Next Committee Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next committee meeting would be 12th November 2024 at 6:15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON