



Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee

11 December 2024

Title:	Climate Programme Delivery
Report of:	Judith Barker, Executive Director, Place and Connectivity
Lead Member:	Cllr Bridget Smith
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No Key Decisions
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

A	To note the progress on the Climate Action Plan review
B	To note the progress on the Climate Programme and on funding projects in line with the Single Assurance Framework.
C	To note the update on the launch of the Opportunity Fund bidding round.

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

x	Enabling resilient communities
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1. Purpose

1.1	<p>The purpose of this paper is to provide the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee (E&SCC) with an update on three key elements of the Climate Change Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress with the Climate Action Plan review• Status of the current Climate Action Programme - 2024/25• The development and delivery of the Opportunity Fund and bidding round
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2. Background

2.1	ESC noted and endorsed the approach to the Climate Action Plan review for 2025-30 at the last meeting, in particular, to ensure the plan is co-produced and co-owned and aligned to the development of the Local Growth Plan.
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2.2	The Committee was presented with an update on the Climate Programme delivery, including progress on project approvals, committed funding and proposed project funding.
2.3	Members noted the plans and the progress of the Opportunity Fund with the added recommendation to meet informally to review the Opportunity Fund bids before they are presented to the Investment Panel in February. A suitable date is being considered.

3. Approach taken to shape the Climate Action Plan review

3.1	The Combined Authority and constituent local authority partners have commenced the development of the Local Growth Plan as invited by Government. The 10 year Local Growth Plan will set out our collective ambitions for sustainable economic growth; the opportunities and strengths that can be built upon and the constraints that need to be addressed to achieve these ambitions. It is therefore crucial that the refresh of the Climate Action Plan is clearly aligned to the development of the Local Growth Plan, and vice versa.
3.2	<p>The LGP is being developed in line with Government timescales for submission in the Summer of 2025. The Governance established to oversee the development of the Local Growth Plan includes Internal and External Officer Working Groups. The Executive Director of Place and Connectivity has been charged with leading a LGP Workstream which focuses on our Infrastructure Plan. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and Connectivity • Water • Energy • Climate & Environment <p>Environmental and climate change considerations are therefore central to setting out our ambitions for sustainable economic growth through the Local Growth Plan</p> <p>To help achieve this it is vital that the current Climate Change Action Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and this workstream is fully aligned to development of the Local Growth Plan.</p>
3.3	<p>As climate considerations are a critical dependency in the development of the LGP, the Climate Action Plan is being reviewed to see where there are dependencies and opportunities for joint commissioning of supporting evidence.</p> <p>To provide further reassurance to Committee members it is proposed that a short presentation on the development of the Local Growth Plan and its alignment with the Climate Action Plan is given at the next Committee meeting.</p>
3.4	The Locally Determined Contribution (LDC) work is producing a framework for the development of a Climate Action Plan, including the guiding principles when selecting the methodological approach to set an overarching carbon budget and associated targets. Since this information will be key in the development of the Climate Action Plan, using the LDC guidance framework will enable a better and more informed process, with a Climate Action Plan that is more robust. The LDC work will produce initial recommendations on the 'toolkit' to use during January 2025. A presentation on the emerging work is scheduled for the 29 January E&SCC meeting.

3.5	Stakeholder engagement with key partners will ensure they are kept informed and involved in the development of the Climate Action Plan ahead of gathering the evidence and external specialist support. The commissioning of the evidence base is linked to the outcome of the LDC work and alignment with evidence needed for the LDF. A timeline will be presented to the January meeting. This will inform the shaping of the plan so that we deliver a co-produced co-owned plan that meets the areas expectations.
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4. Update on the Climate Action Programme 2024/25

4.1	<p>As presented to the last Committee, this is a development year to agree projects and spend for this MTFP period. Since the Committee’s last meeting, the Board approved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Retrofitting your Home Guidance’ – this project is to update and extend the Cambridge City Council’s Retrofitting your Home Guidance to encompass additional housing archetypes so that this can be used by all authorities across the area. • ‘Domestic Energy and efficiency’ – this project will enable the installation of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating in domestic properties for low-income households. It ensures a continuity of retrofit delivery in-between Government funded schemes, with a delivery window of 6 months, although the delivery partners expect the bulk of approvals to between 1st January 2025 – 31st March 2025. <p>The Final Business Case for The Peat Affected Roads Trial (previously referred to as the Fens Road trial) which will test innovative solutions to peat affected roads was considered by the Investment Panel on the 14 November and will be presented for agreement to Investment Committee on 16 December.</p> <p>Table 1 below contains all the projects currently in progress along with those that have recently have funding approved within the Climate Programme. Budget performance is covered in the paper later on the Agenda. We can provide further details as requested.</p>
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Table 1		Enabling Resilient Communities	Status
Theme	Project		
Buildings	Care Homes	by providing capital investment to decarbonise care home estates.	Two care homes in delivery.
	Extending "Retrofitting your Home" Guidance	through the review and extension of the Cambridge City Council's guidance to encompass housing archetypes so that it can be used by all authorities across the area.	Business Case approved at Investment Panel 14 November 2024.
	Domestic energy and efficiency - Phase 1	by retrofitting low-income homes in conjunction with government funding via the home Upgrade Grant, through the installation of energy efficient measures and low carbon heating.	Business Case approved at Investment Panel 14 November 2024.
Energy	Cambridgeshire LAEP (Plan development)	through the development of a Local Area Energy Plan for Cambridgeshire which will contribute to the unlocking of an estimated £15bn of early investment in energy infrastructure over the next 20 years to achieve Net Zero	Funding committed and in delivery with planned completion September 2025.
	City of Cambridge Culture	By removing the need to use fossil fuel and to install permanent electricity for events and sourcing from a green tariff, proving a low carbon energy solution.	Business case in development and planned for 13 Feb 26 Investment Panel.
Engagement	Net Zero Villages	by providing funding to local community group to decarbonise and improve nature. Funding through local authority partners	One authority in delivery, four in final process of signing GFA and planning funding.
	Climate Opportunity Fund	By allowing Public Sector and community organizations to bid to CPCA for investment ready projects that deliver the Climate Change Action Plan priorities.	Outline Business Case approved at Investment Panel 21 October 2024. Funding launched.
Nature	Constituent council's Biodiversity	by funding biodiversity audits on council land assets, enabling development of biodiversity improvement plans supporting the Doubling Nature vision, including delivery aspects of the CPCA's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (due 2025).	Final Grant Funding Agreements with Councils for agreement.
	Doubling Nature Matrix	by creating a robust baseline of priority habitats for the region to inform local policy and strategy that will help measure doubling nature.	In delivery with planned completion March 2025.
	Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream	by establishing and implementing a programme of case studies projects using an evidence-based approach to showcase holistic solutions for restoring Greater Cambridge chalk streams and their associated riparian habitats	Delivery commenced with planned completion March 2026
	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	by delivering a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the area.	In delivery with planned completion in 2025.
	Logans Meadow	by creating new wetland habitat to improve public access and reconfigure public amenity spaces	In delivery with planned completion November 2026.
	Huntingdonshire Biodiversity for all	by improving nature and biodiversity, empower the community and improve skills.	In delivery with planned completion June 2026
	Nature and Environment Investment Fund	by establishing a Fund to attract additional investment into nature-based projects, building local capacity in green investment, and deliver projects on the ground across the CPCA area.	In delivery with planned completion July 2025
	Natural Cambridgeshire capacity	by providing capacity funding to our local nature partnership (Natural Cambridgeshire), to champion the improvement of the area's natural environment	In delivery with additional funding agreed up to 31 March 2026.
Public Sector Retrofit	Sustainable Land Use Advice (Rewilding)	by providing funding to support farmer engagement with landscape-scale solutions, a biodiversity register and support for accessing the Nature Fund	Deployment linked to progress on LNRS. Depending on LNRS timetable decision, business case to 13 Feb 26 Investment Panel.
	Schools retrofit -Low carbon Heating	by providing three local maintained schools to come off fossil fuels for their heating contributing to the area achieving Net Zero ambitions.	Funding committed and in delivery with planned completion
Soil & Peat	Fenland Soil	by providing capacity funding to Fenland Soil, enabling them to bring together farmers and academics to address the impact of climate on our vulnerable Fens soils.	In delivery with additional funding agreed up to 31 March 2026.
Strategic	Climate Action Plan	by providing resources for Climate Action Plan programme management and associated costs.	Secondment agreed
	Climate Review	by reviewing the current Climate Action Plan and producing a plan for 2025-2030 to enable future CPCA business planning to adapt to climate change and meet Net Zero targets.	Funding committed and in delivery with planned completion December 2025
	Developing Climate Evidence	by ensuring evidence is being considered for the Climate Action Plan alongside the Local Growth Plan	Linked to the Review of the Plan. Being considered alongside LGP evidence needs
	Infrastructure Delivery Framework	by identifying infrastructure challenges that will inform the emerging Local Growth Plan.	The IDF was approved at CA Board 13 November 2024
Transport	Fen roads Trial	by trialling innovative solutions to address the continuing maintenance and safety problems related to roads constructed over fenland soil deposit	Business Case Approved at Investment Panel 14 November and being considered at Investment Committee on 16 December 2025
Water	Future Fens	by supporting Future Fens Integrated Adaptation Project that will protect The Fens from the impacts of climate change from flooding and drought.	Previous funding provided and Business Case in development for additional work planned for 13 Feb 26 Investment Panel
	WRE membership	by supporting collaborative, cross-sector approach to water resources and integrated water management planning for the region.	Continued funding up to 31 March 2029.
Waste	Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network (WREN)	by decarbonising the waste fleet by installing a solar array and battery storage on site.	In planning phase with a revised completion by 31 March 2027.

4.2	<p>Grant Funding Agreements: key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Net Zero Villages Grant Funding Agreements – there is one sealed GFA for East Cambridgeshire District Council who have launched this funding. The remaining four are targeted to be signed by the end of December. • Biodiversity Audit Grant Funding Agreements in discussion with authorities with the aim of completion by 13 December • Natural Cambridgeshire Capacity Funding deed of variation for the extension of the funding is drafted and progressing to approval.
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5. Opportunity fund bidding round

5.1	<p>Our Climate Change Opportunity Fund is now open with request for initial Expressions of Interest by 3 January with formal applications to be submitted by the closing date of 17th January 2025. We are aiming for appraisal of the applications to be done in January and February to enable decisions before the pre-election period. If we have a high volume of responses we may need to review this timeline. Expenditure is by 31 March 2025. The grants are capital with a minimum of £50K and maximum of £150k unless there are exceptional collaborative bids to whom we may award up to £250k. The value of the fund is £1m.</p>
5.2	<p>Two Information and Briefing Sessions took place online on 27th November and 4th December. Both events were very well attended with more than 50 partners in attendance for the first session. The sessions were also recorded with the link to the recordings available to all potential applicants on the CPCA website at: Climate Change Opportunity Fund 2024/25 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority</p>
5.3	<p>At these information events delegates were provided with full details of the Fund's ambitions and the application process. The sessions also included an opportunity for delegates to raise questions. A more detailed guidance workshop aimed at assisting applicants with the development of their applications is scheduled for the afternoon of 11 December. One to one support is being offered via on-line sessions to all applicants, regarding specific elements of the forms and a suite of guides, tools and templates will be sent to all applicants with the Application Form.</p>
5.4	<p>Regular reminders will be provided to organisations that the deadline is 17 January for completion of full applications with a special focus on local authority areas where a low number of applicants is identified. The assessment of projects will be carried out by an independent third-party organisation following the deadline, and the ranked applications will then be available for E&SCC's consideration, to help inform the Investment Panel meeting on 13 February. Approval of the list of successful projects will be considered on 17 March by the Investment Committee, after which applicants may be notified of the outcomes, Grant Funding Agreements will be produced with projects being completed by 31 March 2026.</p>
5.5	<p>In the meeting of 25 October the committee requested clarification on particular issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Officer time can be used as match but will not scored as highly as a project providing capital match b. We only have capital funding available and therefore cannot help with running costs c. Natural capital can be considered as infrastructure as part of the project d. All constituent authorities are eligible to submit an application e. An assessment framework has been developed to score the projects and we can update at the committee meeting further



6. Appendices

6.1 None.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

7.1 The projects are contained within the existing Climate budgets.

Legal Implications

7.2 Grant Funding Agreements will be required for each Business Case that involves external partners leading on delivery.

Public Health Implications

7.3 Tackling emissions and impacts of climate change can have significantly positive impacts on public health and future risks to health.

Environmental & Climate Change Implications

7.4 The Climate Action Plan is a key component of the Combined Authority's response to environmental and climate change impact.

Other Significant Implications

7.5 None.

Background Papers

7.6 [Climate Action Plan \(Revised\)](#)