



# Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee

**31 July 2024**

Title:	Place & Connectivity Directorate Monthly Highlight Report: July 2024
Report of:	Judith Barker, Executive Director – Place & Connectivity
Lead Member:	Councillor Bridget Smith, Lead Member, Communities and Environment
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

## Recommendations:

A	Note the content of this report.
---	----------------------------------

## Strategic Objective(s):

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

x	Enabling resilient communities
x	Achieving best value and high performance

## 1. Purpose

1.1	This report provides a general update on the key activities of the Place and Connectivity Directorate in relation to Environment and Sustainable Communities, which are not covered in the other reports to this Meeting.
-----	---

## 2. Projects updates

2.3	<p><b>Great British Energy</b></p> <p>Since the last meeting a new government has set out a programme in the Kings Speech of 17 July. This included a new publicly owned energy production company which will own, manage and operate clean power projects, in partnership with the private sector, with a capital budget of £8.3bn over the Parliament. The Local Power Plan will offer up to £600 million a year in grant to local authorities and £400million a year in low-cost loans for community energy. We will monitor this for opportunities.</p> <p>In addition, the government has requested that MCAs produce Local Growth Plans this summer. This work is being led by the Executive Director for Economy and Growth with support from across the Corporate Management Team and constituent authorities Place Directors. This will include sustainability, housing and net zero ambitions but the timetable and wider scope is not yet confirmed.</p>
-----	---

2.4	<p><b>National Infrastructure Commission</b></p> <p>The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), which provides strategic guidance on long-term infrastructure needs to Government, is investigating electricity distribution this year.</p> <p>To inform this, Commissioners are meeting with the Combined Authority and partners on 1st August in Cambridge. This visit signifies the NIC's commitment to ensuring the nation's energy infrastructure is robust, efficient, and future proof. Their expertise and the feedback by the Combined Authority and partners will be invaluable in assessing the current state of our electricity distribution network, identifying potential challenges, and recommending improvements.</p> <p>The NIC's focus on sustainability and resilience will help us align our electricity distribution strategies with broader national goals, including decarbonisation and energy security. Through comprehensive analysis and stakeholder engagement, the NIC aims to foster innovation and investment in our electricity infrastructure, ultimately enhancing reliability and performance.</p> <p>This collaboration underscores the importance of expert advisory sessions in shaping a resilient and sustainable energy future for the UK. The work will result in a report to Government early in 2025.</p>
2.1	<p><b>Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b></p> <p>The LNRS Steering Group meets on the 24<sup>th</sup> July to consider progress on the development of the Strategy. A verbal report will be made at the Committee.</p> <p>As reported to the Committee in June, the current timeline to consider the draft Plan at either the September or October Committee dates, depending on progress on the technical assessments.</p> <p>This will then enable an 8-week consultation process to be undertaken in the autumn. This will allow the strategy to be considered with the results of the consultation early in 2025.</p>
2.5	<p><b>Climate Partnership update</b></p> <p>The Climate Partnership met on 3 June and is next scheduled to meet on 24 October 2024.</p>
2.7	<p><b>Cambridge Cultural Project Business Case</b></p> <p>The business case for the project was postponed from the June Committee due to the pre-election period. However, in accordance with the new SAF this business case now gets considered via the Investment Panel. It is scheduled for the Investment Panel on 29 August.</p>

### 3. Strategic Partner or other major scheme updates

3.1	<p><b>Locally Determined Contributions</b></p> <p>Local Determined Contributions (LDC) project is developing a place-based carbon target, action and monitoring framework. This will align local ambition with national targets. The output of the work is due in 2025.</p> <p>Workshops to co-design the LDC process for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough took place in June. These focused on understanding the unique features of the region that needed reflecting into the LDC design. They also explored how the framework could also unlock finance across the public and private sector investor community. Attendance at both workshops was good and the project was well received by local and national stakeholders.</p> <p>The early research phase of the project is now complete, with initial findings and design principles for the LDC under development over the coming months. The next engagement on the LDC designs will be provided towards the end of the year. The LDC team have been invited to present to the Committee in the autumn.</p>
-----	---

3.2	<p><b>Water Supply issues</b></p> <p>The Committee has previously raised the challenges of water supply (both for domestic and non-domestic use) for the Combined Authority area, and the impacts that can be seen on the environment, supporting future growth, and farming. Water is one of the four core issues being examined in the Infrastructure Delivery Framework (see separate agenda item). Water Resources East have been approached to attend the Committee in autumn to provide a briefing on the supply of water and the impact on future development in the region.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Sunnica Solar Farm</b></p> <p>On 12 July, the Secretary of State approved the application for Sunnica Solar Farm (which had been examined by the Planning Inspectorate as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project).</p> <p>The project will see the installation of solar photovoltaic generating panels and electrical battery storage technology on Sunnica East and Sunnica West sites, and associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid, including an extension to the Burwell National Grid Substation. The Scheme will allow for the delivery of over 50 megawatts of renewable energy.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Fenland Soil</b></p> <p>Fenland Soil have been invited to present an update on their current work and the policy landscape impacting on the Fens soil at the September Committee.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Forward Agenda items</b></p> <p>Presentation items for forward agenda include (and potential timings):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A428 highways improvement project – environmental impact (September)</li> <li>• Great Ouse Waterway (October)</li> <li>• Local Area Energy Planning (December)</li> <li>• Addressing the issue of drought-damaged roads (February 2025)</li> </ul>

## 4. Appendices

4.1	None
-----	------

## 5. Implications

### Financial Implications

5.1	None
-----	------

### Legal Implications

5.2	None
-----	------

### Public Health Implications

5.3	Climate and infrastructure developments can have major positive and negative impacts on public health.
-----	--

### Environmental & Climate Change Implications

5.4	None.
-----	-------

### Other Significant Implications

5.5	None
-----	------

### Background Papers

5.6	None
-----	------