

# Public Document Pack



**Meeting:** EAP Climate Change, Environment & Growth

**Date:** Wednesday 17th November, 2021


**Time:** 9.30 am

**Venue:** Remote Meeting via Zoom (this meeting is not the subject of public meeting requirements)

The meeting will be available for the public to view live at the 'Democratic Services North Northants' YouTube channel.

To members of the EAP Climate Change, Environment & Growth

Councillors: Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair), Councillor Tim Allebone, Councillor Jennie Bone, Councillor Dez Dell, Councillor Anne Lee, Councillor Jan O'Hara and Councillor Elliot Prentice

Agenda			
Item	Subject	Presenting Officer	Page no.
01	Apologies for Absence		
02	Members' Declarations of Interest		
03	Minutes from Meeting held on 20 October 2021		3 – 8
04	Verbal Update on Air Quality across North Northamptonshire	Iain Smith	Verbal Update
05	Reflections on NN Climate 21	Councillor Harriet Pentland	Verbal Update
06	Community Renewal Fund – update on successful bids across North Northamptonshire	Ian Achurch	9 - 14
07	Climate Change - update on future activities (to follow)	George Candler	
08	Close of Meeting		
<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p><b>Proper Officer</b> <b>9<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b></p>			

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## **Meetings at the Council Offices**

This meeting will be held using the Zoom platform.

## **Members' Declarations of Interest**

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Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or **relates to** a financial interest of a relative, friend or close associate, you must disclose the interest and not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

Members are reminded that they should continue to adhere to the Council's approved rules and protocols during the conduct of meetings. These are contained in the Council's approved Constitution.

If Members have any queries as to whether a Declaration of Interest should be made please contact the Monitoring Officer at – [monitoringofficer@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northnorthants.gov.uk)

## **Press & Media Enquiries**

Any press or media enquiries should be directed through the Council's Communications Team to [NNU-Comms-Team@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:NNU-Comms-Team@northnorthants.gov.uk)

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## **Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Panel: Climate Change, Environment & Growth**

Held at 9.30am on Wednesday 20 October 2021 as a remote meeting via Zoom

### MINUTES

Attendees: Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair), Councillor Tim Allebone, Councillor Jennie Bone, Councillor Dez Dell, Councillor Anne Lee, Councillor Jan O'Hara, Councillor Elliot Prentice, Ian Achurch George Candler, Graeme Kane, James Loader, Carol Mundy, Amy Plank, Iain Smith, Raj Sohal

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

#### **2. Members' Declarations of Interests**

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

#### **3. Minutes**

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 were approved as a correct record.

#### **4. Destination Nene Valley - Nenescape**

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Development, Infrastructure and Funding which sought to consider representation from North Northamptonshire Council on the Destination Nene Valley Board, and also outlined the importance of the visitor sector in the local economy. The report was marked 'item 4' on the agenda.

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. The title of 'widening the reach' in protecting open spaces was an ambitious but achievable target and recognised the harm that could be done to a fragile ecosystem. It would be beneficial for North Northamptonshire Council to actively work towards this target to allow the area to become a tourist destination;
- ii. Protecting tributaries had been omitted from the report, not all of which were maintained. There had been significant past pollution problems regarding waterways and impacting local wildlife, therefore it was viewed that the authority should investigate and consider these issues;
- iii. It was queried whether work had already been done to link 'green ways' (for transport) across areas in North Northamptonshire and if this work tied into Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). The Head of Development, Infrastructure and Funding explained to the Panel that the green ways were routes intended to connect areas, and that the aspiration of the local authority was to create a network across North Northamptonshire - connecting Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby etc. The LCWIP project had its own dedicated timescales;
- iv. It would be imperative to protect open spaces in collaboration with partners, such as the Environment Agency, and obtain sufficient funding available to carry out such work. Members suggested that the local authority should seek to apply for grant funding to help maintain spaces and look to make wild areas more amenable and accessible, perhaps by linking to planning policy, to promote a cleaner and safer society.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

## **5. Bus Strategy – update on consultation and Improvement Plan**

The Panel considered a briefing note of the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste setting out the background to and key themes emerging from the recently closed Bus Service Improvement Plan consultation. The report was marked 'item 5' on the agenda.

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. Other local authorities had adopted interesting models, whereby local businesses in town centres with parking spaces paid an annual fee to the authority. These funds could be used to fund buses and other local transport facilities, as they would reduce congestion and air pollution. It was queried whether North Northamptonshire Council had considered such measures?

In response, the Assistant Director clarified that:

- ii. The level of engagement that the enhanced partnerships and bus service improvement plans had facilitated was significant, therefore, continuing to engage with operators formally was essential;
- iii. Other authorities, such as Oxford City Council, had carried out similar work and achieved success in engaging directly with local businesses, to drive usage of public transport services. North Northamptonshire Council would seek to establish a passenger representative board, to discuss issues with services and engage proactively with key stakeholders.

It was noted that the public consultation had now closed and that following the verbal update of emerging themes, the consultation responses would continue to be reviewed.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

## **6. Air Quality Update**

The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Services on Air Quality in North Northamptonshire, which provided a position statement on current air quality, what was being done to manage and monitor air quality, and proposals for its improvement and raising public awareness. The report was marked 'item 6' on the agenda.

During discussion the following principal points were noted:-

The Panel was encouraged to see that areas did not exceed the upper air limits and considered that it would be important for the Panel to investigate factors affecting air quality, such as the trees strategy, electric vehicle charging points etc. Members raised several lines of enquiry into the report concerning:

- i. The discrepancy between the four areas across North Northamptonshire, regarding the equipment used to record air quality (Corby had 17, East Northampton 33, Kettering 39 and Wellingborough only 11). Members queried whether there was an intention to level this discrepancy and provide equal resources.
- ii. Whether the authority had considered implementing increased electric vehicle charging points across the area and produced a plan to meet demand, as more residents would purchase electric vehicles?
- iii. If anything could be done to encourage developers to install more environmentally friendly apparatus to heat newly built homes?
- iv. Whether air quality data had been skewed due to standing traffic, if there existed a density of monitoring stations along main roads and

dual carriageways, with a high volume of standing traffic – areas such as Rushden Lakes retail park?

- v. It was noted that a monitoring site in Wellingborough had exceeded the threshold of forty micrograms per cubic metre in eight of the nine months of data available. Similarly, a site in Kettering had exceeded air quality limits in six of the seven months' data. Members suggested that the Council should prepare an air quality action plan for these management areas, due to the existence of such historical data.
- vi. Whether there existed better technology available than diffusion tubes, to monitor areas immediately?

In response, the Environmental Protection Manager clarified that:

- vii. The authority had found itself in a transitional period, in the process of consolidating environmental protection work, aiming to reach a more balanced position across the entire North Northamptonshire area, to eradicate disparities between available resources;
- viii. This included the discrepancy in measurement equipment across areas resulting from prior sovereign council budgets. She assured the EAP that the authority was actively seeking to bring budgets together and calculate a net amount for the North. Nevertheless, rural areas would not require measurement equipment, as data would only be collected in areas with high volumes of traffic. The tube network would be reset to ensure monitoring was fairly measured;
- ix. The authority had continued its work to review vehicle and taxi policies around pollution limits, as older vehicles tended to produce greater air pollution;
- x. There was a shifting picture nationally regarding sustainable urban extensions and gas boiler technology. North Northamptonshire would follow the national lead and was in a position to publicise support and raise awareness around grants available to the public for this technology. There would be a need for officers to work more closely with planning policy colleagues to support this work;
- xi. From the DEFRA returns, there had not been any instances of pollution from the installations regulated by the Council. The authority had reacted to complaints and taken the necessary enforcement action;
- xii. Regarding the procurement of improved measurement technology, the authority would have to manage its resources and budget to pay for the tools available. Nevertheless, this could be explored.

Members emphasised that funding and the availability of necessary resources would be essential in regulating air quality and allowing the authority to achieve its target of being a 'green council'.

The Chair explained to members that the issue of air quality would be explored again, in comprehensive detail, at future meetings and that the EAP's comments on this matter would be fed back to the Executive.

Similarly, the Executive Director of Place and Economy assured the Panel that levels of resourcing regarding environmental matters was actively being looked at. He also considered that it would be valuable to invite a representative from DEFRA into the discussion, to gain a government perspective of how North Northamptonshire was performing and what the authority could do to further improve matters.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The report be noted; and
- b) That further consideration of the impact of air quality and proposals to improve this in North Northamptonshire be brought back to a future meeting.

#### **7. Next meeting date**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at 09:30am.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT & GROWTH EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL 17 NOVEMBER 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Community Renewal Fund - update</b>
<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Brackenbury, Executive Member for Growth &amp; Regeneration</b>

<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974</b>	

### List of Appendices

Appendix A – List of successful projects

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 Following last months' announcement of the successful Community Renewal Projects by Government as part of the recent budget statement, this report provides an update on the programme in North Northamptonshire.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) was launched by the Government in March 2021 and comprises £220 million additional funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) in 2022. This new Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches and will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.
- 2.2 NNC issued a call for projects and evaluated all submissions. A shortlist was produced, endorsed by Executive and submitted to Government in June.
- 2.3 Government announced last week that **nine projects have successfully secured funding** in North Northamptonshire, with a **total value of £2,852,726**. These projects deliver against all the key themes. This report details the successful projects and the next steps in delivering the programme.

### 3. Report Background

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- 3.1 Following an evaluation process by Government, successful projects were announced as part of the budget statement. In North Northamptonshire, nine projects were supported, with a total value of £2,852,726. All these projects must be delivered by 30 June 2022.
- 3.2 The projects cover a range of themes, and include support for skills (training in construction, rail and land and water management), support for business through grant programmes and innovation vouchers and other innovative projects including Parish Asset Mapping, creation of a food waste app and several climate change-related initiatives.
- 3.3 NNC was successful with two of its own projects – the Construction Skills programme and the Greenway and River Ise Feasibility Study.

#### Successful Projects

Project Reference no.	Project Name	Project Value (as taken from Lead Authority Summary Sheet)	LA Management Costs
1. CRF428855	Green Recovery and Innovation programme	£492,978	£14,789
2. CRF344254	In2work	£736,000	£22,080
3. CRF301403	The Skill Mill	£90,000	£1,800
4. CRF37787	Greenway and River Ise, Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study	£120,000	£2,400
5. CRF993300	Construction Skills Programme	£88,268	£1,765
6. CRF587150	Sustainable Food Network North Northamptonshire	£106,250	£2,125
7. CRF193859	Knowledge Exchange for Better Business (KE4BB) (North Northamptonshire)	£332,514	£9,975
8. CRF817170	Parish Asset Mapping - Northamptonshire Devolution Project	£273,422	£8,203
9. CRF467686	North Northamptonshire to Net Zero (NN2NZ)	£534,133	£16,024

Total Project Value: £2,733,565

Total Management Costs: £79,161

Overall Lead Authority Award: £2,852,726

- 3.4 A press release welcoming this announcement was issued last week, along with a statement from the Leader of the Council.

#### Next Steps

- 3.5 NNC must confirm that all the projects can be delivered to the new timeframe, with revised milestones. Once this is done, Government will issue a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) with NNC which will set out the conditions of the funding.
- 3.6 NNC will then issue Funding Agreements with all the successful projects, setting out the obligations, milestones, budgets, publicity and all reporting requirements. Project inception meetings will then be arranged to discuss the requirements and regular monitoring will commence.

#### 4. Issues and Choices

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- 4.1 NNC was not obliged to submit a shortlist of projects, but it was an opportunity to secure funding to deliver a range of projects.

#### 5. Implications (including financial implications)

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##### 5.1 Resources and Financial

- 5.1.1 As outlined, £2,852,726 of funding has been secured for this area. Half the allocation will be paid to NNC on signing of GFA, the remainder on completion of projects.
- 5.1.2 Projects will then submit a quarterly monitoring and claim form and all evidence of defrayal. They will be paid, in arrears, on confirmation of eligible spend.
- 5.1.3 NNC will also receive a management fee. This recognises the additional work involved to programme manage the Fund and report to Government. This is a standard rate of 2% or 3% of the project totals, depending on the complexity of the project. The award to NNC totals £79,161. It is understood that payment will be the same as for the wider grant. This is half on signing the agreement and the remaining half on completion in June 2022.
- 5.1.4 In addition, £60,000 Capacity Funding will be paid to NNC. The additional funding provided by Government is very welcome and will enable the Council to dedicate resource to create a programme management function, which can both manage and support the CRF and help to prepare for the new UK SPF.
- 5.1.5 The additional funding is vital as it will avoid diluting and undermining the Council's capacity to deliver existing projects and to facilitate, and/or initiate direct, action on new projects, either as a project lead, or by supporting individual projects as a delivery partner

##### 5.2 Legal

- 5.2.1 The Grant Funding Agreement with Government will be checked with the NNC legal support, and they will also review the Funding Agreement template that will be used with the successful projects.

##### 5.3 Risk

Risk	Impact / Mitigation	RAG
That NNC does not have the capacity to programme manage the Fund	(I)-Funding would not be secured (M)-Strong and experienced team in place with systems already established to ensure successful delivery, capacity funding and management fee secured	

That NNC is not able to deliver the projects that it secured funding for	(I)-Funding secured would be lost (M)-Bids set out strong processes which were endorsed by Government appraisal	
Project leads are unable to deliver	(I)-Reputational harm to NNC and potential investment and impact lost (M)- Assurances received that projects are deliverable. Monitoring arrangements in place. Extension to June 2022 provided by Government.	

#### 5.4 Consultation

5.4.1 The Invitation to Apply for Grant Funding (IAGF) process involved a range of mechanisms to engage with and inform local stakeholders. This has included developing a IAGF document, setting up a dedicated web page with links, issuing press releases, setting up a webinar, social media posts and direct email contact and discussions. It ensured that a wide range of projects, from a wide range of organisations were submitted for consideration.

#### 5.5 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

5.5.1 Observations from the Executive Advisory Panel are welcome on the announcement and successful projects. This is not a Key Decision and is not subject to the 'call-in' process.

#### 5.6 Climate Impact

5.6.1 The Government's CRF prospectus made it clear that projects which are based on low or zero-carbon best practice, adopt and support clean tech, and support growing the skills and supply chains in support of 'Net-Zero' targets, were strongly welcomed. This approach has been followed by the Council and the successful projects will make a positive contribution to developing and delivering best practice. The NN2NZ project in particular is focussed on supporting climate change initiatives and research, and the Green Recovery and Innovation programme will provide support to businesses.

#### 5.7 Community Impact

5.7.1 The Council prioritised the bids that have the greatest potential to support a local economic recovery, complement existing economic development-related activity, meet identified need, have strong support, promote health and wellbeing and align with the four UK CRF Prospectus priorities.

### 6. Background Papers

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-successful-bids>

## APPENDIX A

Proposal Name	Short description (50 words)	Investment Priority (Skills, Business, Community, Employment)	£ requested*
CRF03: Greenway and River Ise: Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (North Northamptonshire Council)	The two feasibility studies will identify Green Infrastructure connections linking Wellingborough to Rushden and Corby (via Kettering) - all growth towns. This will facilitate the development of green corridors, and wider network, for active travel, enhance travel to work choices and educational opportunities, and increase tourism and leisure trips	Community	120,000
CRF05: Training in land and water management for ex-offenders (The Skills Mill)	The Skill Mill provides employment opportunities in water and land-based management. Training and support are delivered to ex-offenders, actively reducing reoffending whilst increasing engagement, participation, employability and educational levels of the young people to increase their life chances. Participants undertake accredited training and achieve a nationally recognised qualification	Skills  Community  <b>Employment</b>	90,000
CRF10: NN2NZ (Electric Corby)	North Northamptonshire 2 Net Zero – a programme of projects designed to provide feasibility studies into net zero and local energy projects and a framework to assess them, pilot an e-mobility hub, create a project website and deliver a showcase event – complex programme of projects	Community	534,133
CRF11: Sustainable Food Network North Northants (Made in Northamptonshire)	This project will undertake two pilot projects: (1) Rural Food Chain Research (2) piloting two waste food apps and a sustainability audit. This project focuses on a key sector for the local economy	Business  <b>Community</b>	106,250
CRF16: In2Work (Hillsbridge Services)	Delivery of training for rail sector / HS2, inc L1&2 for 240 people	Employment	736,000
CRF18: The Knowledge	Providing 30 Knowledge exchange vouchers (£7.5k), 15	Skills	332,514

Exchange for Better Business (University of Northampton)	funded graduate interns, 1:1 academic support, 50 development grants (£2.5k), membership of chamber / FSB – large number of grants to be monitored	<b>Business</b>	
CRF19: Parish Asset Mapping, Local Devolution (Northants CALC)	Providing capacity funding to town/parish councils to map assets, services, functions and facilities to support bids for community funding and local devolution – large number of small grants	Community	273,422
CRF20: Green Recovery and Innovation Programme (SEMLEP Growth Hub)	Delivering a package of business support designed to support 100 SMEs with 1:1 & green recovery events, up to 60 grants of £10k – large grant programme	Business	492,978
CRF21: Construction Skills Programme (North Northamptonshire Council)	Delivery of construction training to 50 people. Building on previous delivery, this programme will have a particular focus on sustainable construction	<b>Skills</b> Employment	88,268