

CABINET



URN: 23-054

Report Title: Innovate UK Funding Award: Net Zero Living - Fast Followers Programme

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 5th June 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Paul Wells, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainability

Responsible Director/Officer: Paula Boyce, Executive Director - People

Is this a Key decision? Yes

Date added to Forward Plan of Key Decisions if a Key Decision: 24 April 2023

INTRODUCTION FROM CABINET MEMBER

Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) is one of 13 constituent public sector organisations in Norfolk making-up the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP). On behalf of the NCCP, GYBC applied and has been successful in securing £300,000 for a 2-year Net Zero project for Norfolk from the Government's sponsored 'Net Zero Living' programme managed by Innovate UK, the UK's national innovation agency.

Innovate UK's 'Net Zero Living – Fast Followers Programme' is a £6 million fund for local authorities aimed at building skills and capabilities to accelerate local progress towards Net Zero.

This report seeks approval to be the Accountable Body for this 2-year funded project working with NCCP partners, sharing learning across Norfolk and with other Fast Followers 'Places' nationally.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

That Cabinet :

- a) Agree the grant offer of £300,000 and in doing so, agree that Great Yarmouth Borough Council becomes the Accountable Body for 'Net Zero Living – Fast Followers Programme' on behalf of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.
- b) Delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainability working with the Executive Director – People, to agree the location of the pilot Net Zero Community in the borough of Great Yarmouth working as part of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP), formed in 2020, exists to facilitate public sector organisations in Norfolk share learning and work together to reduce territorial emissions and address climate change in Norfolk as a whole. Its website can be found here: www.norfolkclimatechange.co.uk
- 1.2 Whilst the NCCP is not a legally entity, its constituent public sector organisations operate in partnership by way of a memorandum of understanding, adding value to local place-based climate change projects and initiatives. Since its inception, the NCCP has grown to include other strategic public body partners from across Norfolk and the eastern region that can contribute to the core aims of the Partnership. In addition to the seven district/city/borough councils and the county council, the NCCP includes the New Anglia LEP, Broads Authority, Tyndall Centre/UEA, Great South Eastern Net Zero Hub and the East of England Local Government Association.
- 1.3 In January 2023 Innovate UK, a Government-sponsored public body, put out an opportunity for local authorities to apply to a £6 million fund to be part of a national '[Net Zero Living – Fast Followers Programme](#)'. With the backing of NCCP partners, Great Yarmouth Borough Council led an application on behalf of the NCCP and has been successful in being accepted on to the Fast Followers Programme. The successful geographic places chosen to be part of IUK's Fast Followers Programme join a cohort of other selected local authorities known as '[Net Zero Living - Pioneer Places](#)' to share experience and practical case studies related to climate change adaptation.
- 1.4 The NCCP last year re-set its governance and its priorities which now focus on adding value and sharing know-how in relation to: (i) the decarbonisation of energy supplies, (ii) retrofitting homes and (iii) low carbon transport solutions.

2. Norfolk Net Zero Communities – Pilot Project

- 2.1 An IUK Fast Followers grant of £300,000 is to be awarded to Great Yarmouth Borough Council on behalf of the NCCP. In order to comply with the funding agreement, GYBC as 'Accountable Body' is expected to employ a dedicated Net Zero Innovation & Delivery Manager for the term of the two-year Programme. During that time, the NCCP will plan, prepare, engage with both residents and the local clean growth business sector, set-up a unique project aimed at testing how non-technical barriers can be overcome in order to make a step change in climate change emissions related to residents/citizens. In this context, IUK's definition of non-technical barriers includes for example: consumer awareness, behaviour change, policies, financial drivers, and digital tools that will be made available to support citizens take decisions about embracing Net Zero Living and for Norfolk's clean growth sector to respond to demand created through such direct community empowerment.
- 2.2 The NCCP's Fast Followers pilot project will bring innovation and clarity for citizens and opportunities for the local supply chain and clean growth economy for Norfolk. Whilst pockets of good practice exist where residents/citizens do their own research, have the financial means to invest and navigate the myriad of non-technical barriers, this is not the norm. In Norfolk there exists many households that do not know where to start or if they do, they cannot afford the investment which hinders progression of Net Zero options at any scale.
- 2.3 The project chosen by the NCCP which will be co-ordinated by GYBC and delivered in selected areas in each of the seven district, city and borough councils is to be known as

‘Norfolk Net Zero Communities’ pilot.

2.4 The project has two ambitions:

- To provide Norfolk citizens, communities, and visitors with relevant information to enable people to take transformational steps (big or small) to modify behaviour in favour of Net Zero, empowering people to make positive choices along a pathway to Net Zero with climate change in mind.
- To support Norfolk's business sectors to benefit from clean growth, supporting business model evolution, including workforce and supply chains, to best serve local citizens choosing a pathway to Net Zero. This includes creating workforce growth, giving access to people with the clean growth skills thereby grasping the opportunities borne out of a green economy.



Norfolk Net Zero Communities

Key Outcomes:

- Consolidation of Norfolk Climate Change Partnership as a delivery pathway.
- More supportive local strategy landscape and local planning policies.
- Development and regeneration plans integrate net zero considerations.
- Shift in consumer preferences and increased demand for clean tech.
- Growth of the Low Carbon and Environmental Goods & Services sector.
- Economic opportunities and higher-value, more resilient jobs for residents.

Deliverables:

- Enable Net Zero options for citizens easier to understand and navigate.
- Co-produced key messages via engagement with citizens bringing clarity to the topic of Net Zero Living in practice.
- Stimulate consumer demand.
- Ignite Norfolk's clean growth business sector to meet the higher consumer demand generated.
- Adopt a place-based approach addressing specific barriers for 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.

2.5 Norfolk aspires to an integrated growth and regeneration framework that decouples growth from environmental harm. Its coastline is absolutely core to its sense of place; wind turbines forming part of its skyline and the low carbon and environmental goods, and services sector has a key role in our evolving economy, the livelihoods of our residents and the UK's ambition to achieve 'Net Zero' carbon. The County's topography and geography make it particularly vulnerable to the cumulative effects of climate change and the need to recognise and respond to our challenges - including the decarbonisation of communities/economies and the requirement for physical adaptation - are fully acknowledged by all partners.

2.6 Two dimensions will be tested and supported within the chosen **Norfolk Net Zero Communities**:

(1) Citizen Preparedness – working closely with the University of East Anglia (UEA) through The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research coupled with local authority insight on socio-economic and demographic data of communities, behaviour change will be tailored to provide targeted guidance to citizens & visitors to Norfolk on what they can personally do to make changes to adapt to the effects of climate change:

- How citizens/communities make changes to their homes, travel and invest, access funding, where to find trusted up-to-date sources of information and support.
- Seamless customer journey to access local services and local skilled tradespeople.
- Targeted local interventions in urban, rural, and suburban community settings to include a range of socio-demographics from citizens most likely to financially invest themselves in Net Zero adaptations and lifestyle choices, to citizens in less affluent areas who require financial support and convincing to make a switch.
- Leveraging local examples to illustrate impacts of climate change and how Net Zero options will provide 'pay back'.

(2) Clean Growth, skills and supply chain readiness - working closely with New Anglia LEP and Norfolk CC, the implementation of the right changes to grow the capability of Norfolk's business sector to grasp green growth opportunities:

- Identify opportunities to accelerate green skills development to meet expected consumer demand and implement changes.
- Attract investment to grow businesses, & change business models in line with demand.

2.7 In order to identify the seven Norfolk Net Zero Communities, work will be undertaken to identify within each local council a potential community (grouping of households) that when brought together across all seven pilot communities, is representative of different communities, insofar as:

- Housing type and tenure (social and private sector ownership)
- Age of citizens
- Affluence, deprivation
- Adjacency to transport network
- Household transport need
- Sense of community and communities facilities

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the grant will be accepted and recruitment of the NCCP post employed by GYBC will be completed. Thereafter, GYBC for the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership will join other Fast Follower places on a national learning programme and share knowledge across the NCCP organisations. In parallel with the learning, the Norfolk Net Zero Communities will be established. An outline project plan is shown below:

Citizens Preparedness:		Year 1						Year 2		
		July '23 - Aug.	Sept. - Oct.	Nov. Dec.	Jan '24 - Feb	March - April	May - June	July '24 - Aug. - Sept	Oct - Nov. - Dec. '24	Jan '25 - Feb - March 25
Phase 1 Set-up	Data and research evidence of non-technical barriers (across housing, transport and energy).									
	Agree the Net Zero Communities									
Phase 2 Implement	Co-production in real time with communities to understand barriers and generate innovative solutions to address those barriers.									
	Support the seven Norfolk Net Zero Communities, engaging citizens and visitors in behaviour change to develop the right positive interventions.									
Phase 3 Build Assets	Build the right solution / interventions including digital resources (e.g. web-based portal, Norfolk Net Zero App) giving access to suppliers.									
Phase 4 Measure Impact	Monitoring & engagement - incl. launch, test and learn from interventions which have the biggest benefit, targeted at the right citizen segmentation based on socio-demographic cohorts and guided by territorial emission data.									
Clean Growth - Industry and Business:		Year 1						Year 2		
		July '23 - Aug.	Sept. - Oct.	Nov. Dec.	Jan '24 - Feb	March - April	May - June	July '24 - Aug. - Sept	Oct - Nov. - Dec. '24	Jan '25 - Feb - March 25
Phase 1 Research	Consolidate data and undertake gap analysis to identify what is currently available to support an expansion of clean growth businesses that are able to supply citizens with services & support.									
	Engage business community, assess the ability to respond to need primarily driven by emissions data but also by the views of citizens and their demand within the seven Norfolk Net Zero Communities.									
Phase 2 Implement	Develop sustainable procurement frameworks for Norfolk, promote and make available in line with the principle of 'local supplier first'.									
Phase 3 Connect	Launch with relevant businesses to support citizens in the seven Norfolk Net Zero Communities.									
Phase 4 Measure Impact	Monitoring & engagement - incl. identification of any further skill gaps, and other non-technical barriers.									

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Innovate UK grant of £300,000 revenue covers the cost of employment of the Net Zero Innovation & Delivery Manager role for the NCCP together with costs associated with the 2-year Norfolk Net Zero Communities pilot project to 30 June 2025.

5. Risk Implications

- 5.1 A risk log has been prepared in support of the IUK application and will be maintained by the appointed Net Zero Innovation & Delivery Manager on behalf of the NCCP.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The UK Parliament legislated for 'Net Zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and published its 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener' in October 2021 pursuant to Section 14 of the Climate Change Act 2008. The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero sponsor Innovate UK and this Net Zero Living - Fast Followers Programme.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The NCCP's Fast Followers project aims to bring innovation and clarity for citizens and opportunities for the local supply chain and clean growth economy for Norfolk. Through the establishment of pilot Norfolk Net Zero Communities, the NCCP aims to establish what local

citizens need to invest in climate change and net zero adaptations.

- 7.2 Its impact includes a quantified change in citizen's behaviour and propensity to invest/move to low carbon net zero adaptations (e.g., increased retrofit homes & buildings, increased community energy schemes, making different choices on greener transport options, increased demand for local circular economy green solutions). The outcomes will be the generation of greater demand for net zero changes in local communities, the local economy and supply chains (e.g. construction, heating, technology & logistics, land management, tourism) resulting in changes in local business operating models, the creation of more green jobs and workforce opportunities, and a firm shift along the pathway to Net Zero in Norfolk.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 NCCP application to Innovate UK prepared and submitted by Great Yarmouth Borough Council (February/March 2023).

Consultations	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	As part of ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	As part of ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan Annual Action Plan 2023/24 Sustainability Strategy
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/a