

Media release

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Norfolk Leaders and Public Come Together to Tackle Climate Change

Leaders from across the county and members of the public came together at a special event that showcased new ideas and solutions to tackle climate change in Norfolk.

Hosted by the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, the Net Zero Norfolk Conference focused on the potential to deliver sustainable climate change solutions across the county, based on the findings of two innovative studies the partnership had commissioned.

The conference, which took place in Norwich, was the first of its kind held by the partnership which includes all the county's local authorities, the Broads Authority, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Member Forum, and the University of East Anglia.

Held at the end of September, the event welcomed attendees from local authorities, public bodies, and businesses, as well as members of the public.

Cllr Ian Sherwood from Breckland Council, spokesperson for the Norfolk Climate Change

Partnership Portfolio Holder Group commented: *"We have to work together if we are to overcome climate change. This includes finding new ways of working and innovation to tackle the challenges we face.*

"The studies we have commissioned offer us new ideas and highlight the potential for Norfolk. The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership will continue to consider how we can collaboratively tackle climate change across our county because together, the strength of our partnership is greater than the sum of our parts."



At the event, the potential for local communities in Norfolk to collaboratively reduce, purchase, manage, and generate energy was highlighted, based on the findings of the Community Energy Kickstarter project which was delivered by Net Zero East.

The research, which included a public webinar, detailed geo-spatial analysis of Norfolk and eight illustrative locations providing community energy case study examples.

The report highlights how communities and local stakeholders can engage and collaborate to stimulate community-based activity, provide structure, access to funding and investment. Ideas put forward included retrofitting existing housing, considering public-private partnerships, local community ownership, and unlocking the economic, social, and environmental value, amongst other suggestions.

Andy Holyland from Net Zero East said: *“There is a lot to consider going forward. Local authorities occupy a pivotal role in their respective communities, can demonstrate local leadership in their areas, and be key enablers and influencers of action at a local and community level. We have a real opportunity to realise the opportunities that exist for community energy in Norfolk”.*

“By engaging with local communities, community groups and key stakeholders, there is scope to maximise the potential for community energy. But, there isn’t a one size fits all, it will take proactive leadership and engagement to identify, prioritise and enable what might be right for them.”

The second study showcased at the event was carried out by strategic engineering and environmental consultancy Ricardo and looked at innovation and opportunities to decarbonise transport with hydrogen.

This research considered the case for green hydrogen – hydrogen made from sustainable sources such as wind and solar energy – for use in refuse collection vehicles across the county. It highlighted how, operating in a large, rural area, Norfolk refuse collection vehicles could make use of this as an alternative source of energy.

The challenges of hydrogen as an alternative fuel were also highlighted, and the hydrogen option needs to be considered against other options.

Alec Davies from Ricardo commented: *“As a large, mostly rural county, electricity has its limitations as an option for transport. Which is why we focused on the potential of green hydrogen to power refuse collection vehicles – vehicles which we know travel considerable distances each week and require extra energy for compacting loaded refuse.*

“Our work has allowed us to understand what could be possible for the county, and through green hydrogen use, Norfolk could take full potential of its natural renewables such as solar and wind energy.”

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership will continue to work together to consider next steps based on the outcomes of the findings and other activities to tackle climate change across the county.

Both the studies have been funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Steve Blatch, Chief Executive of North Norfolk District Council and Co-Chair of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership Member Group commented: *“These two studies have given us a lot of thought and a greater understanding of the potential for Norfolk.*

“The Net Zero conference allowed us to come together to outline the opportunities and the feasibility to overcome the challenges that we face.”

Lorraine Gore, Chief Executive of Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk and Co-Chair of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership Member Group added: *“The challenges around net zero are complex and we need to look at everything we can.*

“Innovation and partnership working can take us forward, and it was great to see so many people coming together at the Net Zero Conference with a shared purpose and commitment to addressing climate change for Norfolk.”



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Notes to editors:

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership was established on the 6th January 2020.

The aim of this partnership is to help develop Norfolk into an exemplar in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing its natural environment. Members are Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Breckland Council, Broadland Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, the Broads Authority, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Member Forum, and the University of East Anglia.

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership will share knowledge and practises, regarding how local authorities can respond to climate change, as well as how the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership can influence climate change in Norfolk as a whole.

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership has a shared interest in supporting Norfolk's authorities, communities, public, voluntary and community organisations, businesses, and residents to reduce their carbon emissions, realise economic benefits of reducing utilities consumption and adapt to and mitigate against the future impacts of climate change.

This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund. The UK Community Renewal Fund is a UK Government programme for 2021/22. This aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches to prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It invests in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus>

