

3 August 2023,

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) has been successful in securing £300,000 of government funding to run a two-year 'Net Zero Living' pilot project led by Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC).

Called 'Norfolk Net Zero Communities' this innovative pilot project is one of only 21 successful locations across the UK. The Partnership will use the funding to support one community in each of the seven Norfolk districts, working with householders and local community organisations to explore ways to decarbonise homes and travel to help tackle climate change across Norfolk.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is the lead authority to deliver the project working with all NCCP partner agencies across Norfolk, which include Breckland Council, Broadland Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council, Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the East of England LGA, the Broads Authority and the University of East Anglia through The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

The money was awarded to the Partnership following a successful application to the Net Zero Living Fast Followers Programme managed by Innovate UK – the Government's national innovation agency. This is a £6m pot of funding made available to local authorities to help build skills and accelerate progress towards Net Zero.

Known as the Fast Followers Programme, the funding will be used to help build skills and accelerate progress towards Net Zero. With the backing of its partners, GYBC led its application on behalf of the NCCP. The Partnership joins other selected local authorities nationwide as part of the programme.

The two-year project will see the Partnership work with residents and businesses and set-up a unique programme aimed at testing how barriers can be overcome in order to make a step change in reducing emissions. Consumer awareness, behaviour change, policies, financial drivers and digital tools will all be made available to support households and help business to respond to demand.

Working closely with all NCCP partners the project will focus on low carbon Net Zero adaptations such as retrofitting homes, community energy schemes and greener transport, in the local economy, construction, heating, technology, logistics, land management and tourism industries. This will create a spotlight on climate change with the aim of creating more green jobs and a shift to Net Zero.

[Name of District/City/Borough/County NCCP lead officer], said: "Pockets of good practice exist where people do their own research, have the financial means to invest and navigate myriad barriers, but this is not the norm. In Norfolk, there are many households that simply do not know where to start or, if they do, can't afford the investment.

“Our Fast Followers programme will be delivered in selected areas in each of the county’s seven district, city and borough councils and will provide people with the necessary information to take transformational steps to modify behaviour in favour of Net Zero, empowering them to make positive choices with climate change in mind.

“It will also support Norfolk business so it can benefit from clean growth by creating new jobs and access to those with relevant skills to help us grasp the opportunities of a green economy.”

[Name of NCCP councillor/portfolio holder] and member of the Partnership, said: “This grant award is excellent news. Norfolk’s aspiration is for an integrated growth and regeneration framework that decouples growth from environmental harm. And this pilot programme will help us accelerate that work and make significant changes.

“The low carbon and environmental goods and services sector has a vital role to play in our evolving economy, the livelihoods of our residents and the national ambition to achieve Net Zero carbon.

“Norfolk’s geography makes it particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and this will help NCCP address and take on some of the challenges we face.”

The Fast Followers scheme is part of Innovate UK’s Net Zero Living Programme which is designed to help places and businesses across the UK accelerate the delivery of the transition to Net Zero.

A competitive process saw 21 local authorities receive a total of £6m from Fast Followers to help their areas increase innovation all with the aim of achieving Net Zero. The projects cover urban areas like Birmingham and Edinburgh and rural areas like Devon and the Outer Hebrides and, like Norfolk’s programme, all are designed to overcome non-technical barriers like public engagement or procurement.

Mike Biddle, executive director, Net Zero, Innovate UK, said: “The winners demonstrate innovative ideas that are designed at grass roots level. Seeing the range of projects is inspiring and, as well as running their individual initiatives, the local authorities will share best practice allowing others to capitalise on proven solutions.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

- 1) The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) was formed in 2020 and exists to facilitate public sector organisations in Norfolk to share learning and work together to

reduce territorial emissions and address climate change in the county. The organisations aim to add value to local placed-based climate change projects and initiatives.

NCCP has grown to include other strategic public body partners from across Norfolk and the eastern region. In addition to the seven district/city/borough councils and the county council, it now includes the New Anglia LEP, Broads Authority, Tyndall Centre/UEA, Great South Eastern Net Zero Hub and the East of England Local Government Association. Its focus is on adding value and sharing knowledge in relation to the decarbonisation of energy supplies, retrofitting homes and low carbon transport solutions. See the NCCP website www.norfolkclimatechange.co.uk

- 2) Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is the UK's innovation agency. It works to create a better future by inspiring, involving and investing in businesses developing life-changing innovations. With an annual budget of more than £1 billion it provides businesses with the expertise, facilities and funding they need to test, demonstrate and evolve their ideas, driving UK productivity and economic growth.