

# Climate Change Advisory Committee

Notes of a Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the **13<sup>th</sup> January 2022**.

## **Present:**

Cllr. Barrett (Chairman);  
Cllr. Feacey (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Anckorn, Blanford, Campkin, Ledger, Mulholland.

## **Apology:**

Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager

## **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Clokie, Forest, Harman, Iliffe, Michael, Ovenden, Shorter, Walder, Wright.

Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications, Head of Environment & Land Management, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Development & Regeneration Manager, Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader, Senior Mechanical & Electrical Surveyor, Waste & Recycle Education Officer, Strategy and Policy Development Manager, Senior Marketing Officer, Member Services Officer.

## **1. Declaration of Interest**

- 1.1 Cllr. Feacey made a Voluntary Announcement, as he was on the Management Committee of UK LPG.
- 1.2 Cllr. Mulholland made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Tenterden Town Council.

## **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

## **3. Draft Terms of Reference**

- 3.1 The Chairman advised that the Terms of Reference had changed since the previous Committee had met. He asked Members whether they were happy with the draft Terms, which would then be signed off by the Leader, and the following points were raised:

- A Member asked if the full title of the Action Plan could be changed, since it currently read as Carbon Reduction Action Plan (CRAP). Members and Officers agreed and Carbon Neutral Action Plan was proposed in its place.
- Officers and Members were unsure who the ABC Climate Change Group were, mentioned at Point 7. The Leader would be asked for clarification on this and remove if this was duplication of this Committee.
- The Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications suggested that the Communications Team be cited specifically at point 4 (viii). In addition, reference to the Green Communications Plan would be useful.
- The Chairman added that he had drafted a letter to be sent out to the major supermarkets and businesses as a pilot scheme in the Borough. It was requested by Members that Brake Brothers and Ashford College be included in the distribution, and the letter could be circulated throughout the Council.

**Recommended:**

**That the Draft Terms of Reference be updated to reflect the amendments stated and then sent to the Leader for signing off.**

## **4. Developing Ashford's Carbon Descent Plan (presentation from LASER)**

4.1 Helen Cartledge and Lloyd Milner attended and represented Laser Energy. They gave a presentation to the Committee, outlining the work already completed and what was to follow in order to begin the modelling process. The next steps were to conduct additional studies to include a District Emissions Study, Science Based Targets Pathway and Supply Chain Assessment. The Project end date of March was aligned with a Members Engagement Workshop that would hopefully take place in February. The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following points and questions were raised:-

- The Chairman highlighted the issue of including Well to Tank within the carbon emissions figures. Most of the Committee Members would agree to include those figures but it was suggested that more time be given to consider this decision. The Chairman agreed that he would liaise with Committee Members offline and return to Laser with a decision within 7/10 days.

- The scope Laser were currently working with excluded ABC Housing. The Chairman advised that the Housing Dept. were planning to give a presentation on their plans at the next meeting in March. A number of queries were raised regarding the Council's housing stock. Members were interested to understand what the percentage of carbon effect was from social housing, compared to the scope of everything else outlined within the report and they agreed that it needed to be reviewed in context with everything else. The Chairman spoke about reducing EPC ratings within Council houses (to move from E/D rating to a C rating) and the huge cost of that undertaking, which was in the region of £80 million. This would need to come from the HRA fund, but it was an essential cost and task.
- A Member asked about the inclusion of targets and milestones. Helen explained that these could be included and contain assumptions and timeframes. She added that there was flexibility and targets could be revised and adjusted if it became apparent that they were not achievable, taking into consideration the limited Local Authority budget. Any milestones for the modelling would be included from 2022 to 2030 to keep them inclusive with the declaration made by ABC. The Member highlighted that it was important for the Committee to comprehend why some targets would need to be revised if that was the case.
- A question was asked concerning the suggested figure of 3270 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, and whether that was that in absolute terms. Helen explained that when looking at accounting for growth in terms of ABC, Laser would review the baseline.  
Post Meeting additional comment: Growth & associated consumption occurring after the initial baseline year of 19/20 would be incorporated within the initial year of growth and then future years. The GHG protocol advises that base year emissions and any historic data are not recalculated for organic growth or decline – in this case acquisitions or closures by ABC.
- When considering use of green electricity – solar or hydro generated, Laser could provide a Green tariff, produced from renewable sources and certified. Other options included a Green Energy Basket or PEPPA (Public Energy Power Purchase Agreement) – these sources for the Green Energy Basket and PEPPA were traceable and a PEPPA contract revenue could be used to initiate construction of new build renewable energy assets. The Member Engagement Workshop would explore this topic in more detail.
- Concerning procurement, Central Government were looking at carbon reduction plans, which would need to be provided with procurement of contracts over £5 million, but that figure may decrease over time. A number of templates would be provided to assist companies to produce their carbon footprint.
- Discussion turned to the huge cost of decarbonisation and how to demonstrate to the public what action was currently underway. The Chairman asked if ABC were to decarbonise along the route set out by Laser, would they at some point begin to generate revenue. Helen advised that

installations of solar farms could generate excess energy that could be exported back to the grid, which would create revenue, and had a payback of on average 20 years and savings were associated with reduction in gas and electricity use. Solar PV panels and LED lighting could also potentially generate income/save costs, after the payback period. It was agreed that there would be a large initial front spend, and the focus was primarily on reducing carbon emissions as opposed to generating revenue. The Council also had to consider that the more carbon emissions they had remaining, the more they would then need to offset. This would increase the Councils risk exposure, since prices on the open market were likely to fluctuate.

- A Member asked about installation of solar PV on buildings including council houses instead of a solar farm, which would take up green space. Helen explained that there were three solar projects already in the pipeline, which would be included in the modelling. Other available areas such as car parks and roof spaces would also be taken into consideration for the modelling.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

## **5. Feedback from the consultation on the Carbon Reduction Plan**

5.1 The Strategy and Policy Development Manager gave a presentation to the Committee summarising the results from the consultation. The presentation outlined and gave details through the following headings:

- Overall Aim
- 8 Priorities
- Consultation
- Questionnaire
- Social Media
- Face to Face
- Key Messages
- Next Steps

5.2 The Chairman expressed disappointment in regards to the low response rate and considered the possibility of alternative methods of communicating with residents. A Member alluded that the pandemic was a key reason why the response rate was so low, with people struggling to direct their focus away from Covid and its effects. She went onto say that the public were still highly motivated on carbon reduction and that the information provided by ABC to its residents should be clear, concise and honest.

5.3 The Committee went onto consider the issue of communication. Sponsored Ads and algorithms was cited as another method to increase the communicative reach of the Council, and the Senior Marketing Officer agreed

but said the problem was budget restraints within the Council. Public Engagement days were also encouraged and the Chairman requested that the topic of public engagement be made a priority for the Committee to review and feedback.

## **6 Green Communications Plan**

6.1 The Senior Marketing Officer and Waste & Recycle Education Officer spoke to the Committee and gave a brief presentation covering the following themes:

- Green Pioneer Objectives
- What we are doing already
- Green Communications Group aim
- Ashford Green Focus Group
- Where do we go from here (results from Consultation, Mayors events, and what residents want to see)
- Climate Action Communications Plan
- ABC Communications Resource Library
- Further Ideas

6.2 The item was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions/comments were raised:

- The Chairman reiterated the significance of public engagement being made a priority, in the future. The Waste & Recycle Education Officer confirmed that some engagement events had already been set up with 11 local Schools having been invited to an event in March.
- A Member spoke about engagement in rural areas and encouraged Officers to feed material into Parish newsletters and approach KALC with information.

## **7. Air Quality Strategy**

7.1 The Strategy and Policy Development Manager explained to the Committee that there were many similarities and duplicate actions between the Air Quality Strategy and the Carbon Neutral Action Plan, and therefore the proposal was that the two be merged. They shared many synergies and objectives, and so it seemed logical that they sit together.

7.2 The item was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions/comments were raised:

- The Chairman spoke about roadside planting and considered how it could be expanded. The Head of Environment & Land Management explained that the Aspire Manager was working on this in terms of additional pollinators that could overlap with the plants that could absorb more pollutants.

- A Member spoke about the SPD for Planning and what could be done in terms of Carbon reduction. Planning Officers were reviewing this and so more info should be available soon.
- The issue around sustainable land management and retention of mature trees was raised, with particular reference to landowners. A Member reinforced the importance of retention alongside planting new trees, and suggested this be ramped up within the report. The Head of Environment & Land Management reassured the Committee that a Tree Officer vacancy was being advertised to take forward the Queens Green Canopy Project, and within the next two years, a wider tree-planting programme was being set up.

**Resolved:**

**That the actions listed in the Air Quality Strategy be incorporated into the Carbon Neutral Action Plan.**

## **8. Initiatives to Increase Electric Charging Points in ABC Car Parks Report**

- 8.1 This item was deferred to an extra meeting scheduled for Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January.

## **9. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme update**

- 9.1 The Head of Corporate Property and Projects introduced this item and spoke about the opportunity to draw down monies for the Stour Centre decarbonisation works. £1.7 million of Government funding had been secured and enabled ABC to implement significant energy saving measures. A quirk around the VAT meant that some additional funds had been reallocated to support further initiatives, principally at Tenterden Leisure Centre. There were numerous grant opportunities available, which proactively needed to be explored. The point was made that if the utility contracts had not been competently managed, ABC would have incurred an extra £550,000 expenditure. Members needed to be mindful of Carbon savings, but in addition consider the revenue implications of utilities increasing.
- 9.2 The item was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions/comments were raised:
- The Chairman asked about photovoltaic panels/canopy schemes and the potential to utilise them in the Stour Centre car park. The Development & Regeneration Manager was exploring this option, and had to consider the requisite to provide a safe environment in regards to anti-social behaviour concerning a canopy scheme.

- In terms of a green supplier for the Civic Centre, Laser Energy were currently managing a blended basket approach on ABC's behalf, but this contract would end in 2023 and therefore the opportunity to review alternatives and consider the financial effects would be presented then.

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