

Climate Change Advisory Committee

Notes of a Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the **17th May 2022**.

Present:

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

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

Also Present:

Cllrs. Forest, Wright.

Head of Environment & Land Management, Waste & Recycle Education Officer, Allotment & Service Support Officer, Specialist Management Support Officer, Project Manager Carbon Neutrality, Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1. Declaration of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Feacey made a Voluntary Announcement, as he was on the Management Committee of UK LPG.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Presentation on Waste Contract

- 3.1 The Head of Environment & Land Management introduced this item and gave a presentation which covered:
- Directions in collections, including consultation and plastics discussion
 - Current contract
 - Future options
 - Current direction
 - Tender specification
 - Government consultations
 - Consistent collections
 - Black plastics
 - Discussion points
 - Considerations to explore
 - Packaging producer responsibility reform
 - Deposit return scheme

- DRS – management
- Uncertainty.

3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were made:

- A Member asked about the future of black plastics as a product. The Head of Environment & Land Management said that industry was currently seeking alternative colours for plastic usage.
- A member asked whether there was current consideration of LPG/diesel combined vehicles. He also considered that it was important to check the age of the collection vehicles and ensure that new stock was provided. The Head of Environment & Land Management said that the Council would be pushing for new Euro 6 vehicles. Officers would make enquiries about the use of LPG vehicles as part of the tender process. Contract vehicles were likely to be a combination of HVO and diesel. Electric vehicles were problematic due to the price and the lack of infrastructure in the Borough for an entire fleet.
- A Member asked if data was available on the difference in recycling rates. The Head of Environment & Land Management said that the Council was performing well and recovery rates were higher than in neighbouring authorities. Data was shared with officers and the Kent Resource Partnership and the Head of Environment & Land Management said he would share details with Members of the Committee.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Environment & Land Management advised that, although the Council did not presently provide composting bins, residents were encouraged to compost. It was important to advise residents not to mix the residual stream. The collected garden waste was currently turned to compost at Blaise Farm and it would be possible for officers to arrange a visit to the facility for Members. The Head of Environment & Land Management would make further enquiries. He also confirmed that some food waste was composted.
- A Member asked about the disposal of captured methane and the Head of Environment & Land Management advised that it was captured and turned into fuel.
- A Member asked about the disposal of recycling. The Head of Environment & Land Management explained that it was passed on the KCC and then taken to a facility in Crayford. It was also possible to visit this site. KCC kept a record of the destination of the recycling and this information was available on the KCC website. The aim was to keep the recycling within the country and not export overseas.

- There was a question about the provision of education and advice on reducing waste, particularly food waste, by residents. The Head of Environment & Land Management said that the Council was looking to drive outcomes through the new roles that had been created. Although food waste collection data was good, it was important to encourage residents to reduce food waste in the first place. There had been a recent campaign to push for food waste reduction, and it was intended to focus intensively on this issue in the future. The Waste & Recycle Education Officer added that education drives had been restricted last year, but various events were planned for the coming year, with an education campaign on plastics in July.
- The Chairman said that he was pleased to note that the Council had the best recovery statistics in Kent. He went on to ask about the potential to provide an electric flat-bed truck to pick up small electric waste items or electrify the current truck used by Biffa to pick up other large non-electrical waste items. He questioned whether this could be negotiated within the new contract. The Head of Environment & Land Management said that the Council was pushing for the best outcome possible in terms of the fleet provision, but there were concerns about the distances that needed to be covered around the Borough and the viability of electric vehicles in this regard. The Chairman asked officers specifically to raise the provision of an electric flat-bed truck as part of forthcoming tender discussions.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

4. Presentation on Water Retention at Allotments

4.1 The Allotment & Service Support Officer introduced this item and gave a presentation which covered:

- Scope of project, including provision of sustainable water
- Water use and cost
- Education
- Tenant collected water
- Options – borehole drilling/rainwater harvesting.

4.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were raised:

- A Member asked whether the proposals covered private as well as Council-owned allotments. The Allotment & Service Support Officer advised that the proposals did not cover private/Parish allotments, although it was possible to liaise with other allotment holders and pass on any learning points.

- A Member asked about 'no dig' gardening and whether it was possible to provide education on this to reduce water usage. He noted that woodchips were required to start the process and he asked whether this was something that Aspire could supply. The Allotment & Service Support Officer said that Aspire had indicated that they could supply woodchips. The Ashford Allotment Society also arranged for woodchips to be provided to different sites.
- There was a question about cultural approaches towards allotment use. The Allotment & Service Support Officer explained that hosepipe usage on allotments was not allowed without special permission, and even in such cases it was not permitted to use the hosepipe directly but only to fill a water butt. He added that he was often on site to monitor hosepipe use.
- In response to a question, the Allotment & Service Support Officer advised that it was possible to obtain food grade IBC's.
- A Member suggested that water butts could be provided through co-funding with water companies. The Allotment & Service Support Officer said that this worth pursuing. South East Water had already indicated that they had spare water butts which could be used as part of a water-saving competition.
- The Head of Environment & Land Management praised the work undertaken by the Allotment & Service Support Officer since his arrival at the Council. He confirmed that officers were working towards establishing an understanding of diversity with clear cross-cultural communications to clarify guidelines for allotment usage.
- A Member asked whether there was a list of all allotment holders, including private ones, so that they could all be sent a copy of the newsletter. The Allotment & Service Support Officer said he did not have access to contact details for parish allotment holders, but it would be possible for residents to sign up for the newsletter via the Council's website and an up to date copy of the newsletter would always be available on the website. It was also intended to put articles into Ashford For You magazine to achieve more widespread communication. The newsletter would also be provided to Parish Councils for display on their notice boards.

- The Chairman asked the Allotment & Service Support Officer to visit Dover and afterwards provide him with an A4 brief on borehole drilling.
- The Committee recommended that at least one water butt should be provided on every shed or building on every allotment owned by the Council within the next 12 months. The Chairman also asked the Allotment & Service Support Officer to investigate the potential for harvesting water run-off from roofs. The Chairman advised that this item would also be discussed again at the September Committee meeting, with a presentation on progress.

Resolved:

That the Climate Advisory Committee recommends that at least one water butt should be provided on every shed or building on every allotment owned by the Council within the next 12 months.

5. Update of Climate Action – A Systemic Approach

5.1 The Specialist Management Support Officer introduced this item and gave a presentation on the forthcoming report to Cabinet in June, which would present the Carbon Net Zero Strategy. The presentation covered:

- Context
- Informed approach
- Laser data
- The bigger picture
- Consultation key messages
- Net zero navigator
- Revised strategy
- Key priorities
- Climate Action Team – CAT
- Action Plan 22-24
- Summary

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- The Chairman noted that government funds were available for decarbonisation and he urged officers to ensure that the Council took all available opportunities and maintained an oversight of the funding possibilities.

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- The Chairman noted that government funds were available for decarbonisation and he urged officers to ensure that the Council took all available opportunities and maintained an oversight of the funding possibilities.
- A Member asked whether the Planning SPD document would include reference to solar panels, type 2 charging points and water butts on all houses. The Specialist Management Support Officer said she believed Planning officers were currently considering the viability of the SPD route itself as directed by the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group but would ensure these views were passed on to relevant officers. Although building regulations were due to be amended in 2025, officers were looking at how the Council could support better standards earlier so interim housing development would be less likely to require retro-fitting from the outset.
- The Member asked the Specialist Management Support Officer to pursue the inclusion of solar panels, type 2 charging points and water butts in the Planning SPD. The Chairman asked the Specialist Management Support Officer to provide a brief to him shortly to formulate an agenda item for discussion at the September Committee meeting.
- The Chairman noted that decarbonising the entire Council's estate would only produce an estimated 3% reduction in the Borough's overall carbon footprint. He said it was essential to educate and engage with the community to influence residents on this issue.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

6. AOB including Project Updates

- 6.1 The Project Manager Carbon Neutrality introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key points within the update paper. She said more details would be available as the projects progressed.
- 6.2 The Chairman said that this update paper was very useful and he would like this to be an item at each Committee meeting. He also asked the Project Manager Carbon Neutrality to email him with a short brief on any important progress between meetings.
- 6.3 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were raised:

- A Member asked about ground source heat pumps and whether they could be used on the Stour Centre and the new flats nearby. The Project Manager Carbon Neutrality said that officers were currently looking into this issue. There would be conversations and a presentation on heat networks in the following week.
- There was some discussion on the viability of producing hydroelectricity in the Borough, but the Chairman said that at present he wished to focus on the potential for providing solar and wind energy.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

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