

# Climate Change Advisory Committee

Notes of a Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the **2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022.**

## **Present:**

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

Cllrs. Blanford, Campkin, Ledger, Mulholland.

## **Apologies:**

Climate Change Manager, Strategy and Policy Development Manager, Waste & Recycle Education Officer.

## **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Buchanan, Forest, Ovenden, Walder, Wright.

Director of Place, Space and Leisure, Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation, Housing Development & Regeneration Manager, Project Manager Carbon Neutrality, 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. Walder made a Voluntary Announcement, as her husband worked for the GEAPP Project.

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

- 2.1 There were some amendments to be made to the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022:
  - The Director of Place, Space and Leisure (recorded as previous job title Head of Environment & Land Management) was not present at that meeting and had given her apologies.
  - The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager had been present at the meeting.
  - A Member asked that point 3.2 ('A Member asked whether there was current consideration of LPG/diesel combined vehicles') be amended to clarify that this was referring to waste collection vehicles, and not vehicles

in general.

- A Member asked for an update on Item 3 – ‘various events were planned for the coming year, with an education campaign on plastics in July’. The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation advised that she would ask for an update and feedback to Members about this.

### 3. Decarbonisation Update

3.1 The Project Manager Carbon Neutrality introduced this item and gave a verbal update to the Committee that covered the following subjects and points:

- Carlton Road Business Park – A Contractor had been appointed. Scope of project altered so instead of exporting all energy generated by the panels back to the grid, each unit would now be powered individually. In addition, more panels would be used to power the Aspire site.
- Stour Centre solar array – Feasibility study had been completed with results showing that majority of the power generated would be taken up by the Stour Centre. Survey reports showed that even if there was surplus energy, the Civic Centre electrical system was far too outdated to be incorporated. Next stage was to have designs made and submit planning permission.
- Ellingham Industrial Estate - Quotes received for the feasibility studies and the Building Maintenance team were reviewing those. The re-roofing project would likely sit with Building Maintenance. A project group would assess how to tackle the project as a whole – specifically looking at options of decanting tenants or carrying out the work with them in situ, due to the identification of some asbestos. Pending the results of a heat decarbonisation survey, PIDs would be written to agree funding, after which a project timeline be decided. Likely to be a 2023/4 project.
- International House - Re-roofing project due to start spring next year. (More info in PSLCSF section)
- Acquisitions - Continuing work with GIS and the Land Mapping Commission to identify the factors e.g. grid connections, car parks, areas of biodiversity etc. and what ABC control over the land is.
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) - An opportunity to gain grant funding to retrofit a significant proportion of housing stock and take them up to an EPC rating of C. Have identified around 750 eligible homes. Will be working with a company called Turner & Townsend alongside energy company EON. The project aims to retrofit social housing in the EPC band D category and lower, adopting a fabric first approach. If successful, the bid could provide 50% match funding and could bring forward work already planned within HRA (Housing Revenue Account) budgets, making a significant impact on our asset decarbonisation plan by

front-loading activity in years earlier than planned. A core group of officers have been assembled to work on this bid, with submission opening in October and decisions given in February 2023. If successful, work must be completed by March 2025 to complete the work.

- Green Heat Network Fund - application window open until 2025 and had met with KENSA who manufacture/supply ground source heat pumps/install heat networks to discuss a possible strategy. Suitable sites for GSHP networks would be identified. A standalone bid would probably not be viable this year as it required significant planning, unless it could be tied into the SHDF bid/Ellingham project.
- Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (PSLCSF) - This fund provided grants to source industry experts to devise heat decarbonisation plans. ABC had successfully secured £11,400 to develop detailed heat decarbonisation surveys for International House and the Julie Rose Stadium. Working with APSE to carry out the work, and will tie in with the re-roofing project currently underway at International House. Initial discussions between APSE and ABC project group scheduled for later this week. March 2023 was the deadline to complete the surveys. Possible that a ground source heat solution may be a pathway to decarbonise those sites, but interventions would be evidence led, so this can't be guaranteed at this time.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) –  
PSDS1 Tenterden Leisure Centre (project change from funds left from Stour Centre project). Air Source Heat Pump that supplies heat to new Air Handling unit is partially commissioned. Air handling unit 90% assembled, awaiting commissioning and heat on this week or next.  
PSDS3 Contract with Alliance Leisure (procurement partner) being signed. Awaiting full scheme design details from Leisure Energy for Civic Centre, and Tenterden Leisure Centre.  
PSDS3b Another round of PSDS coming. Applications open in September and requirements are to have feasibility complete or be at a stage in the procurement process where ready to appoint a contractor. Looked at current projects and none fit this category –therefore highly unlikely ABC will be bidding for this round of funding.

3.2 The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following points and questions were raised:-

- The Director of Place, Space and Leisure mentioned the possibility that street cleansing vehicles could draw power from the Carlton Road site, and she would pick this up with the Project Manager Carbon Neutrality outside of the meeting. The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation added that planning restrictions may need to be reviewed in line with opening times of the site. The Chairman highlighted that it was logical to use excess power generated at these types of sites in this way.

- The leisure centres would be run exclusively on green power once the new systems were fitted.
- The Project Manager Carbon Neutrality advised that the verbal update would be summarised within the Minutes. The Chairman suggested meeting with key officers to disseminate the information that they received, including how to circulate to Parishes. A suggestion had been made that the Chairman deliver a blog, and this would be picked up by the Climate Change Manager when she returned from leave. A Member with experience of blogs offered her assistance with delivering the blog and added that the focus be broadened to ensure rural areas are encompassed.
- A Member asked what was the likelihood of the electrical system in the Civic Centre being updated. The Assistant Director of Environment, Property & Recreation explained that the long term future of the Civic Centre was being considered, as the electrics were just one aspect of the costly improvements needed. The Chairman added that once all the final estimates were received, a thorough evaluation would be undertaken to reach a decision.
- The Chairman asked about the SHDF and the Housing Development & Regeneration Manager advised that an update would be given at the next meeting, although the result of the bid would not be known until February 2023.

## **4. Ground Source Heat Pumps - A Future Solution?**

4.1 The Development & Regeneration Manager introduced this item and said that the Project Manager Carbon Neutrality had touched upon this topic during her Funding Update, for the bidding rounds for this type of heating system. He then gave a comprehensive presentation to the Committee, which covered the following topics/themes:

- Background – prioritisation of our activity
- How do Heat Pumps work
- Benefits of Heat Pumps
- High Level Benefits
- Potential applications - scalability
- Commercialisation Opportunities

4.2 The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following points and questions were raised:-

- A Member spoke about a visit he and some colleagues had made to Gravesham Borough Council where they had observed Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP's). He highlighted that the technology was established and proven effective, and he felt was an exciting opportunity for the Council. It also had the potential to deal not only with net zero objectives, but also cost of

living crisis.

- The Chairman asked about the cooling element of the Pumps. The Development & Regeneration Manager explained that the passive form to action was very simple and inexpensive, but thought was being given to how best to install the active version in the future.
- The presentation highlighted a proposal that ABC become an energy company and it was important to ascertain that in this scenario, the Council would distribute the heat but the cost of powering the pumps would be for the residents to choose and go out to market for their supply, which essentially could make the system greener over time.
- In response to a question asking whether the heat could be stored or continuously flow through the network, the Development & Regeneration Manager explained that the heat would continue to flow. The ultimate aspiration was to connect residential and industrial buildings into the network to enable it to feed any surplus from them through the system. There were methods to collect it using a heat battery, which would store the heat.
- Regarding losses over distance, it was explained that this was not an issue, because the pipes buried in the ground were collecting and retaining energy along the system. A borehole depth could be between 60 to 200 meters.
- Rural connectivity was discussed and the potential for properties that were currently not on the grid. In areas where new development was intended, there could be a planning requirement to install boreholes for GSHPs.
- A Member commented that the GSHP scheme was established and worked extremely well in Scandinavian countries, whilst Air Source Pumps were not as productive in terms of being expensive, noisy, unsightly, and planning approval could be contentious. She added that ABC Officers had made great progress with this.
- The Chairman asked about price comparisons between this scheme and a Gas Central heating system. The Development & Regeneration Manager explained that the costs were not dissimilar, but the upfront pumps costs were slightly greater, but then there was then a saving over time on maintenance and upkeep. A big advantage was that it could be retrofitted into properties, alongside the existing heating system and hot water system. A Member asked whether a Supplementary Planning Document could be a requirement that GSHP's installed on all new builds. The Director of Place, Space and Leisure explained that the Planning Service were looking at drafting an SPD for climate change and as part of that would look to the market to ensure the viability. It was highlighted that from 2025 all new builds would not include Gas fired boilers, so alternatives would have to be sourced. Some developers may favour Air Source Heat Pumps since the initial cost was lower.
- In response to a question asking how many houses each borehole would serve, the Development & Regeneration Manager confirmed that one would

serve three houses, so the proportionate cost was £7000. A cheaper solution could be a provider of the infrastructure who then sold that heat energy to residents, and they could then connect to the service for a one off fee. Multiple boreholes would be necessary for a larger housing development. The installers considered the geology and boreholes were constructed to last 100+ years. They needed adequate spacing and areas that were predominantly clay were considered favourable. There was minimal visual impact on the landscape, since they were similar to manholes on the ground.

## **5. Solar Go - design and purpose**

- 5.1 The Vice-Chairman introduced this item concerning the Solar Go project, that had been compiled after reviewing the KCC project called Solar Together, and was a Councillor led initiative for an ABC led Solar PV Grant Scheme, devised by Cllrs Barrett and Feacey. They had identified that a saving of approx. £350 per year on an average house could be made. The proposal was that a grant of £2,000 per household be made available (up to 100 properties max) to enable them to use towards the cost of installing solar PV panels. He then opened the presentation up to the Committee for their views.
- 5.2 The Chairman voiced his support of the project and advised that out of 36,000 properties in the Borough, Solar PV uptake via the Solar Together scheme had been in in the region of 180 households. Therefore, there was still lots of work to do in this area and it was hoped that this pilot scheme would increase the uptake.
- 5.3 Members praised the idea and hoped the number of households the grant was available to could increase following this pilot scheme. The Vice-Chairman added that this was in effect a subsidy, since the scheme would generate energy that could be fed back into the grid. Approx. 500,000 acres of roof space in the UK were available for Solar PV. A Member spoke about the possibility of households joining together to install an inverter for the panels.
- 5.4 The Director of Place, Space and Leisure voiced some concern regarding the scheme being open to employees and Members, since this could be perceived that ABC were potentially looking to benefit themselves. She also suggested payment upon invoice rather than payment upon receipt, because this would avoid applicants having to find the entire cost and contractors inspecting the panels before any payments being made, and payment could also then be made directly to the contractor. Furthermore concerning the Council Tax band A-D criteria; she proposed using the EPC rating of properties instead, since the Fabric First concept was a priority. The Vice Chairman responded to those queries and explained that the scheme was open to all residents paying Council Tax and it was felt that it was unfair to exclude employees and Members, if they met the criteria. A Member agreed that there was no need to omit anyone, so long as they fit the criteria. Ultimately, the goal was to put as many panels on as many roofs as possible. He agreed that payment upon invoice was a good suggestion and the project

team would explore that. He explained that to avoid placing barriers in people's way, they would keep the Council Tax banding criteria.

- 5.5 The scheme would need to be promoted via more traditional methods, as well as social media, to ensure all residents were aware, and the period for advertising be sufficient before the scheme was opened to applications. A Member suggested setting up Parish Workshops, to ensure those not able to navigate the forms are able to submit their applications.
- 5.6 The Chairman observed that the Committee welcomed the pilot scheme and approved for the Project Team to take it forward. He agreed with the suggestion to issue payment upon invoice, to the contractor. He added that the scheme would hopefully be over-subscribed, and a discussion would then be needed as to next steps going forward.
- 5.7 The next step now was for the report to be submitted into the Cabinet process, as a recommendation from the Climate Change Advisory Committee firstly to CBM, and then to Cabinet.

## **6. Further Project Updates**

- 6.1 Big Green Week was a national initiative running from 24<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October following Central Government's expectation that District Councils would help to boost carbon reduction in the population by around 30-35%. ABC were arranging events throughout the Town Centre and had been liaising with County Square, Park Mall and various suppliers. Green companies would be invited to come and promote themselves and their products, as part of the Green Agenda and Members were encouraged to attend events throughout the week.

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services:  
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