

Climate Change Advisory Committee

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

Present:

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

Cllrs. Anckorn, Campkin, Ledger.

Apology:

Cllr. Mulholland

Also Present:

Cllr. Wright.

Head of Policy & Performance, Climate Change Manager, Project Manager Carbon Neutrality, Senior Climate Action Officer, Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure, Spatial Planning Manager, Housing Development & Regeneration Manager, Senior Mechanical & Electrical Surveyor, 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, the Managing Director of Energyshift and was the Chairman of the Ashford Volunteer Centre.
- 1.2 Cllr. Campkin made a Voluntary Announcement as a Councillor for KCC.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.2 The Vice-Chair asked about the Sustainable Warmth Scheme and the deadline to spend the £1.6m by the 31st March 2023. The Climate Change Manager advised she would check and could explore producing additional comms on this.
- 2.3 The Vice-Chair enquired whether an update was available on point 5.2 of the minutes; Officers further investigations relating to water savings on allotments. The Senior Climate Action Officer advised that two containers at Singleton Environment Centre would be offered to ABC. There was a further question regarding point 5.4 and the Blaze Farm Compost scheme being made

available again. The Environmental Contracts Team would be asked to respond to the Committee regarding the Compost Scheme.

- 2.4 The Chairman suggested that the Member Services Officer highlight in red questions arising in each meeting requesting further information from Officers, within the notes.

3. Climate Change Planning Guidance

- 3.1 The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure introduced this item and gave a presentation to the Committee that covered the following subjects and points:

- Status of the guidance
- Content
 - Solar PV
 - Electric Vehicle Charging
 - Rainwater Harvesting
 - Place Making Principles
- Who is the guidance for
- What does the guidance require
- Minimising the potential for challenge
- Timescale for delivering the guidance

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

- A Member spoke about the orientation of the rooves that the panels would be fitted onto, and said how crucial it was to get that included at the planning stage.
- Wind generators had not been covered in the guidance, nor were Ground Source Heat Pumps and a Member wondered whether these would be considered in the future. It was confirmed that the scope of the initial guidance was limited, and wind and heat pumps would be considered for future. Phase two was anticipated to be in the form of a supplementary planning document, which would potentially take a fabric first approach.
- The 2018 Clean Air Strategy guidance stipulated that all new houses should include EV charging points, and a Member questioned how these guidelines were improved or not. The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure explained that the position had shifted in that it was now mandatory under Building Regulations Approved Document S that every new dwelling had an EV point. This became law in June 2022, but it was beneficial to have it included in the guidance to ensure it was considered at the initial stages and minimised the risk of reaching construction phase and then having to amend the plans. The ramifications of developers not including the EV points would be to impose planning conditions. A further query asked whether it was

stipulated to be a type 2 EV charging point. The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure explained that applicants were asked to demonstrate that they were utilising the most efficient technology, so a 3-point plug would not be appropriate and a 2-point would be the best option.

- A Member asked what was being considered to help reduce energy consumption in terms of draught exclusion and insulation. The answer was that this would be inclusive in the fabric first approach and phase two of the guidance. The Sustainable Warmth scheme incorporated grants for low-income families to assist with these concerns for residents.
- A Member noted that developers could afford the modifications that had been discussed.
- The Chairman asked the Officers for their views on the adaptations within the guidance. The Spatial Planning Manager believed the advantage was that by setting it out at an early stage helped to embed a clear message about what was trying to be achieved and inserting it at the planning stage, rather than alter plans further down the line. He anticipated the only resistance that might be experienced would probably be around solar panels. The Team Leader - Plan Making and Infrastructure agreed that the cost of solar panels might create financial hardship, particularly for smaller applications. It was noted that the guidance gave weight to planning applications, but historically some would be handed over to the Planning Inspectorate where a resolution was not found.

Resolved:

That the guidance be received and noted.

Recommendation:

The Advisory Committee recommended that charging points attached to all new properties are type 2 charger or better/equivalent technology.

4. Government Bus Fare Cost Cap Scheme

- 4.1 The Climate Change Manager gave a presentation to the Committee about the Central Government scheme that covered the following subjects and points:

- Scheme Overview
- £2 bus fare cap for Jan to March 2023
- A financial support package for regular users
- Opportunity to encourage new users and frame longer term behaviour change
- Savings could range from £1.60 to £10.90 per journey
ABC Scheme Support will be through communications and evaluation, including Parish Support packs, internal comms and questionnaires
- Research opportunity for Behaviour change project
- CAT will identify KCC and Stagecoach plans for evaluation

4.2 The Chair opened up the item for discussion and the following points were made:

- A Member suggested circulating a Leaders Briefing on the scheme to promote it.
- The Chairman asked whether bus stops could be used to promote the scheme and it was clarified that although this was one possible method of promotion for KCC, it could be quite costly, so budget restraints could deter this method. Radio adverts were often favoured, along with other platforms. The Chairman said he would be happy to appear on radio to promote the scheme.
- Members voiced general concern over the long-term future of bus services in Kent, and whether there would be government funding to support the routes currently available. The Chairman agreed that Covid, homeworking and rising costs had contributed to the diminishing use of public transport (in some areas), so it was hoped that this scheme would revitalise bus use across the Borough and he reminded Members that they did also have the ability to lobby KCC. It was noted that the rationale behind the cap was also to create a change in people's habits, whereby they get used to using public transport again, following the pandemic.

Resolved:

That the Presentation be received and noted.

5. Central Government Funding Update

5.1 The Climate Change Manager gave a presentation to the Committee about available grant opportunities relating to climate change and energy and how ABC were utilising them. The presentation covered the following subjects and points:

- Funding Opportunities
- Work in progress and in the pipeline
 - Social Housing Development Fund
 - Low Carbon Skills Fund
 - Office for zero emission vehicles
 - Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund
 - Share the Warmth
 - Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund
 - Green Heat Network Fund
 - Climate Action Fund
 - Green Financing
- Issues and considerations relating to resourcing and the need for financing feasibility studies for large energy projects were outlined

5.2 The Chair opened up the item for discussion and the following points were made:

- The Green Heat Network Fund would be a viable consideration for the Newtown Works Project.
- The Climate Change Manager explained that Matrix Project Groups could be set up to ensure Officers of different services would work together.
- It was confirmed that ABC were already signed up to the Work Place Charging Scheme for EV charging and £165,000 was available for this.
- The Head of Policy & Performance spoke about the Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund and confirmed that a bid was being compiled for submission. A Local Partnership Group had been established and stakeholders including Parish Councils and Community Groups had been informed about the Fund. ABC were also eligible to apply for the funding, it was not exclusively for any one entity.
- The Chairman asked about the Councils electric car, and it was confirmed that the scheme was being promoted currently and an online booking system was being implemented, which would also include electric bikes. The Chairman considered whether this could be a future agenda item for March 2023 and further funding opportunities be explored, and the Committee then make a recommendation to Cabinet requesting a specific percentage of journeys be made via the electric car. The Head of Policy & Performance explained that an Action already existed within the Corporate Plan that focused on workplace journeys, which the Assistant Director HR was already reviewing.
- The Project Manger Carbon Neutrality and Housing Development & Regeneration Manager spoke about the Stour Centre PV Panels. A PID was being produced which would be taken to PMG in December, after

which would go for sign off from Cabinet. Procurement was hoped to begin in the New Year and funding streams were being explored. Capacity was being tested in conjunction with arrays and batteries to try to create the maximum number possible. The Chairman reinforced the need to create dozens of points, especially taking into account the location of the Stour Centre being so close to the train station and the fact that any excess energy can be utilised and/or sold on. **The Housing Development & Regeneration Manager would circulate the plans to the Committee.**

- A Member spoke about sending the right message so that users did not monopolise the EV points so that other users were unable to access them. The Housing Development & Regeneration Manager advised that the designers would be consulted on that issue.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

7. Project and Reports Tracker

- 7.1 The Vice Chairman clarified that the Climate Change Team had now moved over to Policy and Performance for which Charlotte Hammersley was Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder was now Cllr Feacey.

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