

Minutes of the meeting of the **CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held as a Teams remote meeting on Tuesday, 30 November 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C A Vinson

Councillors: S H Beer
N S Kenton
O C de R Richardson
H M Williams

Officers: Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Head of Assets and Building Control
Head of Commercial Services
Strategic Development Lead (Leisure)
Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer

19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bates, N J Collor and K Mills.

20 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

22 MINUTES

The Notes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

23 GREENHOUSE GAS REPORT 2020/21

The Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer (PCCSO) introduced the Greenhouse Gas Report 20/021, which had been circulated to members of the Climate Change Project Advisory Group as part of the agenda. The report was required in line with government guidance and greenhouse gas protocol, to provide details of local authorities' gross greenhouse gas emissions from their own estate and operations, on an annual basis.

The Council had recorded a decrease in emissions for 2020/21 due to the impact of lockdown and travel restrictions. Members asked that the report be shared internally and having ensured all details were accurate, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy would be notified. The consensus of opinion was that it would be useful for the report be promoted on the Council's website and social media platforms.

Members discussed the impact of the switch to LED street lighting and the PCCSO advised that she would report to a future meeting on this matter. It was felt that the

benefits of the conversion to LED street lighting should be promoted to the wider public.

24 ENERGY USE AT DOVER DISTRICT LEISURE CENTRE AND TIDES

The Strategic Development Lead (Leisure) provided an update to Members on the energy use at Dover District Leisure Centre (DDLC) and the opportunities presented by the proposed project at Tides Leisure Centre (TLC).

There were operational changes introduced at the DDLC in October which helped to reduce energy consumption across the site from 70,000 kilowatts in October 2019 to 54,000 kilowatts in October 2021. These changes included switching off the lights in the car park at night, switching off lights around facilities and spaces not in use and reducing sensor timers of lights from thirty to ten minutes in some areas. In addition, pool covers were being used every night as well as the moveable floor which helped to reduce heat loss and water evaporation by between 50 and 70%. The new DDLC was consuming approximately half the energy of the previous leisure centre building.

In respect of the proposed Tides Leisure Centre project, Members were advised that the intention was to design out carbon emission as far as possible to give the Council options and choices in this respect, as the design and costs were developed further. As part of this, the Council would look at a range of costs and measures using Passivhaus principles and design standards. It was intended to engage a sustainability consultant in the next phase of work to advise DDC and the design team with specific expertise. Members were advised it was extremely difficult to achieve Passivhaus certification when adding a new building onto existing facilities; typically, Passivhaus buildings were standalone new builds. The key focus of the project would be to look for ways to reduce carbon emissions in the new build elements of the project as well as examining the opportunities for achieving decarbonisation of the existing indoor tennis centre and sports hall buildings.

The Head of Assets and Building Control advised that there would be higher capital costs in achieving Passivhaus design standards, but this would result in lower operating costs due to the benefits of the sustainable design. The example of Exeter City Council's new leisure centre was cited as being the first in the UK to be built to ultra-energy efficient Passivhaus standards. This would all need to be considered in the business plan for the proposed TLC project.

Members suggested that more should be done to promote the achievements at DDLC and Councillor S H Beer proposed that open days be held to promote the green credentials of the DDLC.

25 PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION FUND

The Head of Assets and Building Control advised that the Council had terminated its participation due to the timeline for delivery being insufficient to complete the required works. The funders had advised that the Council would have to have spent the money and commenced works by no later than 31 March 2022. However, this would not be possible given the delivery time for air source heating pumps.

Members welcomed the work that had gone into preparing for the funding which would put the Council in a better position for the future. The Council would continue to look for opportunities from other funds.

26 CLIMATE CONCERNED OF DOVER

Councillor C A Vinson informed Members that he had written to the convenor of Independent Climate and Ecological Action Forum of Dover District (ICEAF-DD) and at this time had not received a response to his letter. He welcomed the recognition of the good work being undertaken by the Council and it was the view of Members that opportunities to promote this good work to the wider public, community groups, local businesses and towns and parish councils should be sought. It was considered vital that the Council engage with the widest possible range of organisations. It was recognised that there was still more work to be done in raising awareness of the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

27 CARBON LITERACY

The Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer (PCCSO) advised Members that councils across Kent were looking at training on carbon literacy for officers to ensure that the climate change agenda was embedded across all departments of the Council. In the absence of agreement over guidance for cabinet report writers, some form of climate change awareness would assist report writers in completing the climate change and environmental sections of the report. There was a Climate Change e-learning package already available that could be adapted and made available to both staff and Members.

28 TREES

The Head of Commercial Services advised that the Council had been offered 100 trees by a company called Eco green Communities to be planted in our district with the aim of promoting biodiversity, improved woodland habitats and social benefits to the wider community. The trees were intended for the North Deal Recreation Ground.

Members discussed the wider need for climate change mitigation and were advised that the emerging Local Plan would take this into account for future developments. The issue was wider than just tree planting and included biodiversity and street scene improvements. Alternatives to tree planting included the planting of native hedges and other natural means of mitigating emissions. The Head of Commercial Services emphasised that reducing carbon emissions was just as important as mitigating emissions.

In response to questions about the role of farmland in mitigating carbon emissions, it was stated that this was already an area that Natural England and Defra were involved in.

The consensus view among Members was that there was a need for a clear strategy in this area, The Head of Commercial Services advised that the easiest way to do this would be through an environmental statement that set out the necessary parameters.

29 CLIMATE CHANGE VIDEO

The Principal Climate Change Sustainability Officer (PCCSO) advised Members that the Council's climate change video was now on the DDC website. This was something that could be built on to provide more information to the public. It was acknowledged that it needed to be better publicised, not only on the Council's website, but also through social media. Councillor C A Vinson requested that the link for the video be circulated to all members of the council and that additional information be provided on the website showing the public what they could do to help tackle climate change. At the request of Councillors C A Vinson and O R Richardson the PCCSO advised that she would explore whether the link could be put onto the homepage of the Council's website.

30 COP26 BRIEFING

The Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer provided members with an update on the outcomes of COP 26. Overall, there had been an acceptance that climate change was happening although COP 26 had not gone as far as some had wished. Members were advised that only a few countries had made their pledges legally binding and that most of the commitments made at COP 26 it would be down to individual countries to deliver on those pledges.

The meeting ended at 6.14 pm.