

Notes of the meeting of the **CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held as a Teams meeting on Tuesday, 21 June 2022 at 4.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C A Vinson

Councillors: S H Beer
N J Collor
D R Friend
N S Kenton
O C de R Richardson
H M Williams

Officers: Head of Assets and Building Control
Head of Commercial Services
Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer
Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES

It was noted that an apology for absence had been received from Councillor M Bates.

2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 DRAFT GLIDE PATH

The Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer (PCCSO) introduced the document, advising that work was progressing on formulating a 'Glide Path' that would identify potential actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's assets to net zero, and the areas that would need to be offset if reduction was not feasible. The Head of Commercial Services advised that there would be a transition to electric vehicles when the Council's fleet was renewed in 2029. The Head of Assets and Building Control added that the document was currently a best estimate at what reductions were realistic and achievable. There was a question mark over whether it was more expedient to implement carbon reduction measures or to offset emissions in order to meet targets. The Council would seek to convert all of its assets to electric power. He added that the Council already obtained its electricity supply from renewable resources.

Councillor C A Vinson noted that the renewal date for the Council's vehicles was close to the 2030 target for net zero carbon emissions. Work was needed to identify significant gaps, how these could be closed, and monies allocated in future budgets accordingly. He requested that a visual be produced, showing the different components of the Council's carbon emissions and how these had reduced year-on-year over the last decade.

The key points discussed were:

- Veolia – Discussions needed with the contractor about the Tower Hamlets depot which was leased from DDC
- Council Offices – installation of air source heat pumps and expectation that Government funding would become available for this in the near future. The removal of boilers at Whitfield would require a project programme and financial plan
- Tides Leisure Centre – new building would reduce emissions significantly, as would work on upgrading the existing buildings
- Dover Leisure Centre:
 - already thermally efficient and not much more that could be done so offsetting was the answer
 - Places Leisure was looking to install additional solar panels on roof
 - Clarified that the Council was required to report on energy efficiency measures taken in relation to buildings that it owned. The leisure centres were Council assets and, whilst operated by third parties, were included.
 - Agreed the importance of obtaining this information and encouraging/working with the operators to take appropriate measures to reduce their carbon footprint where necessary
 - The PCCSO to check gas and electricity suppliers to Dover Leisure Centre and whether the energy came from renewable resources.

RESOLVED: That the document and update be noted.

5 DRAFT QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The PCCSO introduced the quarterly report which was an example of the chart used for annual reporting that could be adapted to show quarterly emissions. There were discussions around how the information should be presented and what should be included. Councillor Vinson commented that assets like the Council offices would be generating the most emissions and it was important to show the public what was being done about it. In response to Councillor H M Williams, the Head of Assets and Building Control advised that there were around 50 or 60 assets that were owned by the Council but controlled or outsourced to third parties. He undertook to compile a list of these.

In respect of the reporting format, the following was agreed:

- Travel and mileage headings/data should be amalgamated
- Headings should align with the new performance indicators, with an overall trend analysis included to give the public an idea of the Council's direction of travel
- The biggest/most significant assets/headings should be shown separately as a top ten, with smaller assets/headings amalgamated
- The format could be amended or more information provided if necessary

RESOLVED: That the report and update be noted.

6 SALARY SACRIFICE CAR SCHEME

The PCCSO introduced the report which set out details of the Council's car salary sacrifice scheme which had commenced on 30 March. The scheme was designed to make owning an electric vehicle more affordable and would, in turn, support the

Council's Climate Change Strategy. Seven employees had taken advantage of the scheme to order electric vehicles since its launch.

Councillor Vinson commented that the scheme was in its early days and up-take would be monitored. The Head of Assets and Building Control reported that there were supply chain issues and currently a 15 to 18-month delivery time on electric cars and vans. Councillor Vinson suggested that the idea of installing electric vehicle charging points at the Council offices for staff and public use should be explored.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7 DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEMES UPDATE

The PCCSO presented the report which provided an update on energy efficiency funding streams/schemes and the Government's energy policies. She advised that the Council, along with Dartford Borough Council, would receive £216,255 from the Government's Local Authority Delivery Scheme 2. It was anticipated that a total of 27 properties (split between both authorities) would benefit from insulation measures. The Council had also recently been notified by Kent County Council (KCC) that further funding would be available through the Household Support Fund. Details of the Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO4) scheme were provided, with members advised that, whilst the guidance was still in draft form, there would be an opportunity for the Council to refer residents for financial assistance for energy efficiency measures until 31 March 2026.

Members were advised that an insulated, semi-detached property would see an annual saving of £390 in fuel bills, plus a reduction in carbon emissions. The Head of Assets and Building Control advised that external wall insulation was not straightforward. Councillor Vinson commented that treating all the houses in the Council's stock would simply not be possible due to some houses being unsuitable and the amount of funding required. He recommended that a flexible approach should be taken so that houses that were unsuitable for insulation could have other measures installed such as solar panels and electric vehicle charging points. He encouraged officers to publicise the initiative and promote the Council's progress in retrofitting properties.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8 SOCIAL HOUSING EPC/SAP

The Head of Assets and Building Control advised that the Government had indicated that it would be releasing £3.8 billion under Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund which would entail a 2 to 3-year delivery programme. Details were due to be released in August with a deadline for the receipt of applications in September. Local authorities and other housing providers would be expected to make top-up contributions. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy would be looking for evidence about the Council's housing stock and what difference upgrades/interventions would make. In preparation, two pilot surveys would be carried out on Lancaster House/Durham House and in Goodnestone. Officers were talking to Folkestone & Hythe District Council which had made a successful bid. The PCCSO talked of a frustrating bid process with lots of uncertainty, changes and moving deadlines.

In response to Councillor Williams, the Head of Assets and Building Control advised that £580,000 had been set aside for this initiative. Councillor Vinson added that the Council was playing catch-up on its housing stock and capital monies had been allocated in the budget for improvements. The Head of Assets and Building Control acknowledged that there could come a point when the Council would consider disposing of unsuitable properties in order to generate a capital receipt for building new, more energy-efficient stock.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

9 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS - QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Head of Commercial Services introduced the report which showed that certain sites had enjoyed good levels of usage. Overall, there had been an encouraging upward trend in usage. Officers were working with KCC with regards to the next tranche of funding, but there would need to be an increase in power capacity before the Council could add to the charging network. At some point the Council would need to consider whether it wished to carry on promoting the use of private cars by providing charging points or to focus on encouraging more use of public transport, cycling and walking. Officers had been looking at making charging points available at Whitfield for staff and the public. However, to achieve this more power would need to be brought in from a sub-station at a cost of around £225/230,000 as there was limited capacity at Whitfield.

In response to Councillor Vinson who asked about future, potential sites, it was clarified that Council-owned sites had been explored and some had been found to be unsuitable. The Head of Commercial Services advised that the funding that was available was not designed to support new infrastructure, and the Council would need to consider whether spending £250,000 on infrastructure was a better use of money than, for example, funding a green bus. Councillor Vinson suggested that the Council should do both in order to help the public transition to using greener methods of transport. He urged officers to keep a close eye on developments and to have a clear strategy on what the Council should be doing next.

Members were advised that the Council had received funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles scheme, and charging points had been installed through the Connected Kerb scheme. Other authorities were now trying to catch up, for example, by applying for funding from a multi-district charging point programme announced by KCC the preceding week. Some funding tranches were only available to collective groups rather than individual authorities, but the Council was applying for funding where it could. It was a rapidly developing area with a lot going on. For example, authorities were now seeing an increase in demand for rapid charging.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

10 CLIMATE CHANGE E-LEARNING UPDATE

The PCCSO introduced the report which gave an update on progress in relation to a climate change e-learning package for use by staff. The tender exercise to procure a new system would commence in June, and adaptations to make the package more specific to Dover could be incorporated into the tender specification.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm.