

Notes of the meeting of the **CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held as a Teams meeting on Tuesday, 11 October 2022 at 4.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor C A Vinson

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

Officers: Strategic Director (Place and Environment)
Head of Assets and Building Control
Head of Commercial Services
Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer
Democratic Services Officer

11 APOLOGIES

It was noted that an apology for absence had been received from Councillor N J Collor.

12 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14 NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Members received a report from the Principal Climate Change and Sustainability Officer (PCCSO). Councillor M Bates questioned the use of figures from 2008/09 as baseline data when it would make more sense to use figures from 2019/20, the year the Council declared a climate change emergency. Councillor C A Vinson commented that work to reduce the Council's emissions had started well before 2020 and the 2008/09 figures were useful in pinpointing changes that had occurred as a result of policies being introduced. Councillor S H Beer agreed, welcoming the use of 2008/09 data as they demonstrated how far the Council had come since that time, and starting from 2019/20 would distort the figures anyway due to the pandemic.

The PCCSO confirmed that the installation of LED street lighting had had a sizeable impact on emissions. She clarified that the Council had been gathering information and publishing emissions figures since 2008/09. In response to Councillor Beer, she advised that, whilst the Council's wind turbine had been an innovative step, the

equipment had been over engineered, situated in the wrong place and expensive to maintain.

Councillor Vinson commented that the new Tides Leisure Centre would be 100% electric and would have a big impact on the figures since the Council's leisure centres had the highest carbon emissions in tonnes. It was encouraging to see carbon reductions as a result of using LED lights and electric car-pool vehicles. In response to a question from Councillor Vinson, the Head of Commercial Services (HCS) advised that the current waste contract would expire in 2029 when a decision would need to be made about replacing diesel refuse vehicles with more expensive electric ones. Another option was to convert the vehicles to electric before they reached the end of life.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

16 LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLANNING

The PCCSO introduced the report. She advised that a company called Catapult had given a presentation to the Kent Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Network in September. The county's energy infrastructure was outdated and there was insufficient capacity in the National Grid to support local authorities' decarbonisation targets and objectives. Local Area Energy Planning was designed to address this. The current proposal was to split Kent into three areas. It was estimated that £120,000 would be the cost of developing an energy plan for each area of up to 300,000 homes.

The HCS commented that new infrastructure, like sub-stations, would be required if fleet and refuse vehicles were to be changed to electric. Councillor Vinson added that he was aware that the Port of Dover was looking at future energy requirements. He was encouraged by UK Power Networks' involvement in this particular initiative. In response to a query from Councillor Beer, he responded that the companies involved in supply, distribution and delivery had a narrow remit, with not one having overall responsibility for looking at the entire energy system strategically. He understood that the standing charge to customers covered maintenance of meters, pipes, etc rather than general energy infrastructure. Operators would be responsible for installing the infrastructure, based on the results of the local area plan which would identify what was needed for the Dover district.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

17 DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEMES

The PCCSO presented the report which set out the current position on energy efficiency funding schemes. Dartford and Dover were on track to spend their LADS2 (Local Authority Delivery Scheme) allocation, unlike some other authorities which had handed funding back. In response to Councillor Vinson, she clarified that it was proving difficult to get homeowners who had benefited from energy efficiency installations to agree to being case studies for a good news story; she continued to work on this. Referring to the report, she advised that 21 households had received contributions towards energy efficiency improvements from the Council's Household Support Fund allocation. The Solar Together Kent scheme had been oversubscribed with high demand across the country. 37 installations had been completed in the Dover district. The deadline was likely to be extended due to demand and supply chain issues.

Councillor Beer welcomed the work that had been done as part of LADS2 but lamented the fact that so few homes had been completed considering the large amount of money allocated. The PCCSO advised that the scheme was complex. Meeting the required standards involved additional works which increased the costs above and beyond the already high costs of materials and labour. Councillor Vinson commented that the idea behind regional energy hubs had been to address fraud, efficiencies, etc. Whilst the hubs had not been overly successful, he was confident officials were working on resolving the problems. Although a relatively small number of properties had been treated, they had been particularly problematic ones.

In respect of the Household Support Fund, the PCCSO confirmed that it had been extended to the spring and that Kent County Council (KCC) had been awarded £11 million. However, she did not yet know how it would be broken down and awarded to individual councils. Councillor Vinson asked Officers to investigate how the fund was accessed to ensure that local residents had the information they needed to do so.

The PCCSO advised that the contract to progress the ECO4 scheme (Energy Company Obligation) was in the final stages of completion. She confirmed that the Dartford/Dover consortium (formed for previous grant funding schemes) would be looking to negotiate with the Greater South-East Net Zero Hub for access to Sustainable Warmth funding. One of the criteria of the ECO4 scheme was that measures would have to achieve an uplift of two Energy Performance Certificate bands and it was by no means certain that that could be achieved. Councillor Vinson added that the scheme was particularly complex and would be a challenge to explain to residents.

RESOLVED: (a) That the update be noted.

(b) That Officers undertake further investigations into the Household Support Fund to clarify how it is accessed by residents.

18 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS - USAGE UPDATE

The HCS introduced the report, advising that usage had been busy during the summer but had reduced across all sites since then. The data indicated that there needed to be an increase in usage before decisions were made about installing new charging infrastructure. Charging points would be expanded in areas where there was the energy infrastructure but elsewhere this would be more problematic due to costs. In response to a query from Councillor Beer, he advised that sites like Gazen Salts would have been chosen on the basis of space and sufficient power supply. It was unlikely that moving charging points from one place to another would be more cost-effective than installing a new point entirely.

Councillor Vinson asked for more information relating to the usage and availability of spaces, length and type of charge and whether energy capacity had been reached at any particular times. He stressed the need to ensure that the district's capacity kept pace with the forecast for growth in electric vehicle usage which was set to increase dramatically over the next few years.

The HCS undertook to look at these points in order to have a better understanding of who (residents and visitors) was using the charging points and how. Councillor Bates highlighted the large increase in usage between August 2021 and the same month in 2022, albeit that 2021 had been at the tail-end of the pandemic. The HCS

agreed to produce a list of sites that had additional capacity and those where it had been reached and where new sites were therefore needed. He pointed out that the sites had only all come into operation in June. Work to identify usage and other factors was therefore still in the relatively early stages. He added that the Council was in a better position than other authorities who were playing catch-up. Issues such as charging for the parking space as well as for electricity usage would need to be considered. At present a small profit was made on the charge for electricity usage. Councillors Vinson and Bates referred to the fact that neighbouring authorities like Canterbury and Folkestone charged for both parking and electricity usage and the Council was being overly generous in not doing so.

In response to Councillor Beer, the HCS undertook to check the decision taken by Cabinet on 1 February 2021 in respect of electric vehicle charging to establish whether it had resolved that parking spaces would be free for only a year or ad infinitum. It was also agreed that he would review the fees and charges in respect of the parking charge.

RESOLVED: (a) That the update be noted.

(b) That additional information on electric vehicle charging usage, availability and capacity be provided, including a list of sites where capacity had and had not been reached.

(c) That the Head of Commercial Services review parking fees and charges with a view to considering whether a fee for parking should be charged on top of the fee for electricity usage (subject to confirming the decision made by Cabinet on 1 February 2021).

19 CLIMATE EMERGENCY UK - CLIMATE SCORECARDS

The PCCSO referred Members to the report. She emphasised the need for the Council to publicise what it was doing and to keep the website updated. Councillor Vinson disliked the idea of third-party organisations with an underlying agenda producing reports based on partial information. This involved extra work for the Council and was a distraction from progressing its climate change targets. However, he recognised that the Council should be transparent and accountable and acknowledged that Climate Emergency UK had a right to do what it was doing. Councillor Beer agreed, suggesting that the PCCSO should not spend too much time on this work. Climate Emergency UK was selective with regards to which criteria and figures it used and its opinions should be counteracted where necessary.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.28 pm.