

CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP

13 January 2022

Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group meeting held remotely on Thursday 13 January 2022 at 2:30pm.

Steering Group Members present: Councillors K.M. Field (Chair), S.J. Coleman, P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands, P.N. Osborne and S.M. Prochak, MBE.

Other Members present: Councillor P.C. Courtel.

Advisory Officers in attendance: Director – Place and Climate Change, Head of Neighbourhood Services (in part), Corporate Programme and Projects Officer (in part) and Democratic Services Officer.

CCSG21/1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CCSG21/2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

CCSG21/3. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

On 10 January 2022, Cabinet considered a report on Carbon Baselineing which detailed proposals to be undertaken to assist the Council in meeting its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. It was noted that the report had also been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2021. Following discussion, Cabinet recommended that a more robust approach was required and agreed that the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) be reconvened to consider a set of Key Performance Indicators and potential projects, as well as funding sources including the revised Community Infrastructure Levy's Climate Emergency Bonus Fund (20% apportion) subject to full Council approval. It was therefore necessary to amend the CCSG's Terms of Reference (ToR) to incorporate these activities. Two amendments had been made, as follows:

Objectives – to add / amend

- To agree and monitor a set of Key Performance Indicators to ensure that the Council meets its carbon neutral objective by 2030.
- To investigate all possible sources of external and internal funding, including the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy's Climate Emergency Bonus Fund and match funding to support this commitment.

RESOLVED: That the amended Terms of Reference be noted.

CCSG21/4. **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING IN CAR PARKS OWNED BY ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

In agreement with the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG), the Chair changed the order of the Agenda to consider Agenda Item 6 next.

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services which detailed the delivery of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in Council owned car parks across the district. A key priority in the Council's Rother Environment Strategy adopted in September 2020 was air quality, sustainable transport and energy. Government statistics detailed that transport was the largest source of carbon dioxide emissions (37%).

The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2027 stated that installation of EV charging points would begin in appropriate Council owned car parks by 31 December 2021; it was noted that this target had been missed. Recently, sales of EVs had risen and the Government continued to introduce policy, investment and fiscal measures to promote the development of this market and ultimately ban sales of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030. Therefore, provision of a reliable public network / infrastructure was essential.

It was noted that the capital costs of delivering infrastructure could be significant and generating profit was unlikely in the short term. Opportunities to collaborate with the private sector were increasing and there was the potential to install infrastructure at no capital investment cost to the Council. However, this meant that the Council would have limited control over the location of EV charging points, rates and revenue collected.

At present there were nine EV charging locations across the district namely Cooden Beach Hotel, Yeomans Hyundai Bexhill, Aldi Bexhill, Flimwell Park, Battle Brewery, The Bell in Iden, Flackley Ash Hill Hotel in Peasmarsch, The Gallivant in Camber and Route 1066 Café at Johns Cross. Unfortunately, not all were accessible to the public. It was noted that East Sussex County Council was responsible for the provision of on-street EV installations.

The Council owned 44 car parks, 16 were free of charge (predominantly rural) and 28 were pay and display (predominantly urban). Car parks were operated under the District of Rother (Off-Street) Parking Places Order 2020 which provided a legal framework for the Council to manage and enforce parking regulations.

It was proposed that a procurement exercise be commenced by the East Sussex Procurement Hub to source an appropriate Provider to provide equipment and install EV charging points (dual or single) at nil cost to the Council in several car parks across the district, ensuring there was at least one in Battle, Bexhill and Rye. A feasibility study would be requested to identify suitable locations, equipment /

technology required, as well as maintenance, pricing (payment methods) and costs. The type of technology installed would be dictated by the available power supplied at each location.

During discussion, the following salient points were noted:

- 100% renewable energy sources would be used.
- In the short-term, loss of revenue was expected (details were unknown at this stage). Revenue might not be realised until at least 2-3 years after contract commencement, possibly longer.
- Once procured, the project could take approximately 12 months to complete. 15 to 20 year contract anticipated.
- Advantages – all risks would be transferred to the Provider.
- Disadvantages – the Council would have less control.
- Providers would have the opportunity to apply for Government and specific funding sources.
- Two different types of charges: 'Fast' (2-3 hours plus) or 'Rapid' (60 minutes). It was anticipated that dual 'Fast' charging points would be installed. However, this would be dependent on the power supply available and type of technology / equipment installed.
- EV charging bays would be chargeable (they did not provide free parking).
- Planning Strategy included the provision of EV charging points within all new development.

The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that partnership discussions had commenced regarding the county's EV infrastructure requirements. In future, it was anticipated that there would be greater opportunities to work in partnership with other local authorities.

The CCSG recommended that Cabinet approve the procurement of a Provider to install EV charging infrastructure in selected Council owned car parks at nil capital investment to the Council. Members were keen to see the project commenced as soon as possible with the maximum number of charging points installed.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approve the procurement of a Provider to install EV charging infrastructure in selected Council owned car parks at nil capital investment to the Council.

CCSG21/5. **CARBON BASELINING UPDATE (VERBAL)**

The Corporate Programme and Projects Officer updated Members on the Council's Carbon Baseline in order to monitor its progress towards the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. An update report had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2021 and Cabinet on 10 January 2022.

Data of direct emissions generated by the Council's own operations from the year 2019/20 was currently being / had been collated which included electricity, gas and water usage, waste collection service, as well as business travel information. A standard tool developed by

Local Partnerships/Local Government Association would be used to benchmark the data with local neighbouring authorities.

Greenhouse Gas Protocol identified three types of emissions, referred to as Scopes 1, 2 and 3 and were reported as carbon dioxide equivalents:

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| Scope 1 | Direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by Rother District Council. |
| Scope 2 | Indirect emissions from the generation of energy purchased by Rother District Council. |
| Scope 3 | Indirect emissions that result from the other activities that occur in the supply chain of the Council's activities. |

It was anticipated that baseline emissions for Scopes 1, 2 and some Scope 3 activities would be in place by the end of March 2022. The Council was currently recruiting to the post of Climate Change Project Officer, who would review the baseline data, further scope 3 activities, including data capture, and progress projects to reduce carbon emissions.

CCSG21/6. **PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION (VERBAL)**

The Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) was asked to propose projects that they would like to see progressed. Several projects and other suggestions were proposed. During the discussion the following was noted:

- **Air Quality:** To install air quality monitors throughout the district and promote "Climate Cluster" Apps for cyclists to measure the air quality and forward data to the Council for collation.
- **Biodiversity:** It was suggested that the Parish and Town Councils be encouraged to complete a Biodiversity Audit of their areas.
- **Communication:** Introduce 'green top tip of the week' on 'My-Alerts.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** Funding to be used to deliver carbon friendly projects; this would be subject to CIL Strategic requirements / criteria.
- **Dark Skies:** To minimise light pollution, particularly in the rural areas across the district.
- **Education:** To be influential and promote / advertise best practice techniques on energy efficient measures.
- **Electric Vehicle:** Explore ways to encourage and incentivise usage of electric vehicles and bicycles. It was acknowledged that electric vehicles contained engineered plastics which were not necessarily environmentally friendly. Provide electric charging points for bicycles. Encourage Village Halls to install electric charging points.
- **Food:** To promote healthy food options e.g. plant-based products / choices etc.
- **Green Spaces:** Reduce verge cutting, encourage wildflowers and reinstate rewilding meadows on Council owned land, where appropriate. It was considered important that tree management was monitored on Council own land, particularly with regard to the condition of mature trees.

- Health: Incentivise usage of alternative transport methods e.g. cycling and walking etc. Encourage the public to use the free gym equipment in the green spaces / parks across the district, with the potential to general power.
- Officer Working Group: Develop an Officer Working Group to instigate a 'culture shift' within the organisation e.g. encourage staff to cycle to work, work from home etc. Complete a staff survey.
- Pedestrianisation: Explore options to make urban areas car free or restricted access e.g. Bexhill Town Centre.
- Pesticides: Consider ways to reduce the usage of pesticides on Council owned land.
- Planning Strategy: Adapt planning strategy and criteria to encourage development of renewable energy methods e.g. installation of air source heat pumps, solar panels etc.
- Pollution: Consider ways to reduce pollution across the district and, in particular, the sea.
- Public Transport: Improve services and offer free bus services, where appropriate.
- Repair Swap Shop: Establish a "repair swap shop" in Bexhill Town Centre.
- Town Hall: It was anticipated that the Town Hall Renaissance Project would be a low-carbon development. Renovate Town Hall Bike Shelter to encourage staff to cycle to work. Install a real time display on the Town Hall to show how much is being generated by solar panels.
- Waste: Promote effective ways to reduce waste within the authority and across the district. To promote composting food waste, to supply composters and encourage subscription to the Garden Waste Service.
- Website: Introduce a climate change target page on the website.

It was noted that several of the suggestions proposed were outside the remit of Rother District Council.

The Chair advised that, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration, a Green Sustainable Business Scheme for the district was being developed.

Members were encouraged to forward project ideas to the Director – Place and Climate Change. It was clarified that all projects would be collated, considered and prioritised by the CCSG and instigated, where possible, subject to budgetary and resource availability.

The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that the Council's Environmental / Green Asset Management Plan would be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) projects be collated, considered and prioritised by the Climate Change Steering Group and instigated, where possible, subject to budgetary and resource availability;

- 2) Members forward project ideas to the Director – Place and Climate Change; and
- 3) Environmental / Green Asset Management Plan be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

CCSG21/7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were advised that a tree planting mapping survey, which included public engagement, had been completed in the Bexhill area. Tree planting and tree management needs had been considered and a project of tree planting was scheduled to commence in March 2022. The Climate Change Steering Group would be kept abreast of progress.

CCSG21/8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - TBC

The date of the next meeting was arranged for Thursday 24 February 2022 at 2:30pm to be held remotely on MS Teams.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 3:38pm