

CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP

30 March 2022

Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group meeting held remotely on Wednesday 30 March 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: Councillors Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel and H.L. Timpe (in part).

Advisory Officers in attendance: Deputy Chief Executive, Director – Place and Climate Change and Democratic Services Officer.

As a result of technical issues, it was not possible to webcast this meeting.

CCSG21/16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CCSG21/17. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

CCSG21/18. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 24 FEBRUARY 2022 - MATTERS ARISING

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update in respect of the development of the Rother Climate Action Communication and Engagement Plan. She explained that it had been added to the Communications Forward plan however, it would not be possible to take forward the branding work until May due to existing commitments. The Green Team, when established, will have a role in developing content from services in order to inform future campaigns within the Communications and Engagement Plan.

It was clarified that 'green tip of the week' was now being published on 'MyAlerts'.

CCSG21/19. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

On 28 February 2022, Cabinet considered an Environmental Offences report which outlined the recommended increase to the maximum amount for Fixed Penalty Notices. Following discussion, Cabinet agreed that an informal Working Group be established to develop an enforcement of environmental offences communication strategy, and

that the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) be tasked with monitoring the new strategy. It was therefore necessary to amend the CCSG's Terms of Reference to incorporate this activity. The following amendment had been made, as follows:

Objectives – to add / amend

- Once established, to monitor the Communication Strategy in connection with the contract for the enforcement of environmental offences.

It was also agreed that regular informal private meetings of the CCSG be held (remotely), reports would be made available but administrative services might not be required and that twice-yearly formal meetings be open to the public and broadcast live. The Minutes of all serviced meetings would either be made available on request or published on the website.

It was also recommended that a separate report of the CCSG be incorporated as an Appendix to the Environment Strategy report which was annually reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the amended Terms of Reference be noted;
- 2) regular informal private meetings of the Climate Change Steering Group be held;
- 3) twice-yearly formal meetings of the Climate Change Steering Group be open to the public and broadcast live;
- 4) a separate report of the Climate Change Steering Group be incorporated as an Appendix to the Environment Strategy report, annually reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CCSG21/20. PLACE-BASED CARBON CALCULATOR

Consideration was given to the report of the Director – Place and Climate Change that detailed information on the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions' Place-Based Carbon Calculator, a free tool that mapped the carbon footprint of every neighbourhood in England [Place-based carbon calculator](#).

Calculating an exact carbon footprint required detailed information on individual behaviours and consumption patterns. The tool collated all available data e.g. gas, electricity and food consumption including surveys and modelling etc. Together, these methods gave an overview of the carbon footprint, which was then divided by the number of people living in the area, to provide an average footprint per person.

The report detailed the carbon footprint for the Rother district and identified that, on average, a resident in Rother contributed less to carbon dioxide production than the England average. The key areas where Rother performed better were lifestyle choices e.g. food, flights,

recreation activity, consumable goods and services purchased. Carbon output regarding car usage was 20% higher than the England average; this was attributed to Rother being a predominantly rural district with limited public transport.

It was noted that the calculator could provide data at a local level which would be useful for parish and town councils, local Councillors and the local community in identifying carbon emission priorities. A comparison of both Sidley and Ticehurst and Etchingam Wards was identified within the report and showed that their carbon footprints were completely different, particularly with regards to indices of deprivation.

The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that the data along with other relevant sources, where appropriate, would be used to prioritise the Council’s carbon footprint projects. He also advised that benchmarking data was currently being collated and it was anticipated that the information would be ready by May / June 2022. The data would be included within the Performance Report: First Quarter 2022/23 scheduled to be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September.

Members requested that all district Wards be mapped-out on the Place-Based Carbon Calculator and results communicated via the Climate Action Communication Plan. The results would aid understanding and identify key areas where carbon reduction could be improved.

RESOLVED: That all district Wards be mapped-out on the Place-Based Carbon Calculator and results communicated via the Climate Action Communication Plan.

CCSG21/21. **PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Director – Place and Climate Change updated the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) on the following projects:

- Blackfriars: One of the most sustainable housing developments in the south-east regarding construction e.g. thermal insulation etc.
- Doctor Surgeries in Bexhill: Built to BREEAM (sustainability assessment methods) high performance standards.
- Bexhill Town Hall: The regeneration project was being designed to a sustainable Passivhaus (rigorous energy efficient design) standard.
- Broad Oak Park: Rewilding grazing land with plants and wildflowers to improve bio-diversity.

The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that the “Green” agenda had changed the way the Council operated, and he suggested that over the next six months project information would be collated and reported to the CCSG.

During the discussion the following was noted:

- Councillor Mrs Cook advised that the Guides and Brownies in Battle had started an incredible edible (national) project; building planters out of recycled pallets and placing them around Battle. It had been difficult to source suitable places to deposit the planters, as licences were required in some locations. It was suggested that planters be located on Council-owned land e.g. car parks across the district etc. It was noted that incredible edible projects had also been delivered in Egerton Park, Bexhill and Robertsbridge;
- relevant organisations and full community engagement were considered key and necessary to ensure successful delivery of projects;
- progress was sought on the Electric Vehicle Charging Project. The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that the project was being progressed by the Head of Neighbourhood Services. A report had been presented to Cabinet in early February which included all information on the project and timescale details;
- important that all projects were promoted / advertised through the Council’s Climate Action Communication Plan;
- Members suggested that a community engagement “suggestion box” be established on the Council’s website to allow the public to upload their project suggestions on how to reduce the district’s carbon footprint. Suggested projects that were completed be communicated back to the public via the Climate Action Communication Plan;
- carbon footprint indicator / measure be allocated to each project;
- as suggested at the last meeting, the creation of a ‘green stamp’ business accreditation / rating system was reiterated;
- Members were encouraged to spread the Council’s “green agenda” within their wards;
- a dedicated “green agenda” page on the website to indicate all the proposed, instigated and finished projects, as well as providing key networking opportunities to indicate how the public can get involved etc.;
- Councillor Gray advised that the tree cover in Bexhill had significantly increased where approximately 1,000 trees had been planted over the last year;
- promote and discuss the Council’s Environment Strategy with parish and town councils, local organisations and community groups etc. by visiting them across the district;
- Members requested that a more in-depth project update be presented at the next meeting; and
- it was clarified that the CCSG could recommend projects that were potentially eligible for Community Infrastructure Funding (Climate Emergency Bonus Fund – 20% apportion) to the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Allocations Panel for consideration / determination. Distribution of CIL would be in accordance with the proposed CIL Governance and Funding Protocol. Projects forwarded to the Planning Policy Team were electric vehicle and electric bike charging points, outdoor gyms to generate power, solar litter bins, subsidise community bus services to go electric; help village halls to install solar panels and increase public transport.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) a community engagement “suggestion box” and dedicated “green agenda” page be established on the Council’s website; and
- 2) more in-depth project update be presented at the next meeting.

CCSG21/22. APPOINTMENT OF PROJECTS OFFICER (ENVIRONMENT)

The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that an appointment had been made to the post of Project Officer (Environment) and the person would be starting in June 2022.

CCSG21/23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following any other business items were discussed:

- Sussex Greenways: It was suggested and agreed that Sussex Greenways be invited to deliver a presentation at the next meeting; contact information to be forwarded to the Director – Place and Climate Change.
- Cycle Path: Councillor Osborne advised that a new cycle path was being established between Rye and Camber. It was understood that East Sussex County Council had secured European funding to complete the project.
- Sussex Wildlife Trust: The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that before Christmas he and the Chief Executive had met with the Sussex Wildlife Trust to consider the Council’s Environment Strategy and ascertain what services they could provide. They advised that more strategic work on identified actions versus projects and how they correlated with the Engagement and Climate Action Communication Plan would be required. Information and recommendations were currently being collated and would be presented to the Climate Change Steering Group at a future informal meeting.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) Sussex Greenways be invited to deliver a presentation at the next meeting; and
- 2) once collated, information and recommendations from the Sussex Wildlife Trust be presented at a future informal meeting.

CCSG21/24. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - TBC

The date of the next informal meeting was arranged for Wednesday 4 May 2022, time to be confirmed and to be held remotely on MS Teams. This meeting would not be webcast.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 3:50pm.

