

## Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group

Held at:	Remote meeting
Date	Wednesday, 7 September 2022
Present	Councillors Anthony Hills and Lesley Whybrow (Chair)
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Ian Meyers and Councillor David Wimble
Officers Present:	Martin Kerlake (Carbon Advisor), Robert Palmer (Interim Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Rob Robinson (Sustainable Business Project Manager), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist)

### **Quorum of the meeting**

It was noted that the meeting was not quorate, however those that were present agreed to continue with the meeting to hear the presentations from the officers. The presentation slides would be included with the minutes for the benefit of those unable to attend.

#### **1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

#### **2. Minutes**

As the meeting was not quorate, the approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 would be considered at the next meeting.

Following from the previous meeting's minutes, Councillor Whybrow offered a statement regarding weed killing:

'We carry out weed control on behalf of Kent Highways, which is agreed under an annual memorandum of understanding with Kent County Council (KCC).

We are not contractually bound to weed spray as the means of control but it remains the most effective way of operating at scale. The council motion on

pesticides 20/11/19 did not include phasing out its use on footpaths/street cleansing.

The last spray was arranged in May in preparation for the summer. It was arranged with a separate company Languards who also completed the spray in Dover District Council. Veolia then follow up with digging out and removing. KCC will fund us £16K for each spray up to a total of two. The cost of the last spray was £22K. We have not yet committed to a second spray this year and it will depend on the waste budget and if it is needed.'

### 3. **Overview from Kent County Council's Sustainable Business Team**

Mr Robinson provided Members with a presentation that has been attached to the minutes. During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- The team encouraged businesses to look at what they could do to insulate themselves from energy price rises. This had become more of a priority for businesses who were worried about future energy costs.
- Many of the grants and funds required businesses to pay for work upfront, this could create cash flow difficulties for businesses. However, grants and funds often worked this way to ensure the funding was used appropriately.
- Mr Tofts would put Mr Robinson in touch with the Folkestone and Hythe District Council Economic Development team who could help publicise the support available to businesses.

### 4. **Overview of work on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund**

Mr Kerslake provided a presentation that offered an overview of the work on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The presentation slides have been attached to the minutes. During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- The council had looked to target the lowest performing homes first. Experience from the initial pilot indicated that most homes would require four or five interventions to bring them up to an EPC rating of C.
- Publicity and public awareness were very important, particularly when moving to the second wave that would target 750 homes.

### 5. **Potential for bid to Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund**

Mr Kerslake provided Members with a presentation regarding a potential bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. The slides have been attached to the minutes.

### 6. **Review of Carbon Action Plan**

Mr Tofts shared a presentation regarding a review of the Carbon Action Plan. The presentation slides have been attached to the minutes. In addition to the slides, it was noted that:

- Feedback from officers suggested that the document needed to include more practical measures and steps.
- Data gathering from across the whole of the council estate was difficult and time consuming.
- It was time to review the plan and plot a trajectory to net zero.

## 7. **Carbon Innovation Lab Update**

Mr Tofts provided Members with a an update regarding the Carbon Innovation Lab. The presentation slides have been attached to the minutes. In addition to the slides, it was noted that:

- The group was facilitated by the Council, but not led by the Council. It had been an interesting process to see the group set its own agenda.

## 8. **Update on LGA Behavioural Insights Project**

Mr Kerslake gave Members an update on the LGA Behavioural Insights Project. During the update it was noted that:

- The most recent workshop had taken place that day, 7 September 2022.
- In June 2022 Kent County Council led a bid with nine district councils for £65,000 of funding from the Local Government Association, to pay for a study to establish what stopped people from installing and incorporating energy saving measures in their homes.
- The final report would be complete in March 2023.
- So far 1903 residents had responded in Kent, 236 of which were from the Folkestone and Hythe area.
- All the responders were self-selected, computer competent and 75% of them owned their own home. These factors could lead to biased results; however the consultant had the ability to account for this bias.
- The top three responses to the question asking what people were currently doing to reduce their energy costs were:
  - Drying clothes on a radiator.
  - Wearing a thicker jumper.
  - Using water efficient shower heads.
- Barriers to adopting energy saving practices were:
  - A perceived reduction in comfort.
  - Unable to make changes because they lived in rented accommodation.
  - A lack of understanding on how to make changes, such as how to install a water efficient shower head.

In response to the update the following comments were noted during consideration of the item:

## Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group - 7 September 2022

- The feeling that other people were not doing anything was a barrier and needed to be challenged. Once 25% of the population were on board, the rest would follow.
- Regular exposure to information would help. Schools could be used, as children could take the message home to their parents.
- Active travel was also important in reducing energy consumption.