

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group

Held at:	Remote Meeting
Date	Thursday, 17 December 2020
Present	Councillors Connor McConville, Ian Meyers, Lesley Whybrow (Chair) and David Wimble
Apologies for Absence	None
Officers Present:	Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Hazel Sargent (Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist) and Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services)
Others Present:	Steve Marks and Helen Cartledge (LASER Energy)

24. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November were agreed with the following comments:

It was mentioned that the Carbon Action Plan would be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, however an all Member Briefing has now been arranged for Wednesday 6 January 2021 to provide a briefing summary of the plan along with the work carried out by this Working Group.

The LED Lamp Post Project quoted a funding requirement of £950,000 however, a revised lower figure will be provided as the original funding requirement included poles.

26. Laser update

Steve Marks and Helen Cartledge from Laser Energy gave a presentation on the Options Appraisal Findings.

This included a list of 17 carbon reduction options, which after responses received from some councillors, were given a weighting scale.

The FHDC Carbon Reduction Model was shown to members. This included emissions graphs showing 'business as usual' scenarios against carbon reduction comparisons. The model considers options available.

Strategic actions by 2030 included street lighting; mileage reduction; moving to electric vehicles (EV), target of 70% grey fleet miles to be from EV, solar park investment and built-in carbon offsetting.

Secondary actions by 2030 would look at heat pump retrofitting to the Council's estate; LED lighting installation; and reducing 'red diesel' usage by Grounds Maintenance.

Members' comments included:

- Heat pumps, although this is an option for Council housing stock, there is a stock condition survey in progress. The information provided today considers property blocks rather than single properties.
- Solar car parks – providing renewable energy. Members were keen to know the district's car park area to explore if this would be a feasible strategy. An officer to provide this information.
- Solar Park strategy – this would take a substantially large investment, potentially a solar park would produce 8MWp of electricity. However more data would be needed with a possible feasibility study.
- Grey fleet – the potential to move to EVs and tools is based around the Government's plan to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2035.
- LED street lighting – the district council's intention is to handover maintenance of these to the county council. Although an initial cost of £950,000 was quoted this did include poles. An updated figure is required which will be provided.

The next steps proposed; carbon action plan; LED lighting; Salix funding; rooftop solar panels, cost of heat pumps versus solar park strategy; solar car parks and PPA framework.

27. **Motion to Full Council - 25 November 2020**

The Low Carbon & Sustainability Specialist presented this item and highlighted certain points within the motion. Resources would be a factor to consider.

Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway – was produced for Kent County Council. It describes the changes Kent might face and the potential risks to Kent's society, economy and environment.

Net biodiversity gain – This would need to be something that is constantly monitored. An idea would be to possibly provide a supplementary planning document for developers.

Improvements to natural capital – The Green Infrastructure Strategy will address this.

Renewable energy – to be considered as part of the Carbon Action Plan.

Carbon neutral housing – Members were advised the Government's Future Homes Standard is likely to be published in 2023 at the earliest. The Energy White Paper, recently published, mentions alternative forms of energy; hydrogen; heat pumps; offshore wind farms; Warm Homes initiative and the possibility of no more gas boiler installations by 2023.

In response to this motion it was suggested that six recommendations are made to Cabinet as follows:

- Adopts the Kent and Medway Low Emissions Strategy in as far as the actions are within the Council's control and it has the resources to do so.
- Supports the objectives of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy.
- Supports Kent's Plan Bee
- Keeps the policy background regarding net biodiversity gain under review and reassesses the situation when the Environment Bill is enacted and supporting regulations brought into force.
- Explores options for improving the district's natural capital through the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Recovery Strategy when the Environment Bill is enacted and supporting regulations brought into force.
- Keeps the policy background regarding the environmental standards of new homes under review and reassesses the situation when the Government's roadmap for the Future Homes Standard is published.

28. **Updates to Action Plan and Next Steps**

Action Plan comments included:

- Transportation links.
- Housing stock condition survey results then look at heat pumps and their effect on carbon reduction.
- Solar Park – feasibility study needed.
- Civic Centre – carbon footprint comparisons with old site and potential new site.
- An important point for members is that the Action Plan is a living document which can be amended once adopted.

To help members it was suggested that extracts of Laser Energy's presentation are provided.

Turning to Next Steps members received a brief presentation on the proposed methodology for the deployment of the Climate Change Reserve. . At present some funding has been set aside for the Electric Vehicle charging points. To assist funding allocation a checklist has been developed.

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Members were reminded that this Council has the largest funding reserve for the climate and ecological emergency of any district authority in Kent and it was suggested this should be promoted.

Members asked about progress of the grant for the EV charging points. The Transportation Lead Specialist is working with the County Council and an update will be provided.

The next meeting of this Working Group to be arranged after the January 2021 Cabinet meeting.