

## **Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group**

Held at:	Remote meeting
Date	Thursday, 13 May 2021
Present	Councillors Connor McConville, Ian Meyers, Stuart Peall, Lesley Whybrow (Chair) and David Wimble
Apologies for Absence	None
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Alastair Clifford (Operations Lead Specialist), Fred Miller (Transportation Lead Specialist), Hazel Sargent (Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist)
Others Present:	None

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 were approved and the Chair agreed her signature could be added showing approval.

The Chair, Councillor Whybrow advised members that a future meeting would include a presentation from Private Sector Housing.

Meetings had taken place with Kent County Council with regard to wild flower verges and also the Energy and Low Emission Implementation strategy, updates from KCC will be arranged for the working group.

### **3. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points**

The Transportation Lead Specialist gave a presentation on the up to date position with regard to EV charging points.

Members noted the following points:

Off-street charging points -

- No initial costs to the Council as these will be met by the supplier and DfT funding.
- A percentage of revenue (approx. 5%) will come back to the Council.
- Potential suppliers have indicated a preference for a long term contract, 12 years plus.

On-street charging points –

- Lamp-post installations as stand alone points are not cost effective.
- 60 potential sites.
- Hopeful for installations to start in Autumn 2021.

Members agreed it would be a good idea to engage with the newly elected KCC councillors, as Folkestone and Hythe District Council had been ahead of other local authorities in the county on EV charging points. The Chair suggested writing to all KCC councillors advising them of this working group's proposals.

The Transportation Lead Specialist advised that there will be a minimum of two charging points per car park in the district depending on space percentage, area and size.

#### 4. **LED Street Lights**

The Transportation Lead Specialist gave a presentation detailing streets lights suitable for adoption by Kent County Council. The County Council will not adopt wall mounted lights or non-public highway lights.

Members were reminded of the options available based on cost and were advised that Option 3 (Upgrade all and transfer all adoptable assets to KCC) is the most cost effective; a total of 328 street lights. The next step would be to recommend Option 3 to Cabinet and then look at funding options.

Members mentioned light pollution and the possibility of a switch off in rural areas. However, although less light pollution could benefit ecology it was pointed out that KCC will not adopt streets if they do not meet minimum lighting levels.

The Chair asked if there were any benefits to ecology by using LED lighting. An officer will look into this and return to the group.

A further question was asked on movement sensitive lighting and whether this could be an option. It was advised that this would probably be costly and it may be 'PIR sensor' technology on a mass scale is not available. Again, an officer will look into this.

## 5. **Carbon Action Plan - Update**

The Low Carbon and Sustainability Specialist showed members the action progress log predominately concentrating on the Civic Centre offices.

The Specialist pointed out pertinent actions taken and in progress as follows:

- Staff training planned in carbon literacy and climate change along with the promotion of Climate Change Champions.
- Waste – Encourage more recycling and reduce contamination. Also, encourage reduction of single use plastics by providing glasses, china cups, wash cloths and towels, however pandemic consequences could have an effect.
- Photocopying – reduce number of photocopiers and measure paper usage to show reduction by monitoring orders and copy counts, Procurement team to be contacted.
- Energy/water usage campaign planned once Civic Centre is open.
- Staff travel – business mileage reduction expected and 'cycle to work scheme' active for staff along with cycle training. Members also suggested updating the Civic vehicle.
- Peat – under review. Members asked for further details.
- Green Infrastructure Strategy – in progress.
- Climate Impact Statement – to be discussed by the Corporate Directors in June.

An idea was maybe to team up with Kent County Council with a view to sharing information as part of their campaign.

## 6. **Baseline Evidence for Folkestone & Hythe's District Emissions**

A report summary was circulated to members which reviewed baseline figures for the Council produced by SCATTER cities and the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The Low Carbon & Sustainability Specialist explained the comparisons between the SCATTER cities and BEIS information, advising members that other local authorities prefer the BEIS information as it is very comprehensive and carries more provenance.

Members comments included:

- Dungeness Power Station – carbon emissions are measured nationally then measurements are redistributed over the whole district.
- It was noted the report shows that it would be a challenge to reduce carbon emissions by 2050.
- Also noted with concern, that Kent and Medway's carbon budget for 2020-2050 would be exceeded within seven years.
- The report shows that the biggest carbon contributors are transport and buildings.

It was suggested that the main document to this report summary is attached to the published minutes.

Finally, members agreed that the baseline figures produced by BEIS are used for the Council.

**7. Environmental Issues raised by Seabrook Church of England Primary School pupils**

A series of letters had been received from pupils at Seabrook Primary School giving their views on plastic pollution and global warming and how this affects the planet.

It had been suggested that the pupils are invited to the next Working Group meeting in order to discuss this subject with members. A provisional date is to be arranged.

Further points for consideration and future meetings included:

- Ask KCC to attend a future Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group meeting to discuss climate change adaptation.
- Guidance needed on reducing plastic use rather than recycling.
- Feedback on pesticide trials; plan to start these in 2022, procure funding and labour.
- Members were advise that a recent publication will be made available to view online by KCC - 'Natural Solutions to Climate Change in Kent'.