

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group

Held at:	Remote meeting
Date	Thursday, 9 September 2021
Present	Councillors Anthony Hills, Connor McConville and Lesley Whybrow (Chair)
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Gary Fuller
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Olu Fatokun (Low Carbon Senior Specialist), Adrian Hammond (Housing Lead Specialist), Fred Miller (Transportation Lead Specialist), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist)
Others Present:	Tom Henderson (Climate Change Adaptation Team, KCC)

16. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

17. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 were agreed. The Chair's signature will be added to these showing approval.

18. **Private Sector Housing - Energy Efficiency update**

Mr Adrian Hammond, Housing Lead Specialist, gave members a presentation on Private Sector Housing – Energy Efficiency Initiatives Update. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mention was made of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme 2 (LADS2) in the presentation and Mr Hammond advised a further scheme to be launched is LADS3 which has a greater focus on zero carbon activity. This will be looked at

towards the end of 2021 and Mr Hammond hopes to bring an update to a future working group meeting.

Members comments and questions included:

- Heat pumps – cost prohibitive at present, however there maybe scope within the LADS3 scheme. £350K has been allocated to FHDC which equates to improvement for 35 properties.
- Private Landlords – the PSH team concentrate on enforcement activities, however landlords are made aware of their responsibilities along with grant funding availability.
- Solar Panels – no initiatives at present, however looking for a clearer steer from Government.
- Warmer Homes – grant funding to assist households on low incomes and with long-term disabilities to improve the energy performance of their homes.

The Chair thanked Mr Hammond for the presentation and asked that the working group receives regular updates.

19. **Adapting to Kent's changing climate**

Mr Tom Henderson from KCC's Climate Change Adaptation Team, gave a presentation Adapting to Kent's Changing Climate. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr Henderson opened up his introduction and said that Kent County Council is the largest local authority in the country with a large coastal area and 18,000 properties at risk of flooding, resilience is needed. He went on to say that temperatures are rising, the last 15 years have been the hottest, resulting in more heatwaves, drought risks and flash flooding. Climate denial is not an option.

Mr Henderson went through his presentation and relayed to members the following comments:

- STARS2C project. Short term adaptation to long term resilience to climate change. Countries across Europe have National Adaptation Programmes, however there is a general lack of understanding of costs; funding and tools available.
- Examples of resilience tools – seawall defences with model projections looking at heights and flood risks; buffer blocks, these absorb water and prevent subsidence; and increasing public awareness.
- Important to note that although climate change is about mitigation, emphasis must also be about adaptation.
- Cool towns – Margate is one of the pilot towns for this European project and the aim is to reduce ambient temperatures and reduce flooding by planting trees. Initially running for two years, however planted trees are fairly small at present

- H2OSource2sea – Led by the Kent Wildlife Trust. Assessing risks such as Kent's water management challenges; climate change; population; and land use change.
- Polytunnels – these create a significant flood risk, irrigation of fruits creates massive water run-off. Farmers are able to produce water saving data to help them with planning and budgets.
- Hacklinge Marshes (between Deal and Sandwich in East Kent) – licensed for the abstraction of water, managed by the EA. Farmers are able to trade water rights, however the EA system seems archaic and improvements are being made to make the system easier to use.
- KCC has a dedicated comms team for climate resilience. FHDC comms workstream exists, however to what extent they work with KCC will be checked.

Members commented on how this presentation had brought home the realism of the climate change problem. Raising awareness with residents was key and to understand the differences of mitigation and adaptation.

Members were advised that climate resilience work will begin on district wide communications to residents and businesses, noting that further information to be brought to the working group on mitigation and adaptation.

The Chair asked that relevant links are included in the minutes as follows:
For the climate change impact assessment for Kent and Medway:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/climate-change/kents-changing-climate/climate-change-risk-and-impact-assessment>

For the STAR2Cs project: www.star2cs.com

20. **LED Lamp-post project update**

Mr Fred Miller, Transportation Specialist, presented slides on the District Street Lighting Proposed LED Upgrade. This presentation is attached to these minutes.

Members thanked Mr Miller for the update and made the following comments and observations:

- Costs – Approximately 50% to be met by the Climate Change reserve with the remainder to be funded by capital resources. Approximate cost per lamp column is £205. Members asked for a further breakdown after conversion.
- 1084 street lights in the district and the plan would be to dispense responsibility and maintenance of as many as possible.
- Baseline figures could be affected as we transfer polluting assets, adjustments to be reported back to this working group.
- Biodiversity loss effects on LED lights use. Possible brightness affecting moths and other insects. The street lights are controlled by one central

system, which could mean lights can be dimmed or switch off to mitigate biodiversity loss effects.

The Chair turned members' attention to EV lamp-post charging points. Mr Miller advised that KCC are still working on the strategy for this, however it doesn't look promising. Cllr Hills, in his capacity as a KCC member, asked Mr Miller to provide further details for follow up.

Mr Miller did comment that the implementation of car park EV charging points is progressing well.

21. **Update on the Carbon Action Plan**

Mr Adrian Tofts, Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist, presented the latest updates on the Council's Carbon Action Plan. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr Tofts reminded members that the Carbon Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet in February. Discussions around performance had taken place and how the KPI for carbon emissions could be framed. Could this be a staged decrease or indicate larger steps?

It was interesting to note that Dover District Council had been reporting on carbon emissions for the last decade, however although generally emissions are reducing, it seems unlikely on current trends that net zero would be reached by 2030.

The Chair introduced the recently appointed Low Carbon Senior Specialist, Olu Fatokun. Ms Fatokun said that in the short time of being in her role, she had started to look at the district wide structure of the carbon action plan, wider publicising and climate impact statement training for Council report authors. She also mentioned she had been working with a carbon savings expert for technical skills.