

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

Held at:	Remote Meeting
Date	Wednesday, 20 April 2022
Present	Councillors Anthony Hills, Ian Meyers, 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 (Chief Officer - Operations), James Farrar (Senior Planning Lead (Otterpool Park)), Olu Fatokun (Low Carbon Senior Specialist), Hazel Sargent (Planning Policy Specialist), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist)
Others Present:	Thomas Lefevre (Etude), Richard Haynes (White Cliffs Partnership), Tom Henderson (Kent County Council), Sharon Bayne (Blackwood Bayne), Irene Seijo (Seijo Associates)

### 9. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 10. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021 were approved, the Chair's signature will be added.

The following comments were made with regard to various updates from the last meeting:

UK 100 Membership – Adrian Tofts, Strategy, Policy and Performance Lead Specialist advised that a welcome pack had been received. UK100 has asked

follow-up questions about the council's approach and Mr Tofts has replied to these questions. Mr Tofts said he would circulate the pack to members.

Proposed Green Business Grant Scheme – the Chair, Councillor Whybrow mentioned that this needs more prominence on the Council's website. Currently it is sitting under Folkestone Works website.

District Wide Strategy – Ms Olu Fatokun, Low Carbon Senior Specialist, advised she had started contacting possible participants to the steering group.

#### 11. **Draft Net Zero Toolkit**

Mr James Farrar, Senior Planning Lead, initially opened this item and started by saying that match funding had been obtained from Homes England to enable this commission.. A steering group was established with input from other organisations including KCC and Homes England .

Feedback from members welcomed.

Mr Thomas Lefevre, Etude, gave a presentation and project update to members. He mentioned the four key deliverables; Decarbonising buildings – strategic objectives; New Build Net Zero Toolkit; Retrofit Net Zero Toolkit; Recommendations for planning policy.

Members asked questions:

- Ground source heat pumps, are they cost prohibitive? There are possible grants available and discussion as to whether long term gas use is compatible with climate emergency
- Retrofitting – could homeowners use this toolkit? The toolkit could be a practical guide to homeowners as the same principles apply.
- Planning policies – recommendations and best practices to inform the next version of the Local Plan.
- Heat stress, insulation, how do we manage this? Adaptation is as important as mitigation. Guidance available on overheating.
- When will the document be completed? Aiming for publication towards end of May following peer review . This will be followed by training sessions being made available to members and officers,.

Members thanks Mr Lefevre for the update.

#### 12. **Joint working with White Cliffs Partnership**

A presentation was given to members by Mr Richard Haynes, from the White Cliffs and Romney Marsh Partnership. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr Haynes made the following comments as he went through the slides:

- White Cliffs Countryside Partnership was set up in 1989 and the Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership was created in 1996.
- Reporting to a Steering Group.
- Membership has grown to include companies and charities.
- Successful in obtaining Lottery funding.
- The Partnership team are locals to the area.
- The Partnerships managed 13 nature reserves over two districts.
- Events take place; inspiring local communities; promoting the local area.
- Three sites within F&H district; Romney Warren; Greatstone Dunes and Folkestone Warren.
- Carbon reductions measures in place; increasing biodiversity and connectivity. Use of Aspen fuel.

The Chair asked about Aspen fuel. This is a cleaner fuel, less emissions, however more expensive than regular petrol.

Councillor Hills mentioned Dungeness Estate's parking problems. Mr Haynes is aware of the recurring parking problems. Although the Estate is owned by EDF, there are two regular wardens in the area at the weekend.

Mr Clifford advised the Council are very aware of the parking problems at Dungeness and Lade. Further signage will be in place; double yellow lines installed and leaflet drops to Kite Surfing Schools.

The Chair, Councillor Whybrow, thanked Mr Haynes for his presentation.

### 13. **Kent and Medway Climate Adaption Programme**

Mr Tom Henderson from Kent Council Council gave a presentation on the Climate Change Adaptation Programme for Kent and Medway. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr Henderson gave background information to the programme. He asked that feedback is given on all aspects of the document and that guidance is provided on the final slide of the presentation.

The Chair clarified timescales for feedback which are the end of May 2022, however this date is flexible. A formal consultation will be actioned at the end of the year.

### 14. **Green Infrastructure Strategy**

The report introduced the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy, its findings and recommendations. It is a local plan evidence document that will provide further detail to development plan policies as well as providing information for the consideration of planning applications. It could also form the basis for a future Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide additional clarity for decision-making.

A presentation was given to members by Sharon Bayne from Blackwood Bayne Consultants and Irene Seijo from Seijo Associates Ltd. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Within the presentation an overview was given to members along with the draft action plan culminating in the next steps for the Council to take. In this respect any comments would be welcomed.

Councillor Hills commented that there are updates needed in the Strategy, for example, amending that the Romney Marsh is not below sea level, however it is below high tide level.

The Chair also mentioned a couple of minor points which will be followed up by email.

**15. Update on trial to reduce use of pesticides**

Mr Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer – Operations gave a presentation. He reminded members that this subject was proposed as a Motion at Full Council in 2019. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr Clifford took members through the reduction in usage of pesticides over the last six years including application types.

It was noted that regular invasive weed control techniques led to reductions in Glyphosate use, however the increased Glyphosate usage in 2021 was due to Giant Hogweed on the Princes Parade site.

Alternative options were explained to members along with trials and demos that had taken place.

**16. Update on current consultations from Government and Kent County Council**

The paper summarised three current consultations for the Working Group's information. Members were given a brief overview of the consultations along with the response deadline for each one.

Mr Tofts advised F&HDC would look to respond to the Plan Tree consultation and possibly to the Defra – Nature Recovery Green Paper: protected sites and species.

Members comments included:

- 'Right tree, right place' – Romney Marsh in particular, as the right management needed for water conservation.
- The county council's pledge to plant an additional 1.5 million trees – assurances needed that double counting would be avoided.
- Concerns about the biomass power plant in Sandwich and how this affects the loss of trees.

- Environmental and air quality targets will not meet worldwide targets.

Members thanked Mr Tofts for his report and update.

17. **Update on Carbon Action Plan**

Olu Fatokun, Low Carbon Senior Specialist, gave an update on the Council's Carbon Action Plan. The presentation shown is attached to these minutes.

Ms Fatokun highlighted some of the actions undertaken and progress so far. She reminded members there are 33 individual actions in the Action Plan.

Councillor Whybrow asked about emissions and was advised that although there is information for the 2019/20 monitoring year – there will be an update for the 2020/21 monitoring year that should be completed in May and this will be reported to the next working group meeting.