

**CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP**

23 June 2022



Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group “informal” meeting held remotely on Thursday 23 June 2022 at 2:00pm.

Members of the Steering Group Present: Councillors K.M. Field (Chair), S.J. Coleman and P.N. Osborne.

Other Members present: Councillors Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel and D.B. Oliver.

Advisory Officers Present: Director – Place and Climate Change, Project Officer (Environment) and Democratic Services Officer.

---

**CCSG22/1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands and S.M. Prochak (MBE).

**CCSG22/2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

(2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

**CCSG22/3. PROJECTS SUMMARY**

(3)

The Project Officer (Environment) updated the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) on the completed, ongoing, outstanding short, medium and long-term projects. The following was noted within the report:

- 2019/20 Carbon Emissions Accounting Tool: Scope 1 was still outstanding due to lack of fleet mileage information; investigations were ongoing to source and collate this data.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Car Parks: Officers were working with the legal team to progress this project. It was anticipated that the contractor would be appointed by the end of June 2022, with installation completed in at least three car parks by May 2023.
- Electric Community Bus Service: Expected to be progressed once Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was awarded.
- Solar Litter Bins: Initial report drafted May 2022 highlighting concerns around manufacturing footprint versus any emission reductions.
- Tree Coverage in Bexhill: Trees for Cities were working with East Sussex County Council on an Urban Tree Challenge Fund project

focused on roadside verge tree planting; some funding had been secured and additional funding was being applied for. £143,000 had been secured to increase tree coverage; information on proposed sites was awaited. Work was ongoing with Bexhill Environment Group on tree and hedge planting proposals for 2022-23. Development of a strategic Urban Forest Master Plan would be drafted once the Environment Strategy Officer was in post (role advertised in June 2022).

- Switch to Council Tax E-billing: Implementation was imminent; 'opt-out' option to maximise take-up.
- Village Hall Carbon Emissions: Use CIL funding and invite all village and community halls to participate in energy audit.
- Green Space Wildlife Areas: Replace seasonal bedding displays with permanent perennial and shrub planting.
- Recycling / Waste: Legislation was still awaited on the introduction of food waste collections and deposit return scheme; until implementation, the target would remain at approximately 50%.
- Local Plan Policies and Heat Pumps: Biodiversity net gain measures incorporated including heat pumps within the emerging Local Plan, expected to be drafted by end of 2022 and adopted in 2024.

It was noted that the development of a website green page and evaluation and reduction of Council staff travel emissions would be progressed by the Green Team. It was also noted that the Pollinator and Pesticide Policy and Green Asset Management Plan had both been deferred until devolvement of assets / services to parish and town councils had been completed.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- the Completed Projects Summary would be translated onto the website green page, when developed, to inform residents of actions taken since the declaration of a Climate Emergency; and
- the Green Team had met for the first time in June 2022, with a further meeting scheduled for July 2022.

#### **CCSG22/4. VILLAGE HALLS PROJECT UPDATE**

(4)

The Village Hall Energy Project aimed to reduce the carbon footprints of village and community halls across the district by reducing reliance on oil and gas as a fuel source, and decreasing electricity drawn from the national grid by 2025. The report identified the aims, measurements, key stakeholders, external specialisms, proposed milestones and funding requirements for the project. As of June 2022, 43 halls had been identified as in scope for the project. 26 had confirmed that they would like to participate (one declined), confirmation from the remaining 16 was still awaited. It was anticipated that the final take-up would be high.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- once funding had been allocated by the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy Allocations Panel, site assessments would take place during August to December 2022;
- a review of site assessments, agreement of prioritisation criteria and confirmation of the schedule of installations at relevant sites would take place between December 2022 and March 2023; and
- ideas for the prioritisation criteria would be discussed at the next meeting of the Climate Change Steering Group.

**ACTION 1:** Ideas for the prioritisation criteria to be discussed at the next meeting. **(BH/EM)**

#### CCSG22/5. **2019/20 CARBON BASELINING** (5)

The Council had undertaken a baselining exercise based on Green House Gas (GHG) emissions for the year April 2019 to March 2020, using a GHG accounting tool developed specifically for local authorities. The tool categorised emissions into three distinct scopes:

- **Scope 1:** Emissions released as a direct result of organisational activity.
- **Scope 2:** Emissions released as an indirect consumption of an energy commodity.
- **Scope 3:** All other indirect emissions other than electricity, as well as emissions from operations that had been outsourced.

Regarding the baseline for 2019/20, Members were advised that Scope 1 emissions related to fleet vehicles and data was still being sought; Scope 2 grid electricity purchased in the Council's operations; and Scope 3 would not be included. As data for Scopes 1 and 2 was unlikely to be available, it was considered appropriate to reset a base year for Scope 3 at a more recent point, to ensure that all reliable data was accessible. A boundary setting exercise had been instigated to identify Scope 3 emission sources including current or potential reporting measures, to confirm how and when they would be incorporated into the GHG accounting tool. It was noted that due to complexities and wide scale variations it was difficult to measure comparisons with other similar sized local authorities.

Members were advised that Scope 3 emissions could typically be 60-80% of an organisation's total carbon footprint. Therefore, the Council's actual carbon emissions for 2019/20 could be in the region of 700 tonnes (equivalent of driving a diesel car 170 times round the Earth and equivalent of 35,000 trees growing for one year to offset).

During the discussion the following points were noted.

- estimated fleet mileage emissions had been received, calculated from mileage recorded from MOT certificates and would be circulated to Members in due course. Figures indicated fleet mileage emissions of 9.55 tonnes, taking the baseline figure to 213.88 tonnes for the year 2019/2020;

- mileage from the Council's main vehicles totalled approximately 30,000. If the vehicles were replaced with electric vehicles (EV), emissions would be reduced by 73% from 9.55 tonnes to 2.6 tonnes. Fuel costs would be reduced by two thirds from £10,000 to £3,500 for EVs;
- emissions from heating for the year 2019/2020 were calculated across five sites owned by the Council at the time, but the number of sites had now increased to 12. Therefore, the amount of emissions would increase as the number of sites had increased in the Council's portfolio;
- all Council vehicles were leased and not owned;
- vehicles used by contractors fell into Scope 3. Mileage figures for this group could not be backdated to 2019;
- 'grey fleet' vehicles fell within Scope 3 and emitted 73 tonnes for the year 2019/20;
- Biffa had been trialling hydrotreated vegetable oil as fuel for their vehicles in the Wealden area;
- mileage for Council owned vehicles had not changed greatly since 2019, as officers had still been mobile during the pandemic;
- the Council had not committed to EVs for their vans yet and were awaiting costs from the lease provider. The 4x4 coastal vehicle had been replaced with a diesel vehicle due to no EV points in the Camber area;
- baseline figures would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July; and
- emissions from the Town Hall in 2019/20 totalled 71.16 tonnes, which was the equivalent of 50 households, accounting for one third of the Council's total emissions. Locally generated electricity was featured in the proposed re-design of the Town Hall.

**ACTION 2:** The Project Officer to circulate fleet mileage emission figures to Members. **(EM)**

#### CCSG22/6. **COMMUNICATIONS / RECRUITMENT UPDATE** (6)

The Director – Place and Climate Change provided an update on recruitment and confirmed that an advert for a Strategy and Partnership role was due to close at the end of the week, with interviews scheduled to take place over the coming weeks. It was hoped that details of the new appointment could be given at the next meeting of the Climate Change Steering Group. The post would initially report to the Director – Place and Climate Change but would in time move to report to the Planning Policy Manager.

#### CCSG22/7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** (7)

The following any other business item was discussed:

- Councillor Coleman requested information on availability of funding for tree planting along Sidley High Street. East Sussex County Council would be contacted in the first instance as the pavement belonged to the Highways Team - Rupert Clubb, Director of

Communities, Economy and Transport and Councillor Nick Bennett, the Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change.

**CCSG22/8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

(8)

The date of the next informal meeting was arranged for Tuesday 26 July 2022 at 11:30am and to be held remotely on MS Teams. This meeting would not be webcast.

**CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 2:37pm

CCSG220623jh/lh

**CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP**

26 July 2022



Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group “informal” meeting held remotely on Tuesday 26 July 2022 at 11:31am.

Members of the Steering Group Present: Councillors K.M. Field (Chair), S.J. Coleman, P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands (in part), P.N. Osborne and S.M. Prochak (MBE).

Other Members present: Councillors Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel, C.A. Madeley, H.L. Timpe (in part) and J. Vine-Hall.

Advisory Officers Present: Director – Place and Climate Change, Project Officer (Environment) and Democratic Services Officer.

---

**CCSG22/9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(1)

There were no apologies for absence.

**CCSG22/10. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

(2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

**CCSG22/11. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 23 JUNE 2022 – MATTERS ARISING**

(3)

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 June 2022 were agreed.

There were no matters arising.

**CCSG22/12. SCOPE 1 AND 2 EMISSIONS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS AND SCOPE 3 REPORTING**

(4)

The Project Officer (Environment) gave Members a presentation on the Scope 1 and 2 emissions over the past three years (2019/20 – 2021/22) and an update on the Scope 3 reporting.

Members were reminded that Scope 1 emissions (released as a direct result of organisational activity) included heating, fleet and Scope 2 (released as an indirect consumption of an energy commodity) electricity. Scope 3 (other indirect emissions as well as emissions from operations that had been outsourced) included water, business mileage, working from home, material use, organisational waste and outsourced services such as the joint waste contract and leisure

centres. Scope 3 emissions were more difficult to measure and monitor.

Over the three-year period, heating emissions from the Town Hall and direct operational buildings had stayed constant, but the total emissions from temporary accommodation (TA) had increased due to the acquisition of more properties. Consideration would be given to how newly acquired properties could be decarbonised and for decarbonisation requirements to be built into the leases of other Council-owned properties. The Town Hall had the greatest heating emissions, but it was anticipated that this would reduce by 50% if the Town Hall Renaissance Project went ahead.

The Council's fleet vehicles accounted for 4.02% of total emissions, which could be reduced by 70% if they were switched to e-vehicles. This was not feasible at the current time due to a lack of charging points across the district but would be re-visited in 2026/27 when the fleet was due to be renewed.

Electricity emissions from the Council's direct operational buildings had decreased due to the change in working practices during and following the pandemic, but indirect operational buildings, public toilets, TA and business leased buildings' emissions had bounced back after decreasing during the pandemic.

The Council had recently procured a 'green' electricity contract. Government guidance offered two different ways for public sector bodies to report the emissions from the electricity they procure, using either a 'location-based' or 'market-based' approach. The location-based approach used the average carbon emission intensity of the national grid. Using this method meant that buying green electricity was not 'counted' towards meeting a carbon reduction target. The market-based approach involved using an emissions factor that was specific to the electricity supply that was purchased. Using this approach meant that, when green electricity was procured in line with the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin scheme, it could be counted towards meeting a carbon-reduction target. If this approach was used then, to avoid double counting, it reduced the amount of green electricity that was available to others through the national grid. In other words, the Council's electricity supply may have been green but the supply to all other customers will be a little less green. As the Council's aim was for Net Zero across the district of Rother, it was suggested that the location-based approach should be adopted.

The Council was currently on track to achieving the carbon neutral target by 2030 with regards to Scope 1 and 2 emissions, but this had been largely due to the pandemic and agile working practices. The Town Hall Renaissance Project, switching fleet vehicles to e-vehicles and the planned devolvement of public toilets would decrease emissions some more, but further work was required to achieve the target by 2030. The Wildlife Trust were working on an action plan to assist the Council.

Work to reduce Scope 3 emissions was under consideration, but further data was required. The joint waste contract accounted for very high levels of emissions and a decarbonisation project to look at the types of vehicles used, route optimisations and the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil fuel by a Working Group was to be taken forward.

**CCSG22/13. VILLAGE HALLS PROJECT – PRIORITISATION CRITERIA**  
(5)

The Village Hall Energy Project aimed to reduce the carbon footprints of village and community halls across the district by reducing reliance on oil and gas as a fuel source, and decreasing electricity drawn from the national grid by 2025.

The application for Community Infrastructure Levy funding had been successful and site assessments would take place during August to December 2022 to determine which halls would be awarded funding. The criteria to be used by contractors carrying out the site visits to determine awards were:

- cost of each measure proposed and the payback to be received by the hall;
- regularity of hall bookings;
- Rest Centre status; and
- higher weighting to those halls currently using oil.

The village halls would be asked to provide 12 months' energy statements, plus pre-pandemic statements. The assessments would be based on a whole-building approach to decarbonisation.

**CCSG22/14. COMMUNICATIONS / RECRUITMENT UPDATE**  
(6)

The Director – Place and Climate Change provided an update on recruitment and confirmed that an offer had been made and accepted for the Strategy and Partnership Officer role. The applicant, currently employed by the Kent Wildlife Trust, would commence employment in the autumn.

**CCSG22/15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  
(7)

The following any other business item was discussed:

The Project Officer (Environment) updated the Climate Change Steering Group on the completed, ongoing, outstanding short, medium and long-term projects since the last meeting. The village halls project had seen the greatest progress and the Green Team were continuing to develop the website green page with good news stories. The Council becoming a member of UK100 was also under discussion. A project update would appear as a separate agenda item at the next meeting.

**CCSG22/16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

(8)

The date of the next informal meeting was arranged for Wednesday 31 August 2022 at 10:00am, to be held remotely on MS Teams. This meeting would not be webcast.

**CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 12:57pm

CCSG220726lh

**CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP**

31 August 2022



Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group “informal” meeting held remotely on Wednesday 31 August 2022 at 10:02am.

Members of the Steering Group Present: Councillors K.M. Field (Chair), S.J. Coleman, P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands, P.N. Osborne and S.M. Prochak (MBE).

Other Members present: Councillors J. Barnes, Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel and J. Vine-Hall.

Advisory Officers Present: Director – Place and Climate Change, Project Officer (Environment) and Democratic Services Officer.

---

**CCSG22/17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(1)

There were no apologies for absence.

**CCSG22/18. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

(2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

**CCSG22/19. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 26 JULY 2022 – MATTERS**

(3)

**ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**CCSG22/20. PROJECTS SUMMARY – UPDATE**

(3)

The Project Officer (Environment) updated the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) on the completed, ongoing, outstanding short, medium and long-term projects. The following was noted within the report:

- Council Staff Travel Emissions: In August a Sustrans Active Steps cycling programme had been launched – to date six Council staff had joined. A cycle to work scheme was scheduled to be re-launched. Team Charters were being produced and a Manager’s Forum scheduled to be held in September to discuss the environmental impact of commuting staff etc.
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Council Car Parks: Installation to be completed in at least three car parks by May 2023.
- Electric Community Bus Service: Awaiting confirmation of Round 2 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.

- Tree Coverage in Bexhill: Trees for Cities were working with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) on an Urban Tree Challenge Fund project focused on roadside verge tree planting; several locations had been identified within Bexhill and planting was scheduled to start winter 2022-23. Additional funding was being sourced. £143,000 had been secured to increase tree coverage; three sites had been shortlisted (Bexhill Downs, Sidley Recreation Ground and Southlands Open Space) with an additional three back-up sites if required. Planting was scheduled to commence in winter 2022-23. Work was ongoing with Bexhill Environment Group on tree and hedge planting proposals for 2022-23. The Bexhill i-Tree Eco Study commenced in February 2022 – the full report was detailed at Agenda Item 6.
- Roll out of “One Digital”: Switch to Council Tax E-billing; Implementation was imminent; ‘opt-out’ option would maximise take-up. Members would be briefed in October 2022.
- Village Hall Carbon Emissions: CIL funding was awarded in July 2022 – report was being presented to Cabinet on 5 September 2022.
- Local Plan (include biodiversity net gain measures): Public consultation on the new plan would commence in early 2023; parish and town councils (P&TC) would be consulted in autumn 2022.
- Green Space Wildlife Areas: Replace seasonal bedding displays with permanent perennial and shrub planting; scheduled to commence at Manor Barn Gardens and along East Parade in Bexhill.
- Solar Power/Panels: To be progressed as part of the Town Hall Renaissance Project. A memorandum of co-operation was being drafted between the Council and Energise Sussex Coast.
- Air Quality Monitors: To be discussed / progressed with Environmental Services.
- Recycling / Waste / Supply Composters: Legislation was still awaited on the introduction of food waste collections and deposit return scheme; until implementation, the target would remain at approximately 50%. From August 2022, the Council’s website detailed links to composting resources, including East Sussex County Council guidance.
- P&TC adopt Climate Emergency Policies: Hurst Green Parish Council had declared a climate emergency in July 2022. A framework template to be established.
- Heat Pumps: A pan-East Sussex approach to decarbonise housing was being considered.
- Re-use Nappy Scheme: Council support to be given to a local charity to implement.

It was also noted that the Pollinator and Pesticide Policy, Green Asset Management Plan and Carbon Neutral Council assets had been deferred until devolvement of assets / services to P&TCs had been completed. Two projects were not being progressed, namely solar litter bins and outdoor gym projects. Members were advised that investigating solar litter bins and technology involved etc. to reduce waste service emissions would duplicate the work of the Joint Waste Partnership Decarbonisation Project. Additional solar bins might be installed for the purpose of reducing litter and would be managed by

Neighbourhood Services. The current gym equipment was still fit-for-purpose and electricity generating equipment only generated enough power to charge personal devices or lighting within the immediate vicinity. The Council's current outdoor gym areas did not have any lighting.

The following projects had been introduced, established and completed: Council Green Team; 100% renewable energy contracts adopted; joined UK Green Building Council; waterless urinals; eco-tips on 'MyAlerts'; four community projects supplied with superfast broadband; delivered free environmental and sustainability workshops; carbon literacy training for Members and officers; wildflower areas; CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund; tree coverage in Bexhill; carbon reduction clauses in all contracts; swap shop for office moves; virtual mailroom; maintenance tracker; paperless pledge and digital image processing; staff digital suggestions box; working from home and on-line meetings; solar panels on Council-owned properties; Environment Strategy; and climate emergency established.

During the discussion the following points were suggested and noted:

- a Members allowance scheme for shared travelling to meetings held at the Town Hall;
- as a result of the current national energy crisis, it was anticipated that staff returning to work at the Town Hall would significantly increase over the winter period;
- offer incentives to staff who cycle to work;
- the Council to pay for season tickets to encourage staff to travel to work by public transport etc.;
- lobby British Rail and businesses to conserve energy and switch off lighting at night; to liaise with ESCC;
- currently in consultation with Energise Sussex Coast to establish community energy micro grids (Egerton Park / Polegrove) etc.;
- currently working with neighbouring authorities regarding drop-in co-working flexible spaces; and
- energy efficient products would and were being used to refurbish Council-owned properties, where appropriate.

#### CCSG22/21. **GREEN TEAM – UPDATE**

(5)

The Project Officer (Environment) updated Members on the work of the Council's Green Team. The Green Team consisted of officers across all departments of the authority. The following projects were being prioritised / considered:

- establish a staff survey to ascertain current travel arrangements and mileage including investigating car pool/sharing and electric vehicles;
- to implement a structured recycling system at the Town Hall with the co-operation of the cleaning staff;
- establishment of the green page on the Council's website; and
- implementation (next year) of the one-digital system for Council Tax billing (reduction of paper bills), opt-in or opt-out still to be decided.

Important that all methods of payment were available, particularly for those residents who were not able to access technology. Members would be fully briefed in the autumn.

## **CCSG22/22. I-TREE ECO SAMPLE SURVEY OF BEXHILL'S URBAN FOREST**

(6)

Consideration was given to the Urban Forest 1066 (Assessing the importance and value of trees) document which had recently been published. The document was an i-tree eco sample survey of Bexhill's urban forest and was collaborated in consultation with the Council, Tree-economics, i-Tree and Forest Research. Provided baseline information which could be used to inform future decision making and strategy. A team of volunteers collated field data from 300 plots across Bexhill. The following key points were noted:

- Bexhill had approximately 228,000 trees.
- Tree 16% and Shrub 6% approximate coverage – covering an area of over 750 hectares.
- 81 different species (Oak [dominant], Ash and Holly).
- Future planting to focus on different species to improve overall resilience.
- Good distribution of semi-mature trees, less large senescent trees; further planting to be undertaken to support ageing population.
- Potential to trap and remove 53 tonnes of air pollution annual / value of £1.5m.
- Reduce surface runoff by over 84,000m<sup>3</sup> per year (equivalent of 34 Olympic swimming pools), worth estimated £152,000 in avoided treatment costs.
- Store 73,000 tonnes of carbon and sequester an additional 2,000 tonnes of carbon annually with associated values of approximately £66.6m and £2m respectively.
- Benefits to habitat, soil conservation and noise reduction.

During the discuss the following was noted:

- it was suggested that the Council managed a “donate and name” the tree service, including a plaque;
- a further 2,000 trees were scheduled to be planted at Bexhill Down in November 2022;
- improve tree-lining streets / plant more trees in the verges; East Sussex County Council support and approval would be required;
- encourage residents to plant more trees within their gardens; and
- important that a variety of species were planted.

## **CCSG22/23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(7)

The following any other business items were discussed:

Communications: it was suggested that a weekly good news story be released to advertise what progress had been made to reduce the District's carbon footprint.

Local Plan: it was requested that the Climate Change Steering Group had input and were provided with a briefing on the development of the new Local Plan. The Director – Place and Climate Change agreed to speak to the Planning Policy Manager and a briefing would be organised before the end of the year.

**ACTION 1:** The Director – Place and Climate Change to speak to the Planning Policy Manager and organise a briefing before the end of the year for the Climate Change Steering Group on the development of the Local Plan.

**CCSG22/24. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

(8)

The Director – Place and Climate Change to agree dates for the next six months with the Chair. Members would be advised of the dates agreed.

**CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 11:12am

CCSG220831jh

**CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP**

18 October 2022



Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group “informal” meeting held remotely on Tuesday 18 October 2022 at 11:00am.

Members of the Steering Group Present: Councillors K.M. Field (Chair), P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands and P.N. Osborne.

Other Members present: Councillors J. Barnes, P.C. Courtel and G.F. Stevens.

Advisory Officers Present: Director – Place and Climate Change, Project Officer (Environment), Environment Strategy Officer and Democratic Services Officer.

---

**CCSG22/25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.J. Coleman and S.M. Prochak (MBE).

**CCSG22/26. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

(2)

Declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the Minutes as indicated below:

Langlands     Agenda Item 4 – Personal Interest as a Director of Bexhill Community Bus Service and Trustee of Community Supporters.

**CCSG22/27. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 31 AUGUST 2022 – MATTERS ARISING**

(3)

It was requested that the Minutes of the previous “informal” meetings be uploaded and made available on the public facing section of the website. After review by the Director – Place and Climate Change, it was agreed to upload the Minutes to the website.

Members requested that carbon measurement savings be added to the Project Summary Update report and recorded in future minutes of the meetings. The Project Officer (Environment) agreed that, where appropriate, measurements would be included within future reports.

The Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) sought clarity on when the next meeting would be held in the public domain. The Director – Place and Climate Change would discuss with his team and devise a suitable agenda. The CCSG would be advised of the agreed date.

The CCSG was advised that an annual summary page would be uploaded to the website to highlight headline details of the projects that the Council and community had undertaken over the year; this was scheduled to be launched shortly. Members were shown a draft version of the page. Progress on projects could also be advertised on the Council's social media platforms, as well as 'MyAlerts'.

**ACTION 1:** Director – Place and Climate Change to review all previous “informal” meeting minutes prior to being uploaded to the website.

**ACTION 2:** Carbon measurement savings be included on future reports and Minutes. (Project Officer [Environment] / Democratic Services Officer).

**ACTION 3:** Director – Place and Climate Change to agree the date and agenda of the next Climate Change Steering Group “public” meeting.

**ACTION 4:** Progress on projects be advertised on the Council's social media platforms, as well as 'MyAlerts'. (Project Officer [Environment]).

**CCSG22/28. RECRUITMENT UPDATE (VERBAL)**  
(6)

The Chair, in agreement with the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG), re-ordered the agenda to consider Agenda Item 6 next.

The Director – Place and Climate Change introduced Dr Lucie Bolton, Environment Strategy Officer, to the CCSG who had recently joined the Council. She would be responsible for and leading on rewriting the Council's existing Environment Strategy to ensure that it was fit-for-purpose, including carbon changes across the Council and whole of the district.

**CCSG22/29. PROJECTS SUMMARY – UPDATE**  
(4)

The Project Officer (Environment) updated the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) on the completed, ongoing, outstanding short, medium and long-term projects. The following was noted within the report:

- Green Page on the Council's website: From 10 October 2022, the Climate Emergency webpage had been redesigned and linked to all relevant pages that contributed towards the Council's Environment Strategy. Additional pages on emissions, annual achievements and guidance were being developed.
- Council Staff Travel Emissions: On 11 October 2022, Sustrans Active Steps cycling programme was completed. A cycle to work scheme was scheduled to be re-launched shortly. Team Charters were being produced and a Managers' Forum established to discuss the environmental impact of commuting staff etc. A staff survey would be used to measure baseline commuting emissions.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Car Parks: Feasibility studies were progressing on three car parks, namely De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP), Bedford Place (Rye) and Mount Street

(Battle). Once these studies were completed, funding would be sought. It was anticipated that all three car parks would be EV ready by the end of the year or early 2023.

- Tree Coverage in Bexhill (Street Tree Project): Trees for Cities were working with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) on roadside verge tree planting at approximately 31 sites in Bexhill. Planting was scheduled to start winter 2022-23 and additional funding was being sourced to ensure all sites were planted. Scanning of locations for confirmed viability would commence on 30 October 2022 with planting soon afterwards.
- Tree Coverage in Bexhill (Green Recovery Challenge): £143,000 had been secured to increase tree coverage; three sites had been shortlisted (Bexhill Downs, Sidley Recreation Ground and Southlands Open Space) with an additional three back-up sites if required. Planting was scheduled to commence in winter 2022-23.
- Tree Coverage in Bexhill (Bexhill Environment Group): Work was ongoing with Bexhill Environment Group on tree and hedge planting proposals for 2022-23. A further 2,000 trees were scheduled to be planted at Bexhill Downs on Friday 2 December 2022; volunteers were required and Members were asked to promote the scheme within their Wards.
- Roll out of "One Digital": Switch to Council Tax E-billing; Implementation was imminent; discussion was still on-going regarding an 'opt-in' or 'opt-out' option. Members would be briefed prior to the system being launched.
- Village Hall Carbon Emissions: Full Council approval was granted on 19 September 2022. Phase 1 would commence once legal sign-off had been received and completion was anticipated in March 2023.
- Local Plan (including biodiversity net gain measures): Public consultation on the new plan would commence in early 2023; parish and town councils (P&TC) would be consulted in autumn 2022.
- Green Space Wildlife Areas: Replace seasonal bedding displays with permanent perennial and shrub planting; scheduled to commence at Bexhill Cemetery Garden of Remembrance, Polegrove Bowls Club, DLWP Car Park, East Parade and Lanes Gardens.
- Recycling / Supply Composters: Legislation was still awaited (anticipated spring 2023) on the introduction of food waste collections and deposit return scheme; until implementation, the target would remain at approximately 50%. From August 2022, the Council's website detailed links to composting resources, including ESCC guidance.
- P&TC adopt Climate Emergency Policies: Hurst Green Parish Council had declared a climate emergency in July 2022. A framework template was to be established in collaboration with the Project Officer (Environment). Bexhill Town Council (BTC) had declared a climate and nature emergency in June 2021 and in October 2022 drafted a Climate Action Plan (CAP).
- Air Quality Monitors: Discussions were being held with the Council's Environmental Services team regarding air quality measures in Rother. Members were advised that the Council was consistently meeting Government Air Quality targets. Investigations would be undertaken to deploy portable units across the district to measure

specific “hotspot” areas. Primary school locations were suggested, as it was understood that parents were reluctant to walk their children to school due to unacceptable air quality. Officers agreed to consider this.

- Solar Panels: A memorandum of co-operation was being drafted with Energise East Sussex. The Council would be participating in ESCC’s Solar Together Scheme scheduled to be launched in February 2023; this would be publicised to all residents nearer the time.
- Heat Pumps: East Sussex Housing Group had formed a Climate Sub-group to discuss joint bids for retro-fitting grant applications for housing stock. The Environment Strategy Officer would be leading and liaising with the housing providers on this project.
- Re-use Nappy Scheme: Council support to be given to a local charity to implement.
- De-carbonise Waste Fleet: Agreement had been reached with the contractor (Biffa) to switch the vehicle fleet to hydro-treated vegetable oil instead of diesel; work would commence and a report would be presented to the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee in January 2023.

The CCSG was advised that a bid of £750,000 had been submitted for the Town Hall De-carbonisation project; outcome was expected by January 2023. It was noted that if successful, the Council would require an additional £200,000 to complete the project. Members were advised that BTC’s CAP included the procurement of an electric bus for lease to the Bexhill Community Bus Service. It was confirmed that the Council would collaborate / communicate with all relevant stakeholders including P&TCs to ensure that projects were not duplicated. It was confirmed that the Repair Swap Shop / Café project would be rolled-out to P&TCs and local community groups.

Since the last meeting, the following projects had been introduced, established and completed: reducing Council staff travel emissions; reduce, re-use and recycle grants scheme; and village halls energy project.

During the discussion the following points were suggested and noted:

- Members were reminded that the Council’s Community Grant Scheme made provision for up to £130,000 per annum and supported the development of community facilities, community activities and sustainable local action projects from P&TCs, voluntary or community organisations. Concern was raised that the process for applying for a grant was too complicated (volumes of paperwork to be completed) and it was requested that the process be simplified;
- Lewes Community Transport had set-up a successful ‘Dial-a-Ride’ service in Hastings;
- it was understood that only improvements to the 98/99 service (e.g. extend hours) within the district would be included within ESCC’s £20m bus service improvement plan;

- Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding could be applied for and used to support community bus services, as long as the project met the funding criteria;
- Members were advised that the Project Officer (Environment) and Environment Strategy Officer would be arranging a visit to Veolia's Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility;
- Members were advised of the Local Government Association's free webinar on Neighbourhood Approach to Decarbonising Buildings and Transport scheduled to be held on Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 10:30am [Local Government Association](#). Information on the webinar would be published in October's edition of the Members' Bulletin;
- it was hoped that all Council-owned properties would be retro-fitted with energy efficient products; and
- it was understood that energy and carbon performance of older houses could be improved. However, it was important that the correct energy efficient measures were implemented to improve efficiency and reduce the risk of harm.

**ACTION 5:** Members promote the request for volunteers within their Wards regarding the Bexhill Downs tree planting scheme scheduled to be held on Friday 2 December 2022.

(When it first became apparent, Councillor Langlands declared a Personal Interest in this matter as a Director of Bexhill Community Bus Service and Trustee of Community Supporters and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

## CCSG22/30. **SPRINT TO NET ZERO**

(5)

Consideration was given to the report of the Project Officer (Environment) on the Council's participation in Every One Of Us Community Interest Company's Couch to Carbon Zero: The 10 Day Sprint for Busy People, scheduled to commence on 7 November 2022 to 18 November 2022, which was in-line with COP27.

The report detailed what the project entailed for the Council, its staff and the district, as well as the Delivery Plan. All participants would be encouraged to make lifestyle changes and it was anticipated that after 10 days, they would have tangibly reduced their carbon footprint. Topics included reviewing / switching bank account providers; technology; and clothing providers. One week prior to the launch, staff would have the opportunity to attend a webinar presentation. Promotional materials, including survey information would also be provided. The project would be promoted district-wide on the Council's social media platforms and through 'MyAlerts' and 'MyBusinessAlerts' to invite residents and businesses to participate. To incentivise participation, monetary prizes would be awarded.

Members were advised that the cost of the project would be £3,250 (50% reduction on the usual price) and that the Council was the first local authority to sign-up.

During the discussion the following was noted:

- prize voucher for a meal at Tillingham Restaurant, Peasmarsh [Tillingham Home](#); and
- promote the scheme to all local environmental organisations and schools.

After deliberation, Members were supportive of the Council participating in the project. It was noted that the Director – Place and Climate Change had already approved the Council's participation, as it was thought that Members would not be opposed to the scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council's participation in the Couch to Carbon Zero: The 10 Day Sprint for Busy People be noted.

**ACTION 6:** The scheme be promoted to local environmental organisations and schools. (Project Officer (Environment) / Environment Strategy Officer)

#### CCSG22/31. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(7)

The following any other business items were discussed:

Local Engagement: To ask Members and the public to submit their favourite 'eco tips' via 'MyAlerts'; these would be uploaded to the Council's website.

Queen's Canopy Memorial / Team East Sussex: register to plant a tree – details would be emailed to Members.

Wildflower Planting: Concern was raised that wildflower planting in Bexhill had led to a rat infestation. The Neighbourhood Services team had investigated the issue and replacement shrubs were being considered.

Local Plan (Solar Panels): it was noted that solar panels could not be installed on buildings that were within the curtilage of a listed building. Members requested that consideration of this be explored through the development of the new Local Plan. The Director – Place and Climate Change agreed to speak to the Planning Policy Manager.

**ACTION 7:** Email information on the Queen's Canopy Memorial. (Director – Place and Climate Change).

**ACTION 8:** The Director – Place and Climate Change to speak to the Planning Policy Manager regarding solar panels within the curtilage of listed buildings as part of the development of the Local Plan.

#### CCSG22/32. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

(8)

The date of the next "informal" meeting was arranged for Thursday 24 November 2022 at 2:30pm to be held remotely on MS Teams.

**CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 12:10pm

CCSG221018jh

**CLIMATE CHANGE STEERING GROUP**

24 November 2022



Minutes of the Climate Change Steering Group “informal” meeting held remotely on Thursday 24 November 2022 at 2:30pm.

Members of the Steering Group Present: Councillors K.M. Field (Chair), S.J. Coleman, P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands, P.N. Osborne and S.M. Prochak.

Other Members present: Councillors J. Barnes, Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel, B.J. Drayson (in part), G.F. Stevens and J. Vine-Hall.

Advisory Officers Present: Director – Place and Climate Change, Environment Strategy Officer and Democratic Services Officer.

---

**CCSG22/33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(1)

An apology for absence was received from Elize Manning, Project Officer (Environment).

**CCSG22/34. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

(2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

**CCSG22/35. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2022 – MATTERS ARISING**

(3)

The following matter arising was discussed:

**ACTION 1:** Uploading Minutes to the Website. It was clarified that once the Director – Place and Climate Change had reviewed all “informal” meeting minutes they would be uploaded to the Climate Change pages on the Website. They would also be added as an Appendix to the next formal meeting of the Climate Change Steering Group.

**CCSG22/36. PROJECTS SUMMARY – UPDATE**

(4)

The Environment Strategy Officer updated the Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) on the completed, ongoing, outstanding short, medium and long-term projects. The following project/objectives had been updated since the last meeting:

- Council Staff Travel Emissions: It was clarified that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) had shared their recent staff survey

information; lessons had been learnt. The survey was scheduled to be launched to staff shortly.

- Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Car Parks: Feasibility studies had been completed in nine car parks, all were potentially viable. The Provider advised that larger bids were considered more favourably, therefore the Council would be applying to install EV charging points within all nine car parks. Funding and approval would be submitted and sought.
- Electric Community Bus Service: Once Bexhill Town Council's Environment Strategy had been finalised, work would resume on this project.
- Tree Coverage in Bexhill (I-Tree Survey): Tree Planting Strategy had been drafted by Treeconomics and circulated to stakeholders for comment and was being considered elsewhere on the Agenda (Item 6). It was anticipated that the final draft would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early 2023.
- Village Hall Carbon Emissions: It was anticipated that the Provider would be appointed by Christmas and meetings would proceed in January 2023.
- Recycling: Members were advised that in November 2022, officers had visited the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility and Woodlands In-Vessel Composting Facility at Whitesmith.
- Parish and Town Councils adopt Climate Emergency Policies: This was being considered elsewhere on the Agenda (Item 5).
- Solar Panels: Due to the closure of Rye Swimming Pool, the Council would be supporting Freedom Leisure and ESCC to review solar options.
- Re-use Nappy Scheme: On 4 November 2022, the Environment Strategy Officer met with "Be The Change", a local cloth nappy initiative to discuss promoting re-usable nappies. Unfortunately, "Be The Change" was not a registered charity, which limited funding opportunities.

The Green Page on the Council Website would be removed from the list of projects as this had been created and was ongoing. Two projects were not being progressed, namely air quality measurement kit for cyclists and installation of air quality monitors throughout the district. It was confirmed that enough air quality measurement data already existed and was being captured, plus mobile units might not deliver accurate information. Members were also advised that Sussex Air was investigating a real time quality monitoring system for Sussex via a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs grant.

The report detailed that approximately 30 projects had been completed; this included the Couch to Carbon Zero Sprint which had recently taken place involving Council officers (80), residents and businesses throughout the district (228).

The following link on the Council's website [Our Climate Action April 2021 – March 2022 – Rother District Council](#) detailed a summary of the Council's progress, which highlighted some of the actions taken each year to address the Climate Emergency.

During the discussion the following points were suggested and noted:

- Rye Swimming Pool (RSP): It was suggested that a Community Energy Project was established for RSP. The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that several “energy saving” options were being explored to improve the building’s efficiency and to maximise financial gain. Advice was being sought from Energise Sussex Coast, as additional power sources would be required. A report would be presented to Cabinet in the future. Members were advised that Community Infrastructure Levy funding was being considered to upgrade RSP’s heating equipment / system. It was essential to ensure long-term viability and that RSP re-opened and remained open to the public.
- EV Charging Points: The CCSG sought clarity on the proposed locations / car parks of the EV charging points; exact information was not available at the meeting and would be emailed to Members afterwards. It was clarified that ESCC was responsible for on-street EV Charging Points.

**ACTION 1:** Project Officer (Environment) to email EV Charging Point information to Members.

#### CCSG22/37. **NET ZERO – PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT** (5)

Consideration was given to how the Council could support the parish and town councils (P&TC) regarding net zero opportunities. The Environment Strategy Officer advised that she had emailed all P&TC Clerks introducing herself and enquiring about the level of support they would be interested in receiving. The Environment Strategy Officer has compiled some resource information, outlining some clear ideas about what they could do, as well as some useful YouTube links which she would disseminate if required. To date she had received no response.

During the discussion the following was noted:

- It was suggested that the Environment Strategy Officer attend the next RALC meeting and promote information through the Parish Assemblies.
- Funding opportunities might be available from the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit, particularly regarding hedgerow and tree planting.
- Councillor Langlands reminded Members of the “Hero to Zero Award” that she had launched in Bexhill. It was important that as well as P&TCs all community groups and schools were encouraged to reduce their carbon emissions / improve their carbon footprint.
- Councillor Mrs Cook advised that Battle Town Council had launched an Eco-Youth Award in Battle.
- Couch to Carbon Zero: Members sought clarity on whether this initiative would be repeated. The Director – Place and Climate Change advised that there were costs involved, however the Council would like to do it again with the focus more on residents. The company regularly launched “sprints” and anyone could sign-up if they wished [Couch to Carbon Zero](#).
- It was important that all community groups, stakeholders, P&TCs were engaged in the Council’s commitment to be carbon neutral by

2023. Expert advice should be sought where appropriate and local community groups notified of relevant projects. A robust Communications Plan would be essential.

- Realistic targets should be set as ambitious / unrealistic goals were less likely to be achieved which could result in disappointment and decreased effort.

#### CCSG22/38. **BEXHILL TREE PLANTING STRATEGY – DRAFT**

(6)

Consideration was given to the draft Bexhill Tree Planting Strategy (BTPS). The BTPS detailed the Council's plans in collaboration with Treeconomics, i-Tree and Forest Research to increase the tree canopy across Bexhill, by providing a baseline for the existing urban forest, while strategically exploring opportunities for future planting. The BTPS signposted best practice and guidance regarding planting, care and management of new trees. It detailed information on the urban forest; policy; existing trees and woodland; planting; and monitoring and review.

During the discuss the following was noted:

- It was clarified that different tree species generated different carbon rates. It was important that a variety of species were planted to ensure maximum biodiversity as well as carbon capture.
- Concern was raised regarding the condition and management of Sidley Wood (SW), near Sidley Recreation Ground that was Council-owned land. Coppicing was required; many trees had fallen over stopping other vegetation / plants from growing / flourishing. The Director – Place and Climate Changed advised that officers were aware of the condition of SW.
- Sidley High Street / Tree Planting: it was clarified that roadside tree planting was the responsibility of East Sussex County Council.
- Large-scale tree planting might not benefit the environment and could reduce biodiversity with very little impact on carbon emissions. It was considered important that large-scale planting was not carried out within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HWAONB). It was recommended that advice be sought from the HWAONB Unit.
- Members were reminded that approximately 2,000 trees were being planted on Bexhill Downs on Friday 2 December 2022; volunteers were still required. St. Stephens Church would be providing refreshments / toilet facilities. Several Council officers would also be attending / volunteering.
- Members agreed that it was important the Council established and implemented a Tree Planting Strategy Plan for the district.

The final draft would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting and the project progressed in the next financial year.

**ACTION 2:** To establish and implement a Tree Strategy and Action Plan for the District. (Environment Strategy Officer).

## CCSG22/39. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(7)

The following any other business items were discussed:

Important to incentivise businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, by supporting relevant award schemes e.g. Green Business Awards or Sussex Business Awards. A suggestion was proposed that a Ward by Ward scheme be established and that stickers be presented to those businesses who had adopted environmentally friendly schemes / ways of working. It was thought that this could be difficult to judge, as the subject was so diverse.

It was suggested that a directory of businesses who had already or were taking action to reduce their carbon footprints be developed and advertised on the Council's website. It was important that the Council developed a signposting role and that a robust Communications Plan was developed. A series of stakeholder workshops could be delivered.

Councillor Langlands reminded Members of the "[Bexhill Unwrapped](#)" initiative that had been launched; a website where businesses could sign-up to pledge to use less carbon and be more environmentally friendly. Opportunity for businesses to share ideas. Important to incentivise businesses that are currently not doing anything to reduce their carbon footprint.

A key part of the Environment Strategy (ES) would be how the Council incentivised and integrated ideas to / with the community.

The farming community should be supported as part of the ES, and that they be made aware of any relevant funding sources. It was suggested that advice be sought from East Sussex County Council's, Ecologist (Kate Cole).

It was requested that a report on "carbon banking" be presented at a future meeting.

Councillor Langlands advised that an upcycling clothing project was being developed with Bexhill College, Chantry Community Primary School, British Legion (women section) and the Rotary Club of Bexhill. A fashion show would be held at the De La Warr Pavilion in May 2023.

**ACTION 3:** To present a report on "carbon banking" at a future meeting. (Environment Strategy Officer / Project Officer (Environment)).

## CCSG22/40. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

(8)

The date of the next "informal" meeting was arranged for Thursday 26 January 2023 at 2:30pm to be held remotely on MS Teams.

## **CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 3:30pm

CCSG221124jh