

## Climate Change Advisory Board

Tuesday, 10 May 2022

7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr John Burden (Chair)

Councillors: Harold Craske  
Sarah Gow  
Shane Mochrie-Cox  
Diane Morton

Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Stuart Alford	Assistant Director (Operations)
Darren Everden	Assistant Director (Transformation & IT)
Wendy Lane	Assistant Director (Planning)
Simon Hookway	Assistant Director (Communities)
Nicole Arthur	Service Manager (Housing Operations)
Saida Shaikh	Climate Action Delivery Manager
Chris Wakeford	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

### 6. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

### 7. Minutes

The minutes of the Climate Change Cross-Party Member Working Group meeting held on Monday, 24 January 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### 8. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

### 9. Climate Change Action Delivery Plan

The Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) introduced Saida Shaikh, Climate Action Delivery Manager to the Committee and advised that Saida would be attending future meetings of the Board to present Members with the Climate Change Action Delivery Plan

The Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) presented to the Committee the Climate Change Delivery Plan.

As part of the Climate Change Strategy, a high-level, strategic Delivery Plan was set out under three key workstreams:

- **Gravesham Borough Council – the organisation** Focusing on how the council can change its own operations, and those of its employees, wherever possible to reduce the level of carbon emissions its produces.
- **Gravesham Borough Council – the housing provider** Exploring opportunities to bring the council's current housing stock up to a better level of energy efficiency standard where it is possible to do so; ensuring new council housing is built to a high level of sustainability and ensuring local planning policy reflects the need for the borough to consider energy efficiency in all developments moving forward.
- **Gravesham Borough Council – the community leader** It is clear that the council cannot directly affect all of the changes that are needed across the borough. However, in its role as a community leader, it can work with residents, community groups and partners to educate and support them in making changes which will have a positive impact on the level of carbon emissions in the borough.

The Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) highlighted the following to the Board:

- The working groups are going well; they meet each month and cover the three priority groups listed above.
- One area of feedback was a request for more challenging baseline data and the removal of "not applicable" where comparable baseline data could be provided; this has now been reflected within the Action Delivery Plan
- Carbon literacy and EV charging we will be covered later on in the meeting.

The Director (Corporate Services), Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) and Service Manager (Housing Operations) fielded questions from the Board and highlighted the following:

- The Council has worked with the Energy Savings Trust to create a booklet that advises residents on recycling, how to use lighting and heating efficiently. 'Energy Champions' have also been established
- The Green Doctors scheme was adopted by KCC under the household support fund and the fund has been extended into this year. KCC are working through how best to use the money with an emphasis on pensioners and fuel poverty. Some funding is likely to come to Boroughs. The Director (Corporate Services) agreed to look into this matter further.
- The Council has already reduced the use of gas boilers and has an air source heat pump being installed as well as a computer intelligent infrared heating system that will be put in at Gravesham Court. The Council is trialling and testing so it can make real decisions about what we do long term. The Heat source pump at Merston Court should control costs for people in housing scheme. This also provides a big opportunity to influence private households; lots of people have already visited the site and got advice and the village hall is looking at installing a ground source heat pump. Private Housing are also looking at this area and gathering mini case studies.
- The Climate Action Delivery Manager is working with the Digital Team to regularly update the Council's website with Climate Change information for residents and businesses etc.
- The Economic Development Team are engaging with the bigger organisations and advising them about climate change opportunities.
- The Council have regular updates from UK power networks regarding electricity availability for EV charging and they are aware of the shortcomings in Gravesham which is also a national problem too. This issue was raised at a recent meeting

between Local Authorities, Central Government and UK Power and the Chief Executive is raising this matter through the District Councils Network.

- 'Passive House principles' refers to housing that meets the following criteria; no thermal bridging, superior windows, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, quality insulation and airtight construction.
- The Council will look at the Furniture Project for 2023/24
- The solar panels at Carl Ekman House are for communal electrics and will save around £6000 a year

The Chair highlighted the importance of Gravesham's leadership role in the community and how publicity was key to show the way forward.

The Climate Change Advisory Board noted the Climate Change Action Delivery Plan

## **10. IPCC Sixth Assessment Report**

The Director (Corporate Services) provided the Climate Change Advisory Board with an update on the progress of the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in forming their Sixth Assessment Report.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in 1988 and is the United Nations body for assessing the science relating to climate change. It provides policymakers with regular scientific assessments on the current state of knowledge about climate change.

The IPCC is currently preparing its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). Assessments Reports are prepared by the IPCC every 5-7 years and are drawn together from the contributions of three working groups, formed of hundreds of scientists from across the world:

- Working Group I – The Physical Science Basis
- Working Group II – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability
- Working Group III – Mitigation of Climate Change

The research findings of the three Working Groups will be synthesised into the final, Sixth Assessment Report which is expected to be completed later in 2022.

The Climate Change Advisory Board noted the contents of the report.

## **11. Carbon Literacy Training Overview**

The Director (Corporate Services) provided Members with an overview of the training recently attended by officers and Members.

The Climate Change Management Delivery Plan contains an action to "Educate all council Members and officers on Climate Change so that they are able to have an awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis. Create opportunities and engagement activity to enable them to be actively involved in the council's activity around Climate Change and become advocates for Climate Change in all council, business and community operations."

The delivery of this training is to be coordinated by the Climate Action Delivery Manager. It is recognised that the level and content of training will need to be tailored to the nature of roles and decision-making responsibilities of individual attendees.

Ahead of designing the internal training for the council, the Local Government Association (LGA) provided access free of charge for its Members to externally facilitated Carbon Literacy Training for Senior Officers and Members in late February / early March 2022. Gravesham were fortunate to secure a number of places for senior officers and Members. The feedback received from those attending these sessions was very positive and has particularly highlighted the usefulness that awareness of carbon impacts can play in our position as policy and decision makers.

Attendance at the training has reinforced the need for training to be targeted at the following Groups:

- Members in key roles – Cabinet Members, Shadow Cabinet Members and Chairs of Council Committees and Boards (including the Climate Change Advisory Board).
- Senior Officers – officers who form part of the council's Wider Management Team.
- General awareness training to all other officers and Members of the Council.

It was proposed that the Climate Change Advisory Board considers a recommendation to Cabinet that Carbon Literacy Training be mandated for all Senior Officers and Members in key roles, as set out in paragraphs 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 of the report. It was proposed that this training is funded from the Climate Change Reserve.

As per the Climate Change Management Delivery Plan, a programme of general awareness training will be developed using the Carbon Literacy Project local government toolkit, with the intention that this will be supported by an internal delivery team, trained to facilitate the training across the organisation.

The Board discussed the training in detail and considered who the training should be aimed at and when it should be delivered.

**Resolved** that the Climate Change Advisory Board recommends to Cabinet that Carbon Literacy Training be endorsed for Members in key roles and Senior Officers, with general awareness training provided for all Members and Officers. Officers be authorised to proceed with developing the training offering, subject to sufficient budget being available and taking into account the Member Induction and Development programme which is currently being prepared.

## 12. EV Charging Update

The Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) provided Members with an update on progress with Electric Vehicle charge points and highlighted the following:

- To date, delivery of charge points in the borough have been achieved through funding provided by the Office of Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) and the On-Street Residential Charge point Scheme (ORCS).
- On 25th March 2022, the government published the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Strategy which specifies access to local on-street public charging as essential. As a result, a package of measures are being made available to support local authorities and transform local on-street charging. This includes uplifting the new Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund with £400m of capital and £50m of resource funding. And, the continuation of the On-Street Residential Charge point Scheme with £20m allocated for 2022/23.

- Within the Climate Change Management Delivery Plan, we have committed to explore the provision of EV charging points within council owned assets and implement actions where a sound business case can be provided.
- Milton Place car park and Parrock Street car park both now have one dual connector fast charger (can charge 2 vehicles at once) and one ultra-fast EV charge point. Both chargers are operated by BP Pulse.
- In addition to the above, BP Pulse will also be installing an additional 10 x dual connector 7kW EV charge points in Parrock Street car park using ORCS funding. This is to provide charging opportunities for town centre residents who do not have access to off street car charging at home.
- Gravesham have also secured OZEV funding under the Kent600 programme with Connected Kerb to install additional EV charge points at more council owned car parks. Details of these are contained in the table below.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of charge points</b>
Rathmore Road Car Park, Gravesend	4 (or 6 if capacity allows)
Echo Square Car Park, Gravesend	4
May Avenue Car Park (Perry Street), Northfleet	4
Camer Parade Car Park, Meopham	4
The Bay Car Park, Vigo	6
The Hill Car Park, Northfleet	2
Osney Way Car Park, Gravesend	3
Cygnets Leisure Centre Car Park, Northfleet	4
<b>Total charge points in Kent600 programme</b>	<b>30</b>

- Sufficient electrical grid capacity within the borough has proved to be a recurring problem with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO), which has resulted in some sites being more viable than others and grid connection costs varying between the feasibility and ordering stages.

- The provision of a rapid EV charge point for use by taxi's in the town centre has taken longer than expected due to cost and capacity issues with the DNO. We are now exploring an option in Parrock Street which we hope will be viable.
- A bid is being made to National Highways as part of their Designated Funds, Lower Thames Crossing for additional EV charge points in North Kent. This funding could help deliver to locations that are otherwise not possible due to connection cost. A second taxi EV charge point has been included in this, for which the preferred location is Rathmore Road (at the railway station taxi rank).
- It is recognised that what we are doing now is only a starting point, and as the adoption of EV's increases the amount of charge points required will also need to scale up. We have therefore registered our interest in the LEVI fund so we can continue to attract funding.
- The LEVI fund consists of a short pilot phase for three to eight local authorities to test the rollout of EV charging at scale, followed by the opening of the full fund for all local authorities. We will use the time during the pilot to plan how we can deliver additional charge points in the borough so we are in prime position once the full fund opens.
- We took the opportunity during the LEVI fund consultation with the Energy Saving Trust to feed back our experiences with the DNO and how grid capacity needs to be improved for expansion of the national EV charging infrastructure at the scale required.
- We have also encouraged Parish Councils to participate in EV charging funding opportunities, and Meopham Village Hall now has two EV charge points installed.

The Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) fielded questions from the Committee and highlighted the following:

- Very few EV vehicles can take advantage of rapid charge at the moment. A large consumer demand will bring about a change in this area. Battery type is also a key factor in the speed of charging; a solid electrolyte battery will improve charge time without the risks of combustion.
- The current EV charging provision in the Borough is not enough but it's not just down to GBC to provide. The Council needs to work with the private sector to meet the demand.
- The upkeep of EV charging points is of paramount importance and the Council has made sure whoever installs them also provides maintenance.
- You do not have to pay for parking whilst are using the EV charge point in Parrock Street car park.
- Gridserve is a company that is building Electric Forecourts to boost charging facilities in the UK.

The Climate Change Advisory Board noted the contents of the report.

### 13. UK Energy Security Strategy Update

The Assistant Director (IT and Transformation) provided the Climate Change Advisory Board with an update on UK Energy Security Strategy and highlighted the following:

- **Immediate support on energy bills**
  - The government acknowledges the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and hence announced a £9.1 billion package of support, including a £150 energy rebate in April (for eligible households in Council Tax bands A-D), and a £200 energy bill discount in October to cut energy bills quickly for most households.
  - The Warm Home Discount will increase to £150 in October and extend its coverage to assist 3 million people.
  - £500 million investment in Household Support Fund for local authorities to use in supporting the most vulnerable with food and utility bills.
- **Energy efficiency**
  - £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme to be launched this April.
  - Heat Pump Investment Accelerator Competition in 2022 worth up to £30 million to reduce demand for gas.
  - Over £6 billion of investment is planned to decarbonise the country's homes and buildings and this would save the lowest income families around £300 a year on their bills.
  - By 2025, around 700,000 homes will be upgraded, and by 2050 all our buildings will be energy efficient with low carbon heating.
- **Solar and other technologies**
  - The aim is to see the current solar capacity to grow up to 70GW by 2035.
  - Government to consult on amending planning rules to strengthen policy in favour of solar development.
  - VAT on solar panels for homes has been removed and working on low-cost finance options with retail lenders to help households install rooftop solar.
  - Design performance standards to further encourage renewables, including solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, in new homes and buildings.
- **Hydrogen**
  - The UK government is doubling the ambition for low-carbon hydrogen production and is aiming to reach 10GW capacity by 2030, with at least 50% coming from electrolytic projects.
  - This fuel will not only provide cleaner energy for vital British industries to move away from fossil fuels, but will also be used for storage, trains, heavy equipment, and generating heat.
  - The UK government is also aiming to design new business models for hydrogen transport and storage infrastructure by 2025 to boost the hydrogen economy.
- **Networks, storage and flexibility**
  - Anticipating need and hyper-flexibility are the 2 key features to be prioritized to reduce energy wastage which could help to bring down costs by up to £10 billion a year by 2050.

- UK to undertake a comprehensive Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) with high-level options for reform set out this summer to ensure fit for purpose retail market for all consumers to benefit.
- Smartening up the system with more flexible pricing, through Time of Use tariffs and battery storage through electric vehicles.
- Ensuring all new homes are designed so that smart meters can be fitted from the outset, in advance of the Future Homes and Building Standards by 2024.
- of billions of private investments to support new industries that can generate hundreds of thousands of high-quality jobs, drive down bills and boost the economy across the United Kingdom.
- This isn't just about getting to net-zero, as crucial as it is. It's a matter of national security.

The Climate Change Advisory Board noted the contents of the report.

- **Climate Emergency UK Scorecard Assessment**

The Director (Corporate Services) informed Members of: -

- the assessment of the council's climate change plans, as conducted by Climate Emergency UK in September 2021.
- the outcomes of self-assessment conducted by council officers in February 2022 against the assessment criteria used by Climate Emergency UK.

The Director (Corporate Services) highlighted the following:

- In September 2021 Climate Emergency UK undertook, for the first time, an assessment of all UK councils' written climate action plans and created Climate Plan Scorecards for each authority. The assessment was based on climate action plans that were published online before 20 September 2021 (and written after 2015) and was conducted by a team of over 120 volunteers, trained and overseen by Climate Emergency UK.
- Climate Emergency UK are a not-for-profit campaigning organisation which exists to support local authorities in delivering on their climate ambitions by providing accessible information about best practice and providing a network where local authorities, activists, NGOs, business and local communities can work together.
- More than one in five of the UK's 409 local authorities have no published plan (84 in total)
- Gravesham Borough Council achieved a total score of 54% (the average score was 46%). Appendix One to the report provides further information on how this score was achieved over the nine assessment areas and also sets out the scores achieved by other Kent district and borough council's alongside the highest scoring district council in the UK, Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- To take into account the actions of the council since the assessment was



conducted, a self-assessment against the criteria has been conducted and is attached at Appendix Two for information. As summarised below this indicates that, based on current arrangements, a score of 75% would currently be achieved by the council which would place it 6th in the county and the best performing council in Kent. Appendix Two also sets out action to further develop the council's arrangements against the assessment criteria used for this assessment. These actions will be taken forward through the Climate Change Officer Group.

Section	CEUK Score		Self-Assessment Score	
	Raw Score	Weighted Score	Raw Score	Weighted Score
Governance, Development and Funding	12	9%	18	13%
Mitigation and Adaptation	11	9%	11	9%
Commitment and Integration	5	11%	6	13%
Community, Engagement and Communications	5	8%	7	12%
Measuring and Setting Targets	2	4%	4	8%
Co-Benefits	4	5%	4	5%
Diversity and Inclusion	1	2%	3	6%
Education, Skills and Training	2	4%	3	6%
Ecological Emergency	2	3%	3	4%
TOTAL (out of a maximum of 79)	44	54%	59	75%

Following questions from the Board; The Director (Corporate Services) highlighted the following:

- The Council is part of the Kent & Medway Environment Group and its associated structure which allows us to collaborate and learn. The Carbon Literacy training has also provided the Council with key contacts in this field (e.g., the Climate Change Network)
- Feedback has been provided to Climate Emergency UK. GBC will continue to monitor and feed into the process in order to make sure it's fair and equitable.

The Climate Change Advisory Board noted the outcomes of self-assessment conducted by council officers in February 2022 against the assessment criteria used by Climate Emergency UK.

### Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9.06 pm