

## CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2024 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

**Present:** Councillor Rob Yates (Chair); Councillors Bright, Davis, D Green, Huxley, Matterface, Pressland and Wright

**In Attendance:** Councillor Everitt, Garner, Currie, Fellows, Bright, Crittenden

### 1. PRESENTATION ON LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Adrian Hooper, Project Manager at Sustrans, and students at Charles Dickens, St George's Primary and Secondary School gave the presentation on local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, making the following key points:

- St Peters was recognised as one of seven core walking zones in Thanet District Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Key characteristics of St Peters were: busy roads and lots of schools.
- Policy context was given regarding the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan noting that the Council had announced the Climate Emergency in July 2019, and the council's pledge to support making Thanet District net zero by 2050. KCC policies were also mentioned such as the Active Travel Strategy, Framing Kent's Future and the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, all of which support active travel.
- The objectives of the St Peter's Walking Zone project included the following: encourage students to walk and cycle to school, make it safer to walk and cycle, reduce the amount and speed of traffic, enhance street greening and improve air quality, create cleaner, safer and happier environment for school students and mitigate the impact of climate change.
- All of the schools involved in the project undertook a student walkabout, which consisted of a guided walk to think and talk about the local environment.
- Co-discover exercises were also carried out with the school's children. During these sessions, the children mapped key issues and locations for improvements. Improvements included: More bins, more pedestrian crossings, more green areas, trees and flowers, slower speed limits and wider footpaths.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Thanks were given to the students of all three schools, and to Sustrans for the work on the project.
- Issues with lighting standards were noted on several roads. It was noted that the Council should approach Kent County Council with a view of increasing street lighting in these areas.
- More crossings near schools were needed.
- Bins were in the way during school drop off and pick up times. It was recommended to Cabinet by Councillors of the Local Plan CAG and Climate Change CAG that bins should be pushed off from the pavements up to the pathway onto individual houses where possible. This not only helped students at drop off and pick up times, but also disabled residents and residents with prams.
- A further recommendation on cleaning alleyways in the area of these schools was put by Councillors. This would be dependent on the ownership of the alleyways, and would be looked into further.

- There were recommendations of a speedwatch day with the school and council collaborating together on this.

Officers responded to Councillors questions:

- The importance of bins were noted, teachers from the schools noted this, and would look into increasing the bins at the entrances of schools. However, it was noted that the issue was notably on the journeys to school, and the lack of bins that these routes had.
- Alleyways in St Peters were considered key areas for footfall from schools within the area. It was important to keep these alleyways clean and safe for residents.
- A speedwatch day was considered a good idea and would be looked into further.

## **2. UPDATE ON BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN**

Adrian Verrall, Strategic Planning Manager, gave an update on biodiversity net gain, making the following key points:

- The biodiversity duty placed a duty on local authorities to enhance biodiversity across all services.
- There had been an increase in biodiversity
- From February 2024, new applications submitted for major development were required to provide 10% biodiversity net gain using the Defra metric.
- There had been a biodiversity baseline study commissioned. This would provide an assessment of the land within the district, and look at ways to provide improvements and contribute to the net gain.
- A new biodiversity officer had been appointed, and had started in post in mid April 2024.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Was the government providing any resources to the council in order to achieve biodiversity net gain.
- It was noted of importance for the biodiversity net gain to be carried out in the district.
- It was questioned whether the biodiversity rules applies to permanent mobile home sites.

Adrian Verral responded noting that:

- There were elements of the government helping, however much of this was being providing by the council itself.
- Biodiversity rules were applied to most developments.
- There had been guidance regarding the introduction of biodiversity net gain. Further guidance would be provided.

## **3. UPDATE ON DECARBONISATION OF TDC ESTATE AND FUNDING BIDS**

Lindsay Reynolds, Decarbonisation Surveyor, gave a presentation on decarbonisation of Thanet District Council's estate and an update on funding bids, making the following key points:

- The council had been awarded the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund for Ramsgate Leisure Centre. This comprised of £674,740 in grant funding for rooftop solar and variable speed filtration pumps. With these measures in place, the leisure centre would save approximately £88,000 per year.

- The council had appointed LASER energy to run the procurement and programme management for Thanet District Council.
- There were three stages to the project for Ramsgate leisure centre:
  - Stage 1 - Survey and design
  - Stage 2 - Specification and procurement
  - Stage 3 - Project management
- Further updates on the decarbonisation of the councils estates included looking at decarbonising five of the councils key assets: Cecil Street, Thanet Gateway Plus, Kent Innovation Centre, Ramsgate Leisure and Hartsdown Leisure.
- GEP Environmental have been commissioned to develop feasibility and design for low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures in all five buildings, in preparation for a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme fund (PSDS).

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Questioning regarding updated figures for the savings for the leisure centre were questioned.
- Solar canopies, as seen in Cornwall, were noted as potentially being good for the district.

Lindsay Reynolds responded to the questions making the following key points:

- Updated figures would be looked into and fed back to the Councillors.
- Solar canopies were a good idea. The open spaces team would be consulted, and the council would look at the potential of these within the district.

#### **4. CLIMATE CHANGE RELATED EVENTS**

Hannah Thorpe, Head of Strategy and Transformation, updated Councillors on a Kent County Council event, the high ambition pathway to net zero workshop which was attended by all Kent District and Borough councils, as well as Medway Council. Climate change officers and councillors were in attendance and core themes around climate change were discussed.

Councillors had been contacted by residents asking for a Thanet Climate Change Network, whereby officers, stakeholders, environmentalists and residents could come together in an open forum to discuss ideas.

It was agreed and recommended that Cabinet look at the current function of the Joint Transportation Board and consider timings, making this board potentially more accessible to Kent County Council officers.

#### **5. GENERAL UPDATE FROM OFFICERS**

There were no general updates from officers at the meeting.

Meeting concluded : 11.52 am