

## CLIMATE CHANGE CABINET ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2024 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

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

**In Attendance:** Councillors Austin, Edwards

### 1. COASTAL PRUNING

Dan Gooch, Open Spaces Manager, gave an update on coastal pruning, making the following key points:

- As the Council was coming into autumn, open spaces were scheduled to be working through the strategy and consultation periods regarding coastal pruning.
- Cabinet have agreed 6 mini woodlands, just under a hectare in size. Funding had been secured for this project.
- There was a restructure within the Open Spaces team. A tree and biodiversity coordinator was in the process of being formalised into a permanent position. Additionally, she would be increasing her working days to three days per week.
- The Open Spaces team were actively involved into looking into all opportunities to help and reduce impact on the environment.
- A further presentation on this issue would be given to the Climate Change Cabinet Advisory Group in September.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Would there be open consultation whilst regarding coastal pruning?
- Trees and whips were vandalised previously, it was necessary that they had additional protection
- Would there be further community engagement?
- Was there a timeline for the policy and strategy document provided by the Open Spaces team?

Dan Gooch responded to Councillors questions:

- Engagement would be opened up as much as possible whilst considering public consultation.
- Whips were much less likely to be vandalised. Putting in explanations nearby to state why the council were planting may help with vandalism.
- There was a wide range of community groups. The Open Spaces team, as part of the restructure, is proposing to bring in a Community Partnership Manager.

### 2. PHASE 4 AFFORDABLE HOMES DECARBONISATION SCHEME

James Young, Programme Delivery Officer, and Mark James, Strategic Housing Manager, gave a presentation on Phase 4 Affordable Homes Decarbonisation Scheme, making the following key points:

- Phase 4 of the affordable homes decarbonisation scheme in contract costing £15.7M. While this was a high cost, the phase was trying to achieve an EPC rating of A. With the higher EPC rating, came a higher cost. In comparison, most new builds had an EPC rating of C.

- The phase would try to incorporate a fabric first approach.
- The council was about halfway to the target of 400 new properties by 2027. New tenant satisfaction measures were key in this process.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Was there a different term that could be used other than “social housing,” due to the stigma this brought with the term?
- Questioning was raised regarding use of gas boilers, would the council be installing gas boilers?

James Young and Mark James responded noting that:

- The umbrella term was social housing, also referred to as ‘affordable’. However, the social housing act had been introduced and was working towards taking away the stigma.
- The council would not be installing gas boilers and instead will install heat pumps.

### **3. EV CHARGING POINTS AT DEPOTS**

Tony Marmo, Head of Coastal and Public Realm, gave an update on EV charging points at depots, making the following key points:

- Charging points at Dane Park Depot were live, they are 7kWh overnight chargers.
- All port and harbour vehicles were eventually to be replaced with electric vehicles and rapid charging points are being considered at the port and harbour.

Councillors commented and asked the following questions:

- Questioning regarding whether the large batteries were an issue whilst regarding the weight it had on the roads.
- How many new chargers were there?

Tony Marmo responded to the questions making the following key points:

- The issue was not the battery weight, more so the battery size. Electric refuse vehicles were better for inner city areas, coastal areas were considered a challenge due to getting little mileage out of the battery.
- There were 3 new chargers, however the intention was to have 5 overall.
- Communications team would look into pushing out the information that new charging points had been installed.

### **4. ANTI-IDLING REPORT**

Amanda Berry, Senior Environmental Health Practitioner, presented a report on air quality and Anti-Idling noting some of the following:

- There were major health effects of air pollution throughout all stages of life, from pre-birth to old age. Air pollution can cause acute asthma attacks, strokes and chronic effects.
- Although most major forms of air pollution have reduced significantly over the last 30 years, the issue has not gone away. The UK’s residents are still facing

significant health impacts, with particulates and nitrogen dioxide still being key pollutants.

- Policy regarding air pollution can be viewed through the Local Air Quality Management (Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and Environment Act 2021.)
- Local monitoring regarding air pollution is also present. Thanet has 33 NO2 monitoring locations.

Morgan Sproates, Regulatory Services Manager gave an update on the ATE capability fund making the following key points:

- A recap of previous Active Travel England (ATE) funding work was provided. In 2021, TDC commissioned Sustrans, through the Active Travel Fund (£19k grant via KCC), to carry out an initial audit of the key walking and cycling routes in Thanet which focussed on the urban areas (ie. Covering the previous Urban AQMA footprint)
- In 2023, the council received a further £47k of ATE Capability funding to undertake a rural audit, assist with preparation of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and for scheme planning & network design of one scheme (ie. the St. Peters Walking Zone).
- The ATE tranche 5 Capability fund allocation for 2024 has been announced and TDCs bid for the following was successful (subject to contract agreement with KCC):
- Finalise the LCWIP report and final consultation, including preparation of summary District LCWIP, with a prioritised network and consultation on final LCWIP. Funding - £6k.
- Design Scheme for St Peters, Develop outline design scheme for the St Peters Walking Zone. Funding - £35k. Please note: this has subsequently been reduced to £30k as stakeholder engagement (vs public consultation) is KCC's preferred option for efficiency savings.
- Design Scheme for QEQM area, Margate, Develop early design scheme for this area (part of Route 1), in conjunction with the hospital NHS trust. Funding - £20k.
- Design Scheme for Ramsgate Town Centre, Develop early design scheme for Ramsgate town centre (Route 7/Ramsgate Walking Zone) to inform development of Ramsgate Long Term Town Plan and Town Investment Plan (under the LUF). Funding – £20k.
- There will be direct KCC Highways participation in 2024. The Active Travel Interventions Team will work with TDC to provide guidance throughout the process. Consequently, KCC will review materials such as specifications & reports and attend meetings.
- Design Scheme for the Westwood area was not successful under Tranche 5. The bid was for an early design scheme for Westwood area (junction of Routes 1, 4, 6 & 7), to inform future development / "remodelling" of Westwood Town Centre - £20k. This will likely now be achieved through future development.

Members commented and asked the following questions:

- When switching on and off the engine when in traffic, was there any impact on air quality?
- It was a worrying thought that the air quality would not be monitored.
- When will works under the new ATE capability funding commence?
- Was there a possibility of including a Ramsgate Station cycle route?
- When will the LCWIP be published?

Morgan Sporates and Amanda Berry responded with the following comments:

- Emissions were not worse off by switching the engine on and off whilst in traffic.

- It was confirmed that air quality would continue to be monitored. Diffusion tubes could be put anywhere to monitor this.
- KCC contract agreement is anticipated next week and then TDC will need to undertake a procurement exercise. We expect this to take 2-3 months. Project completion date is September 2025.
- Not currently as part of the work undertaken by Sustrans, as they have identified and prioritised key infrastructure cycle routes from desire lines (based on movements between areas of employment, education and housing) and consultation comments, however could be something for the future or other funding options if there is political will.
- It is currently in two separate documents relating to the rural and urban audits, but KCC have asked that it is combined in a final summary LCWIP. We can look into the possibility of sharing existing reports to members; and will be progressing the single LCWIP report for final consultation and publication under the new bid.

## 5. **CLIMATE CHANGE RELATED EVENTS**

Lindsay Reynolds, Climate Change Manager, presented an update on Climate Change related updates and events noting some of the following:

- There is now a 'climate change implications' section in all cabinet reports which will be reviewed by the Climate Change Manager. Guidance for staff will be developed imminently to support staff in answering this section.
- Update on estate decarbonisation: GEP Environmental have now completed site visits at all five buildings and now awaiting feasibility reports and design.
- The comms team have added an Environment section on the Scoop (TDC's bi-weekly staff newsletter) sharing news and events. A climate change events calendar has been created with days and events such as Clean Air Day, Cycle to Work Day, Big Green Week, etc.
- Natasha Brown, the Coastal Wellbeing Coordinator, had been successful in securing funding from Cycling UK for the following projects:
- A series of free cycling events (on Eventbrite) from Over 50's bike fixes, 'Thanet Girls Can' guided rides, free bike fix workshops - running from June - Sept
- Electric bike training for the coastal team and guided ride in July & September
- Staff bike fix and breakfast on 27 June with mechanic from The Bike Shed - Margate
- There were heat pump sessions being carried out on the 17th and 18th June 2024, 10:00 - 15:00 in the rear car park at the Cecil Square offices.
- Sunken Gardens were holding an Eco Fair on 6th October 2024 12:00-16:00. The day will include educational workshops, and inspiring discussions focused on sustainability and environmental conservation.
- Phoebe Cullingworth (Tree and Biodiversity Coordinator) was due to present on tree planning and biodiversity, speaking as part of Food For Thought Margate at Union Church on 23rd June 10:30.

## 6. **GENERAL UPDATE FROM OFFICERS**

This was covered within agenda item 5.

Meeting concluded : 12.07 pm