

Minutes

of a meeting of the



Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

held on Tuesday, 15 October 2019 at 6.00 pm
at the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park,
OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members

Councillors David Grant (Chair), Amos Duveen (Vice Chair), Eric Batts, Eric De La Harpe, Hayleigh Gascoigne, Alison Jenner and Max Thompson

Officers

Chloe Bunting, Andrew Down, Louise Griffin, Heather Saunders and Michelle Wells

Number of members of the public: 20

1. Chairman's announcements

The chairman outlined the emergency evacuation arrangements and the procedure for the meeting.

Chairman's Address

The chair made the following statement:

“Earlier this year, Iceland had its first glacier declared dead. A memorial plaque was put up in its place and I'd like to read out what it said:

A letter to the future

Ok is the *first* Icelandic glacier to lose its status as a glacier. In the next 200 years *all* our glaciers are expected to follow the same path. This monument is to acknowledge that *we* know what is happening and what needs to be done. Only *you* know if we did.

August 2019 – 415 ppm CO₂

This committee is in a privileged position. We can do more than most. We may be just a small corner of this planet, but this country led the world into the industrial revolution, and we can lead the world out of it and into the green revolution.

When this council declared a climate emergency and set up this committee it did not task us to discuss *whether* action is needed but to advise *what* action needs to be taken - so that's what we're going to do - starting now."

2. Apologies for absence

None.

3. Declarations of interest

Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne declared that both she and her partner are investors in the Low Carbon Hub, Oxford and that her partner is employed by Project Leo (Local Energy Oxfordshire).

4. Urgent business

Officers reported an amendment to the Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps report.

Paragraph 1, Item 17, page 23 should read;

In 2009, the Council adopted a Carbon Management Plan, in partnership with the Carbon Trust. The Council made good progress in reducing energy use and therefore carbon emissions, with an overall reduction in emissions from the baseline of **17** per cent at the end of 2012/13.

5. Public Participation

Due to the number of speakers registered to speak, the Committee agreed to allow each speaker to receive their full 3-minute allocation and to extend the speakers session to facilitate this.

The Committee heard a number of public speakers who had registered to address them;

- Ian Pritchett – Reducing building projects impact on the environment, building low carbon homes.
- Miriam Jacobs - Specific climate change concerns of Blewbury Parish Council, with respect to infrastructure, housing planning and biodiversity.
- Liz Swallow - Registering an interest in working with the District council on the Climate Emergency on behalf of Faringdon Town Council and recently formed community action groups.
- Chris Church - In support of a Carbon Neutral District on behalf of Chair of North Hinksey Parish Council and Oxford Climate Action network.
- Tim Maundrell - Concern that cycling is not being given sufficient weight in proposals and current projects as a significant tool for reducing individual residents carbon emissions.

- Mike Landy - Renewable energy and energy efficiency standards for new housing as a member of Sustainable Wantage.

6. Options for the Future and next steps

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Partnership and Insight, which set out the options for recommendations that the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) could make to Cabinet in response to the climate emergency declaration.

The Committee noted that all other Oxfordshire Councils had declared or acknowledged a Climate Emergency and were yet to declare specific actions to achieve targets or publish work programmes. A Climate Emergency was declared by the Vale of White Horse District Council on 13 February 2019. At the present time, 212 councils across the United Kingdom had declared Climate Emergencies, equating to 52 per cent of principal authorities. 86 district councils had declared a climate emergency. 56 of these (65 per cent) explicitly pledged to become carbon neutral on council operations.

The report outlined options for an early carbon neutral target, ranging from pledging to be a Carbon-Neutral Council, to aspiring to be a Carbon-Neutral *District*. There was also a middle option to achieve carbon neutrality, which has been named Carbon Neutral Council 'Plus+'. The report set out the benefits and risks of each option. To achieve the desired target, a programme of work to explore seven themes was proposed. Options for specific topics would be subject to further evaluation and costing before being included in any final work programme.

The Committee was asked to consider recommending whether Vale of White Horse District Council should consider a range of ideas for how realistically to achieve any target that was set. Strategies could include: integrating climate emergency action into existing work streams, working closely with outside partners to deliver on key initiatives, scoping important projects well enough to seek outside funding for them and eliminating existing programmes to redirect staffing and funding to climate emergency work. Elimination of existing programmes would need to consider that some core services were mandatory and that there were funding limitations.

The work programme proposals were grouped under seven themes of council business, partnership, housing, infrastructure, transport, biodiversity and behaviour change. This was informed by an informal CEAC workshop held 23 September 2019, attended by CEAC councillors, and by officers engaged in the development of the report. The Committee was asked to consider defining the elements of a strategic response in respect of the following themes. Each theme contained a sub-set of practical activities and initiatives to meet the objectives.

A motion moved and seconded, to recommend to Cabinet proposals to tackle the climate emergency was declared carried on being put to the vote.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Cabinet;

(a) Recommend Target Option Three;

Vale of White Horse District Council to reduce carbon emissions by 75% by 2025 and become a carbon neutral Council by 2030.

Vale of White Horse District to reduce carbon emissions by 75% by 2030 and become a carbon neutral district by 2045.

The committee agreed a proposal to recommend to Cabinet that the final carbon neutral district date of 2045 is an aspirational target which can be approved pending further assurance from officers based around ongoing evidence and agreed action.

This to be an overarching goal for the Council in respect of adopting an early carbon neutral target as outlined in the Council motion put forward on 11 April 2019.

(b) The Committee be authorised to review the Climate Emergency Work Programme proposals for further exploration, full evaluation and costing. The Committee agreed to recommend that the activities and actions contained in the agreed themes be pursued, with a council strategic response being defined in each case;

Theme 1, Council Business

Theme 2, Partnership

Theme 3, Housing

Theme 4, Infrastructure

Theme 5, Transport

Theme 6, Biodiversity

Theme 7, Behaviour Change

Points of amendment:

Theme 5, Transport: Additional point of action to investigate a Council project or business partnership, enabling residents' access to an electric vehicle hire facility, promoting electric vehicle use in the district.

Theme 5, Transport: Additional point to review planning options in relation to the location of housing and business developments to prevent the need for long distance commutes.

Theme 5, Transport: Additional point to work with Oxfordshire County Council to improve and increase the number of cycle paths networks, improving safety and the connection between towns and villages.

Theme 5, Transport: Additional point to resolve to ask South Oxfordshire District Council to incorporate electric vehicle charging points in the plans for the Crowmarsh Council office site.

Theme 5, Transport: Additional point to review the opportunities for installing charging points at taxi ranks.

Theme 5, Transport: Additional point to resolve to ask the Planning Department to investigate the requirement for electric car charging points within domestic and business applications.

Theme 6, Biodiversity: Additional point to engage and support the community in encouraging biodiversity in their own gardens.

An additional question asked of officers was why it was so challenging to allow planning for onsite wind farms, Officers agreed an additional action to seek clarification from the planning department and get written response back through the chair.

(c) Committee be authorised to support the commissioning of expertise where necessary to define and validate the Council's and District's energy consumption and carbon dioxide and equivalent (CO₂e) emissions baselines, and to fully explore, evaluate and cost proposed work programme options. The cost of this scoping exercise should be met within the 2019/20 existing budget, any increased expenditure outside of the remaining 2019/20 budget will be subject to approval as set out in the council's financial procedures.

(d) Committee be authorised to approve commencement of a communications and engagement plan, to include engagement with members and officers, residents, community groups, businesses, town and parish councils into routine communications by the district councils and the exploration of the creation of a Resident Advisory Group. Additional incorporation of letters to be written to the County Council and Town and Parish Councils seeking assistance in meeting carbon targets.

(e) Committee agreed to note that all other Oxfordshire Councils have declared or acknowledged a Climate Emergency and are yet to declare specific actions to achieve targets or publish work programmes.

(f) Committee to be authorised to establish a task and finish group to work with Officers on putting forward work programme proposals for further evaluation and costing. This will include presenting options back to the committee, to prioritise and recommend to Cabinet for their implementation. Representatives agreed were Cllr. Alison Jenner, Cllr. Max Thompson, Cllr. Eric de La Harpe, Cllr. Amos Duveen and Cllr. David Grant.

7. Scene-Setting and Background

The committee received a report which set the scene and the background.

The committee noted the report and adopted it as a supporting document to the report 'Climate Emergency: Options and Next Steps'.

8. Recommendations to Cabinet

Contained in item 6, above.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Chairman

Date