

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Climate Emergency



Advisory Committee

held on Tuesday, 28 January 2020 at 7.00 pm
at the Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, 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, Max Thompson

Officers: John Backley, Paul Bateman, Chloe Bunting, Michael Flowers, Liz Hayden, Heather Saunders, Michelle Wells

Also present: Councillor Jenny Hannaby

Number of members of the public: 26

9. Chairman's announcements

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

The chairman explained to the committee the progress made since the previous meeting by the task and finish group. Three key areas were identified as the prioritisation of work going forward, the collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, and through collaboration with the wider public.

10. Apologies for absence

None.

11. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED: to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019 and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

12. Declarations of interest

None.

13. Urgent business

None.

14. Public speakers

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 seven speakers on the following matters:

- 1) Kevin Middleton: Planning measures for reducing carbon emissions from housing for existing and new-build housing, and the possible encouragement of solar panel inclusion as part of initiatives to improve the local community and environment.
- 2) Mike Landy: Tree planting as an effective method to reduce carbon emissions and the setting of agreed targets for total tree cover for the district.
- 3) Tracey Jesson: The purchase of woodland and country park space for community benefit, methods to prevent vegetative waste being destroyed in non-environmentally beneficial ways, and the introduction of electric buses to facilitate greener public transportation.
- 4) Guy Wilkin: Lack of cycling space currently available and the consideration of making cycling space a mandatory part of the local plans in the future.
- 5) John Broad: Motor cycling as a method to reduce the take-up of road space, congestion, and pollution on roads and methods to encourage this transition for vehicle users in the local area.
- 6) Phillip Swan: The encouragement of public transport and walking instead of non-private vehicle transport in towns.
- 7) David Marsh: Development of new housing in Harwell and ensuring the new-build properties are built to a high environmental standard to set an example in the county.

15. Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Steering Group

The chair introduced the proposal by Oxfordshire County Council to develop an Oxfordshire Electric Vehicles Infrastructure Strategy to establish principles and an action plan to deliver the charging infrastructure needed to support the transition to low emission vehicles in the country. Oxfordshire County Council had invited Vale of White Horse District Council to appoint a councillor to the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Group.

The committee asked when the group would meet and time of day the meetings would take place. The Insight and Policy Manager explained that while the exact timings could not be confirmed currently, it is anticipated Oxfordshire County Council would aim to work around the availability of members where possible.

A motion, proposed and seconded, was passed, to appoint Councillor David Grant to the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Group with Councillor Amos Duveen as substitute.

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor David Grant to the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Group with Councillor Amos Duveen as substitute.

16. Climate Emergency -Year One Work Programme

The committee was informed by Councillor Eric De La Harpe on the actions the task and finish group had undertaken as part of the work programme.

The committee were informed that the task and finish group had split the initiatives into four categories based on the following criteria:

- a.) Items easy to deliver and had a high impact
- b.) Items easy to deliver and had a low impact
- c.) Items hard to deliver and had a high impact
- d.) Items hard to deliver and had a low impact

The group agreed that priority would be given to items that were easy to deliver and had high impacts. These were based on a variety of factors including carbon savings, implementation measures, costs, and resources required. The committee was provided with a table in the report which listed the list of actions/items which were prioritised by the task and finish group and therefore put forward to be included in the proposed one-year work programme

Councillors were keen to ensure members of the public were aware that the new council offices in Crowmarsh Gifford would be solely owned by South Oxfordshire District Council, with the Vale of White Horse paying rental fees to use the site. Councillors were however invited to be part of the planning process by South Oxfordshire District Council and would therefore be forwarding proposals to ensure the new building would be as environmentally friendly as possible.

The committee discussed the costs associated with each project in the proposed one-year work programme, they noted that for some of the projects, the costs given were initial feasibility study fees and that there could be additional resource implications further down the line. The Insight and Policy Manager also reiterated upon request the difference between the internal and external fees described within the report.

An area of concern raised was the wording of the action regarding 'promotion of' low carbon (plant based) diets in Council operations. The committee considered that it was not appropriate to suggest to individuals the type of foods they should be eating and agreed that the word 'promotion' should be edited to reflect a more nuanced stance. The Insight and Policy Manager confirmed that the wording could be edited to reflect this view and then presented to Cabinet for approval.

A question was raised asking for clarification on the composition of the cost figure included for the climate change lead position. The Insight and Policy and Insight Manager confirmed this was the proposed salary based on research of similar roles and the presented cost included a standard additional 25% to cover on-costs including pension and national insurance contributions.

A motion, proposed and seconded, was passed, to approve all priority one options in the year one work programme, subject to wording amendment for the action "Promotion of low carbon (plant based) diets within council operations, facilities and buildings and associated action plan".

RESOLVED: to recommend to Cabinet the year-one climate emergency work programme (subject to amendment of wording for the low carbon diet action), for their implementation and adoption, including the proposed additional measures in the budget for 2020/21

17. Communications and Engagement update

The Insight and Policy officer provided a verbal update on the progress of the communication and engagement with town councils, parish councils, and community groups in the Vale. The officer highlighted that sixty-eight parishes in the Vale of White Horse had received a letter from the Committee outlining the climate emergency targets adopted by the Vale and the role of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee. Parish councils were reminded in the letter that public attendance was welcomed at these meetings and of the opportunity to register to speak and address the committee. The letter also invited parish councils to tell the Council what activities they are doing, or projects they are starting and empathised that their views on options for working in partnership with them to support this important and critical agenda, were welcomed.

A letter was also sent to thirty local environment groups active in the Vale. The officer and the committee were keen to capture ideas from residents on their ideas of how to collaboratively tackle climate change and engage further in discussion.

The update also shared the 'business as usual' activity going on in this area, including regular councilor and staff communications and website updates.

The opportunity had also been taken to promote the councils' climate committees to all residents as part of a flyer which goes out with council tax bills in March

Councillors asked whether this flyer would be posted electronically or in hard copy. The officer confirmed that the residents would receive the leaflet with their council tax bill for 2020/21.

18. Forward Programme for the Committee

The chair invited any questions from the committee regarding the forward programme.

Councillors asked whether the meeting dates included in the calendar of meetings were draft and if times were fixed. The democratic services officer confirmed that dates were drafts and could be adjusted to meet the needs of councillors. The officer also clarified that future dates were being arranged.

19. Exclusion of the public

To exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The meeting was adjourned for a five-minute break period before the commencement of the next item.

20. Car park fees and charges for 2020

The committee made recommendations to Cabinet on the car park fees and charges.

meeting closed at 9.47 pm