

Minutes

of a meeting of the



Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

held on Monday, 10 January 2022 at 6.00 pm
virtual meeting

This meeting was broadcasted live. Watch the recording here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQLwpylUv-c>

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Councillors: Councillors: David Grant (chair), Eric Batts, Eric De La Harpe, Amos Duveen (vice chair), Hayleigh Gascoigne, Alison Jenner, Bob Johnston.

Officers: Michelle Wells, Heather Saunders, Harry Barrington-Mountford and Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive – Place), Candida Mckelvey (Democratic Services)

Guests: Councillor Catherine Webber, Cabinet member for climate emergency and environment.

72. Chair's announcements

Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of CEAC for 2022.

On Thursday there will be a councillor briefing on the Thames Water (Abingdon) proposed reservoir. Interested Councillors should attend if possible. There may be a recording as it will be held in normal working hours.

73. Apologies for absence

No apologies. Cllr Johnston notified that he had to leave slightly early.

74. Declarations of interest

None.

75. Urgent business

None.

76. Minutes of the last meeting

No comments were raised on the minutes of the meeting on 4 October 2021.

77. Public participation

None.

78. update from Cabinet member for Environment

The cabinet member updated the committee.

There had been some significant actions and progress since Cllr Webber last addressed the committee.

- We needed to be able to bid for government grants in order to be carbon neutral in our council properties by 2030. The next possible planned application will be for the White Horse leisure and tennis centre, as part of a public sector decarbonisation scheme. Following a site review of energy and heating options the council had commissioned Concept Energy to carry out soft market testing on technologies and preparatory work for bidding. Focus will be on gathering guidance on decarbonisation and lessons learned from the Faringdon Leisure Centre bid which was a success. This will put the council in a position to be prepared for external funding bidding.
- The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP): On 26th November 2021, the Insight and Policy team brought a presentation to the Environmental Advisory Group, or EAG, on behalf of the officer group. It gave an overview of county wide work in achieving domestic retrofitting. This will help inform a future zero carbon Oxfordshire delivery plan.
- The EAG also viewed a presentation from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), developed by the EAG officer group. It proposed scope of work and approach, governance, costs and next steps. There was a review of Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO). A medium-term piece of work was suggested to bring stakeholders together to produce a short-term map based on the PAZCO map, with a 2030 focus. This work would report into the EAG with a small stakeholder group to govern it (including EAG officer group, OxLEP). It was suggested it goes to the next FOP meeting in January – milestones will be confirmed post this meeting, with possible progress by summer. To achieve economies of scale, it was suggested that working at county level was more effective.
- LEO energy mapping tool – this had been prepared to show renewable energy potential in the district. User testing in January will include the Planning Policy team and will help with preparation of the joint local plan.

79. Task and finish group updates

There were no updates from task and finish groups at present.

80. Future agenda items

Please contact the chair with any suggestions.

Today, committee suggested:

- Park and Charge project update was wanted
- Concern over waste management / collection and the impact on greenhouse gas emissions

81. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Annual Report

Since 2011, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy had required local authorities to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions from their estate and operations. 2020/21 was the eleventh year of reporting and 2009/10 represents the baseline year. Their guidance draws on the principles of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, an internationally recognised standard for corporate accounting and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions.

Committee comments and clarifications:

- Concern over waste management / collection. Any reporting would need to tie in with and be mindful of any contract negotiation timelines.
- It was explained that where fleet data was missing it was for a good reason – such as sale of fleet or moves between inhouse and outsourced services.
- Chair noted that the baseline year for the report was 2009-10, which was the year the formal reporting started. The baseline year for the council ambition to cut emissions by 75% will not be that. The year will be 2019-20, when we made that commitment.
- Chair noted that recent reductions are in part related to the pandemic but also new equipment efficiencies.
- Green energy tariff – the responsibility of energy tariffs is the property team. They would be looking to source some green energy. The reductions cannot be double counted unless there was a contractual agreement, but this was being investigated.
- Could there be a column to compare progress since the 19-20 baseline, since the commitment was made to reduce emissions – officers will take this point away for consideration.
- White Horse Leisure Centre – why were emissions so high? It was answered that it was a complex and large site.
- Mileage claims had to be submitted to be counted. Based on mileage carrying out council business.
- Query as to why 2020-21 data for the Milton Park office weren't significantly reduced due to closure and working from home? The answer would be given when available.

82. Climate Action Plan

Chair opened the item, explaining that officers had carried out a lot of work to bring this report forward and that there was an extended consultation period at the end of last year, as well as a councillor drop-in session. This version was close to finalised, requiring just minor tweaks. Cabinet member presented the item. She explained that she would be bringing back a quarterly report to the committee on the CAP, so that committee may monitor progress of the plan and provide any comments and recommendations.

This was a live document in the face of change and was one part of a puzzle involving other policies and plans within local councils, county and nationwide.

We do have ambitious targets and we needed to commit to it. Faringdon leisure centre was a good example of action taken to meet targets.

Comments from committee:

- Discussion around community assets and whether we can request to build them to higher spec for energy efficiency.
- The plan was overall viewed to be thorough by committee members

The consultations held previously meant that most questions were answered previously, and the committee were content to move onto the next agenda item.

83. Climate Action Fund

Cabinet member introduced this report on the climate action fund, which will actively encourage, support and involve communities to come up with projects that support climate action.

Officers had now been able to produce a proposal to administer the £50,000 one-off fund for projects, including a simple application scoring criteria matrix.

The funding will be open to projects that haven't started yet, not existing works. It was important that councillors promote the scheme at community level.

Comments from committee and clarifications:

- Clarification was given on how the process differs from previous award decision processes. There was no panel required, it was based on the councillor grants scheme, and was a typical structure of new schemes. Policy and Insight team will look at applications with the Head of Policy and Programmes, with strong member input, for their on-the-ground knowledge of community needs. A committee member suggested that ward members should be involved earlier on, rather than on the awarding of a fund towards a project.
- It was suggested that where listed buildings were involved in an application, it might put off applicants due to lengthy planning applications. Head of Policy and Programmes explained that we could not presuppose, but planning applications were completely separate and no comment can be made until an application was seen.
- Discussion around school applications not being allowed. It was explained that schools had access to other funding streams. It was a historical rule, and schools do fall under OCC remit. This was a new scheme and we do need to see what the demand will be from the community. We should be cautious for now and monitor the progress. Guide groups etc may be applicable. This rule shall remain the same but if there was a low uptake it could be revisited.
- Project examples are not exhaustive. Applications will be viewed for their own merits.
- Was a 6-week application window too short? It was responded that it was a standard window.
- A comms plan will ensue only when Cabinet approves the scheme. The information was public. Active promotion across the council, town and parish, would occur in the 3 weeks before the scheme opens for applications, once we obtain Cabinet approval. Councillors were urged to help in this promotion window.
- Chair suggested an emphasis on climate in the ranking, but it was clarified that the scoring had already incorporated this. Concern that non climate related projects could score higher. Officers will consider project relevance to climate as an initial check.

Councillors asked whether ward members could be informed at application level. Head of Policy and Programmes suggested adding the wording "ward members" alongside cabinet members, in the document, with permission obtained from the Head of Legal and Democratic. The committee resolved to agree with this.

Resolved:

That Head of Policy and Programmes will check with Head of Legal and Democratic, as to whether the wording "ward members" could be added alongside "cabinet members" within the document, as committee agreed that they wish for ward members to be notified at an earlier stage.

The committee resolved to agree with the following:

Resolved to agree:

- (a) That the Climate Action Fund policy and guidelines be recommended to Cabinet for approval;
- (b) That subject to Cabinet approving (a) above, CEAC endorse the launch of the Fund and the Head of Policy and Programmes making final award decisions, in consultation with the relevant cabinet members (with the request to add the wording, "ward members")
- (c) That CEAC members promote the fund within their communities to help ensure a wide reach of applicants

Committee overall felt that all councillors should be encouraged to promote the scheme after it had received approval at Cabinet, with comms as soon as possible after approval.

84. Tree Planting Update

Cabinet member shared good news on applications for tree planting on council land. We had several expressions of interest and two full applications since.

1. Abingdon Carbon Cutters – to plant on Rye Farm Meadows
2. Sustainable Wantage – working with Wantage Town Council – to plant on Memorial Park.

Both applications were approved in principle. Site visits were taking place and delegated authority documents were being drawn up, and the legal team were carrying out due diligence and drawing up licence agreements. Both projects were hoped to be achieved by the end of tree planting season in March 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.32 pm

Chair:

Date: