

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on  
Tuesday, 19 November 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

**Chairman:** Pippa Heylings  
**Vice-Chairmen:** Dr. Martin Cahn  
Geoff Harvey

### **Committee Members in attendance:**

Graham Cone  
Peter Fane  
Jose Hales

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Bill Handley and Hazel Smith

### **Officers:**

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Geoff Clark	Assistant Director HRA
Emma Davies	Principal Sustainability Consultant
Jane Green	Built and Natural Environment Manager
Mike Hill	Director of Housing and Environmental Services
Jane Jackson	Senior Resource Officer
Siobhan Mellon	Development Officer - Climate and Environment
Alex Snelling-Day	Green Energy Investment Officer

### **1. APOLOGIES**

No Apologies were received.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

### **4. GREATER CAMBRIDGE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Principal Sustainability Consultant, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, presented this report on the Greater Cambridge Sustainability Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). She summarised the 257 representations received during the consultation on the draft report:

- There had been 48 representations in support of the SPD, 113 objections and 92 comments.
- Many of the comments were supportive, but wanted more ambitious actions regarding water and energy.
- Many representations wanted developers to go further in pursuit of the goal of net zero carbon.

**Future proofing the SPD**

The Principal Sustainability Consultant, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, explained that the SPD would be amended to include these aspirations. It was noted that the building regulations were changing next year and so the wording of the SPD would need reflect this to ensure that it complied with the new regulations.

**Extensions and retrofitting**

The Principal Sustainability Consultant explained that the Local Plan could provide guidance on energy saving retrofitting, when work such as an extension was being carried out.

**Retrofitting listed buildings**

It was noted the Conservation Consultancy Officer was looking at providing guidance on how the energy efficiency of listed buildings could be improved through retrofitting. It was agreed that the Committee would receive an update on this at a future meeting.

**Local Plan**

The Chairman expressed the hope that this SPD and a new Local Plan could improve sustainable design in the District.

**Moving away from gas**

It was noted that replacing gas heating with use of combined heat and power (CHP) or 'cogeneration', which avoids network losses and reduces emissions, would reduce energy use.

**Recommendations to Cabinet**

Cabinet will receive a final version of the SPD at its meeting on 8 January 2020. The Director of Housing, Health and Environmental Services agreed to ensure the Committee's views on the final report were reported to Cabinet.

**5. STOCK MODELLING FOR ZERO CARBON AND IMPROVEMENTS TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACROSS THE SCDC HOUSING STOCK**

The Assistant Director HRA presented this report on the stock modelling for zero carbon and improvements to energy efficiency across the Council's housing stock. He explained that the aim was to report back findings in March 2020.

**Refurbishing voids**

The Assistant Director HRA explained that the aim was to carry out refurbishment of the Council's housing stock to improve the buildings' energy efficiency, when the property became vacant, as this minimised disruption to housing tenants.

**Benefits of retrofitting**

It was noted that improving energy efficiency of our housing stock would reduce costs for our tenants. The Assistant Director HRA explained that this issue could be raised with tenants, but the current practice of retrofitting voids minimised disruption for tenants. It was suggested that the Council should be more proactive in informing our tenants of the benefits of improving energy efficiency in their homes. It was noted that simple improvements could be combined with urgent work that needed to be carried out.

**Communal heating**

In response to questioning, the Assistant Director HRA explained that communal heating, in the form of a ground source heat pump, was being considered in the village of Over and hopefully other opportunities for communal heating in the District would be forthcoming.

**Briefing for Members on tenants' enquiries**

The Assistant Director HRA offered to provide Members with a briefing on the most appropriate way for councillors to process the queries that they receive from the Council's tenants.

**HRA borrowing cap**

The Director of Housing, Health and Environmental Services explained that the financial situation was changing with the HRA borrowing cap being lifted. It was possible that funds could become available from 2021/22.

The Committee noted the report and agreed to receive an update on the feasibility of retrofitting the Council's housing stock to make it more energy efficient.

**6. PROPOSALS FOR A ZERO CARBON COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME**

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment, presented this report, which included proposals for support for parish councils and community groups to run alongside the Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme. She explained that there was considerable support from parish councils and community groups towards the zero carbon target. A first workshop was planned for January 2020. In addition to the workshops and forums, an e-bulletin will be launched. The programme had the support of the Lead Cabinet Members for both Environmental Services and Planning.

In response to questioning, the Development Officer, Climate and Environment, explained that the first session in January would be a general one. Subsequent sessions would be themed according to demand. It was suggested that parish councils need to be provided with a booklet or webpage.

Councillor Heylings was pleased to report that the children from Histon and Impington Youth Eco Council, who had addressed this Committee, had convinced Histon and Impington Parish Council to declare a climate emergency.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**7. PROVISIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ACCOUNTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S ESTATE AND OPERATIONS, 2018-19**

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment, presented this report that detailed the provisional Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions account for the Council's estate and operations for 2018/19. She explained that the facts in the report would be internally audited and Cambridge University would be asked to examine the report to provide external assurance.

It was noted that the overall emissions figure of 1,700 tonnes was lower in comparison with other Councils, as we had fewer buildings to maintain than other local authorities.

**Housing stock**

It was noted that the Council's housing stock was not included in these figures, because the Council does not control energy use in its housing stock, nor does it have access to the data on energy use. It was agreed to include estimated data on energy use on the Council's housing stock, taken from Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), in future reports. The Committee supported this as it would provide benchmark data.

**Refuse vehicles**

It was noted that 72% of the Council's emissions were from direct emissions and 80% of

these were from the Council's refuse fleet. It was hoped that the current fleet could be replaced with electric vehicles. The Director of Housing, Health and Environmental Services explained that a meeting would be held in early December with the manufacturer of refuse vehicles, where this issue would be discussed. He added that the Council's fleet was renewed every seven years and suggested that the Council should wait until the reliability of these new vehicles had been proved. Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, explained that it made sense to use electric vehicles in the city first, where distances were shorter and there were more charging points, before introducing them into rural areas. The Committee noted that the Interim Assistant Director Waste and Special Projects was an expert in this field and could consider other options, such as hybrid or hydrogen powered vehicles.

### **Car mileage**

It was noted that the current figures did not take into account which officers or councillors drove electric cars. The commuting journeys made by officers were also not included. The Development Officer, Climate and Environment agreed to consider how these issues could be included in future reports.

### **Footway lighting**

The Director of Housing, Health and Environmental Services explained that the Council was responsible for 1,800 lights in the District's villages and an additional 1,800 in the housing stock. Replacing approximately 3,600 lights with LEDs would improve the Council's energy efficiency.

The Committee expressed its support for the work of the Development Officer, Climate and Environment and noted the report.

## **8. CLIMATE EMERGENCY MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL**

The Chairman informed the Committee that a motion on declaring a Climate Change Emergency would be going to the next meeting of Council on Thursday 28 November.

The Chairman explained that in November 2018 the Council agreed to set a neutral target by 2050, but the motion did not specifically include the words "we declare a carbon emergency". So a motion was being taken to Council on 28 November 2019 to this effect, which would also commit the authority to reporting on its carbon reduction targets and projects within the next six months.

The Committee supported this approach.

## **9. PROPOSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY - VEHICLE EMISSIONS POLICY**

The Director of Housing, Health and Environmental Services presented this report on the proposed Hackney Carriage/ Private Hire Licensing Policy, which asked the Committee for advice on the emissions and age of vehicles. He explained that the Council had a statutory duty to license taxis, to ensure public safety, to ensure that an important rural service was able to continue to operate and the Council complied with its objective to be "green to our core."

### **Emissions and age of vehicles**

The Committee noted that under the terms of the proposed policy, from 1 October 2021 all newly licensed vehicles will need to be less than four years old and have low or no emissions. The City Council would be changing their regulations in 2020. From 2028 all new vehicles or renewals would need have either ultra-low or no emissions.

Taxi drivers had requested that the proposed change from seven years be extended to nine years. The Committee had agreed to this change to show that it had listened to the concerns of the trade. It was noted that this would mean that in practice all licensed vehicles were a minimum of Euro standard 5, as this was adopted in 2011. After a brief discussion the Committee supported the change from seven to nine years.

### **Accessibility**

The Resource Team Leader explained that the Government had provided a list of vehicles that were wheelchair accessible and had ultra-low emissions.

### **Charging electric vehicles**

It was suggested that taxi drivers would need access to a rapid electric charging point, to make electric vehicles viable for their use. It was understood that LED footway lights could be used as charging points. It was suggested that each village should have a charging point for electric vehicles and Councillor Handley agreed to take this suggestion back to the Executive.

### **Handbook**

The Director of Housing, Health and Environmental Services explained that the Council's policy would refer to the rules in a handbook for the trade. The handbook could then be updated if the European standards were no longer in force after the country leaves the European Union.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (a) The petrol and diesel vehicle age on renewal be kept at 9 years but that additionally, all petrol and diesel vehicles must comply with at least the "Euro 5" emissions standards limiting CO, NOX and particulate matter emissions, introduced in September 2011.
- (b) The 2021 and 2028 deadlines for the introduction of ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles be agreed by Council.
- (c) That in addition to the vehicle age criteria, that clear standards are included in the Policy for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>, CO, NOX and Particulate Matter.
- (d) Cabinet should consider increasing investment in the provision of dedicated electric vehicle charging points for use by drivers and vehicles across the district to support the uptake of ultra-low emission and zero emission vehicles.
- (e) Council should balance the need to be ambitious in our environmental standards with the provision of sufficient high-quality vehicles to meet the huge accessibility and rural transport needs of South Cambridgeshire district.
- (f) To keep up with changing standards and technical developments, that the detailed emissions limits be stated not in the Policy document, but in the accompanying "Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook". This will enable any detailed national standards to be updated via the Handbook and without the need for a full consultation and review of the Policy.

## **10. FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee agreed to add the following items to the Forward Plan:

- Overview of Green to our Core

- Update on the provision of electric refuse vehicles
- Guidance on retrofitting listed buildings
- Retrofitting Council houses
- Review of Zero Carbon grants
- Carbon reduction targets
- Tree planting

It was noted that there would be a joint meeting with the Grants Advisory Committee on 16 December at 10am, to discuss Zero Carbon grants.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 2pm in the Monkfield Room.

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**The Meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.**

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