

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 12TH DECEMBER, 2022**

PRESENT –

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price (Chairman – in the Chair)

Councillors

David Albin

Co-optees

Dr Caroline Spencer-Palmer

Sylvia Godfrey

John Turley

David Penney

Officers in attendance:

Gill Dickson Principal Policy Officer

Phil Riley Green Spaces Manager

Neil Yates Principal Engineer

Jane Watson Head of Democratic Services

Jessica Robinson Committee Administrator

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Sutcliffe.)



1. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group held on 14th July, 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. TREE PLANTING PLAN

The Environmental Services Manager provided an update on the progress made with respect to tree planting, differential mowing, herbicide usage and landscape maintenance machinery.

It was asked if annual figures for tree planting were available for year on year comparisons. Whilst not currently available it would be possible for some to be produced and circulated to the Group.

It was suggested that the tree corridor along the canal could be used as a nature corridor for biodiversity. Work was ongoing with the Ribble Rivers Trust on this.

The Group was asked to suggest potential locations for additional tree planting and the site of the new petrol station development off Whitewalls Drive, Colne was suggested. The Group also suggested that local farmers and other landowners could be contacted and that 'calls for sites' could be made by Town and Parish Councils and the Group itself.

The Group noted there was a limit to the amount of Council land that could be planted up as woodland. They also noted that tree planting was likely to create a financial burden on the Council in 10 years plus time when both inspections and physical management such as thinning out and pruning would be required. Plantations that were planted across Pendle in the last 30 years were all currently suffering from a lack of management due to staff availability and funding constraints.

It was reported that there had not been much progress made with the submission of a Lancashire-wide Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund bid due to the complex application process. It was suggested that this could be raised with Andrew Stephenson MP for him to contact the Forestry Commission on the behalf of the Council and the other interested authorities and organisations.

It was further reported that a number of mature trees of varying species would soon be felled in the Borough's Parks and at Langroyd due to risk of illness. It was asked if they could be pollarded instead. It was explained that they would if there was not too much risk and the trunks were stable.

The report provided progress on a number of sites which were suggested for tree planting at the previous meeting.

The Group was asked to suggest potential locations for differential mowing but none were put forward.

Unfortunately the meeting wasn't quorate but those present were in agreement with the following:-

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the Environmental Services Manager be asked to produce annual tree planting figures for circulation to the Group.
- (3) That the Environmental Services Manager be asked to map the suggested additional tree planting location and this be reported back at a future meeting of the Group.
- (4) That the Environmental Services Manager be asked to contact local farmers and other landowners with a view to identifying additional tree planting sites.
- (5) That the Borough's Town and Parish Council's be asked to make a 'call for sites' to identify additional tree planting locations.
- (6) That a 'call for sites' be made by the Group, itself, to identify additional tree planting locations.

3. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

The Housing, Health and Engineering Services Manager submitted a report which provided further information about the proposals received to enable the Council to develop its own electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Approval was sought, once the proposals had been reviewed, to make a recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee to identify Liberty Charge as the preferred supplier to deliver charging facilities in the Council's car parks.

Additional information had been obtained from seven suppliers/tenderers and they had been requested to confirm the availability of the grid capacity required to achieve their proposed charge

speeds. An overview of the proposed number of charging bays and charge speeds at each car park was provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

Each proposal had been evaluated by Officers against a set of criteria, as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report. Liberty Charge (LC) scored highest in the evaluation and it was, therefore, recommended that they were approved by the Group as the preferred tenderer. The Group, however, felt that Mer Charging UK (MCUK) would be better able to provide the preferred fast charging units as per the resolution made at the last meeting. MCUK's charge speeds appeared to be 3 times faster than LC's and had more favourable charging tariffs. It was explained that MCUK had scored second highest in the evaluation but had been marked down as they had not yet confirmed the grid capacities with the relevant utilities for their proposals whilst LC had. Furthermore, MCUK were offering fewer charge points than LC. It was acknowledged that if power availability was found to be financially unviable, the next best power output available that was financially viable should be selected.

The Group was reminded that £30,000 had been allocated towards the provision of electric vehicle charge points in the Council's car parks and was advised that there was a further source of funding through the Government's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) which offered grants of up to £100,000 subject to at least 25% match funding. It was expected that, due to a substantial shortfall, a bid for funding from OZEV would need to be submitted. Funding was allocated yearly on a first come, first served basis so an early submission would be required. The £30,000 already allocated would be intrinsic to the whole exercise and would help any bid made.

The Group was advised that Lancashire County Council (LCC) was in the process of developing an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which would provide much needed guidance for all Districts who were all in a similar position. LCC were looking at different models including high density housing and commercial provision.

It was asked if supermarkets in the Borough had been approached about siting charge points in their car parks. It was explained that, at this stage, installing them on Council, Barley Parish Council and Pendle Leisure Trust owned car parks only had been looked at but that going forward other parties including commercial ones could be encouraged to be involved. It was also asked if LC could be engaged immediately and MCUK at a later time should OZEV funding be awarded. It was advised that having two suppliers on any one site would not be accepted as a commercially viable proposition but splitting the Borough might.

Unfortunately the meeting wasn't quorate but those present were in agreement that the report be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

4. POSITION STATEMENTS

(a) Climate Change Staffing Resources

It was reported that the Council had recently appointed Phillip Spurr as its Director of Place who would be in post by early March, 2023 and would determine Climate Change staffing resources and strategic approach going forward.

(b) Climate Emergency Budget

It was reported that the Chair had helped to secure £40,000 from the East Lancs Chamber of Commerce for a climate change budget. Allocations of this budget would be determined by the emerging Climate Emergency Action Plan.

(c) 2021/22 Community Grant Scheme

It was reported that 29 applications for the 2021/22 Community Grants had been received and that 22 awards had been made ranging from £350 to £1,500. A review of the Scheme would be undertaken and brought back to the Group next year.

(d) Lower Emissions Fleet Pilot

The Council's Waste Services Manager had reported to the Policy & Resources Committee that from 4th April through to the beginning of September, 2022 six vehicles had used 15,940 litres of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) creating a saving of 36,662kg. From September through to November, 2022 they had used a further 6,412.50 litres. Saving 14,748.75kg of CO₂. In total the Council had used 22,352.50 litres of HVO and saved 51,410.75kg of CO₂.

In relation to cost, HVO price per litre (PPL) had started to increase, the latest order cost £1.96 per litre, whilst pump prices locally for diesel were listed at £1.89. However, the Council does not pay pump price after entering into a fuel card deal some years ago. Its current PPL for diesel is £1.37. Against normal pump price the Council's cost so far had increased by £1,564.67. Against the fuel card contract its costs had increased by £13,187.89.

The Council was still wanting to increase the usage of HVO across its fleet but was waiting to hear whether funding could be made available to cover the work required to install power to a second tank and mark out a no parking area to ensure access to the pumps was available at all times.

5. UPDATE ON THE CORPORATE PLAN ENGAGEMENT AND EMERGING CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Council's Principal Policy Officer presented a report entitled 'This is Pendle 2022' which would inform the Council's new Corporate Plan and drive its priorities over the next 4 years. The report would be submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration at its next meeting on 15th December, 2022. Extensive engagement had taken place with residents and other stakeholders between late August and early November, 2022.

The following five emerging priority themes for the Council had been identified and would inform its Climate Emergency Action Plan:

- Supporting and enabling sustainable transport;
- Reducing carbon emissions and energy demand from the Council's public estate, vehicles and services;
- Supporting a warm and low carbon housing stock;
- Growing a green economy; and
- Supporting biodiversity and the natural environment to maximise carbon capturing opportunities.

An Officer Working Group had since been established to develop the Climate Emergency Action Plan, the direction and steer to be considered by the new Director of Place.

Some Group Members expressed concerns about their perceived lack of awareness amongst residents of Pendle of the seriousness of climate emergency. It was felt that, to address this, engaging schools and other organisations to pass on the climate emergency message through education should also be a priority theme for the Council and its Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Unfortunately the meeting wasn't quorate but those present were in agreement with the following:-

- (1) That a copy of the This is Pendle 2022 report be circulated to the Group following the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 15th December, 2022.
- (2) That engaging schools and other organisations to pass on the climate emergency message through education be considered for inclusion as a priority theme in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

It was reported that the Council's Climate Change webpage had now been updated so that it included more information on energy efficiency tips and grants. Feedback to help determine the Council's Climate Change priorities for next year was then invited from the Group.

Unfortunately the meeting wasn't quorate but those present were in agreement with the following:-

That feedback from the Group be provided to the Council's Principal Policy Officer to help determine the Council's Climate Change priorities for next year.

7. MINE ENERGY SEMINAR - UPDATE

A verbal update on a Mine Energy Seminar delivered by Jon Gluyas at the Durham Energy Institute, Durham University on 8th December, 2022 was given.

The Group was advised that mine energy or mine water energy was a renewable and sustainable geothermal energy source which used water from flooded abandoned coal mines and had the potential to have a zero carbon footprint. Mine water was typically 12-25 degrees Celsius in the UK and 15 degrees Celsius locally, depending on depth.

The Group noted that exploiting geothermal energy would not be a 'silver bullet' but that it was potentially a significant contributor to the suite of sustainable energy solutions and the drive for Net Zero and, therefore, worth considering. It was felt that the Group should be supportive of mine energy whilst being mindful that the benefits for Pendle might be limited as there were only 9 workable but relatively thin seams in the local area and there were few, if any, deep level tunnels. There would also be a need to ensure there would be no connection with the concerns about fracking particularly given that former mine workings were associated with relatively high levels of seismic activity but at a very low magnitude.

The Principal Planning Officer would check that the Council's draft Local Plan policies as written did support the provision of infrastructure for sustainable energy production such as mine energy and would further keep this under review and take on board any feedback received during consultations next year.

Unfortunately the meeting wasn't quorate but those present were in agreement with the following:-

- (1) That a letter be sent from the Chair to Jon Gluyas at the Durham Energy Institute, Durham University to ascertain Pendle's potential to develop mine energy.
- (2) That support for the provision of infrastructure for sustainable energy production be kept under review by the Principal Planning Officer during consultations on the draft Local Plan next year.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

It was reported that Lancashire County Council (LCC) had invested £90 million in fossil fuel pension schemes. The Group felt that they should be formally recommended to divert that investment into renewable pension schemes instead.

Unfortunately the meeting wasn't quorate but those present were in agreement with the following:-

That a formal letter be sent, on the behalf of the Group, to Lancashire County Council to recommend that they divert the £90 million they had invested in fossil fuel pension schemes into renewable ones.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be held in February 2023. Date to be confirmed.

Chairman _____