

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

This meeting was broadcasted live. You can watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKgcuOmW-ps>

Present

Councillors:

Sam Casey-Rerhaye (Chair)

Sue Cooper, Stefan Gawrysiak, Kate Gregory, Lynn Lloyd, Ian White, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Sue Roberts, David Rouane and Celia Wilson

Officers

Harry Barrington-Mountford, Elizabeth Kingdom, Suzanne Malcolm, Candida Mckelvey, Heather Saunders.

Also present:

Councillor Jo Robb and Cabinet member Councillor Andrea Powell.

115 Apologies for absence

Councillor Jane Murphy sent apologies, and Councillor Ian White attended the meeting as a substitute member.

116 Declarations of interest

None.

117 Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that the climate action plan and a carbon reduction plan would be longer-term plans being produced to meet corporate plan priorities. This would ensure that climate action was embedded across the council. The climate action plan should be available by the end of 2021.

Two items that would come back to the standard agenda were:

1. future items
2. task and finish group update.

A joint design guide briefing will happen on 29th September for councillors.

The corporate plan performance had been added to the agenda as a supplement. It had been out in draft form already and had been reviewed at scrutiny committee. Our meetings were now being rearranged to coincide with quarterly reports. These reports should be available six weeks after quarter end. Quarter two could be reviewed in the January 2022 CEEAC meeting.

The biodiversity working group was confirmed to have met once so far for scoping, and Chair would email the committee to inform of progress.

It was confirmed that there were plans to use the information from the Town and Parish Councils forum. Feedback will feed into the climate action plan. This was a potential future item.

118 Urgent business

No urgent business.

119 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26 April 2021 were agreed as a correct record, and the chair will sign them as such.

120 Public participation

None.

121 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils Policy for Planting Trees on Council Land

Councillors were pleased to see this policy (this had been circulated before for comment). The benefit that trees had on the environment meant that this policy was viewed as very important. They discussed whether the council could, in future, extend this to have influence on protecting trees on private land. Relooking at Tree Protection Order strategy was one suggestion.

Committee were reminded that we had to be guided by legislation. Councillors asked that they be notified as soon as this policy was made public, so that they may help waiting community groups to apply as soon as possible. It was confirmed that this would be publicised. Other discussion was about data collection on trees planted/ felled due to danger / felled due to development and how this could be done and how useful this data would be. Could we ask farmers to measure hedgerow? The definition had not been confined to trees.

Next steps may be added to a “future items” list on the agenda. Chair mentioned research on plastic tube protection for trees – there were downsides to this method, and it may be best to not use them.

Resolved:

To add the tree planting policy as a future agenda item – for next steps.

122 Retrofit Scrutiny Report - Feedback from Joint Scrutiny Committee and discussion

This report was a Joint Scrutiny task and finish group report, worked on by officers and councillors, some who are on CEEAC as well. It had been very well received. Joint scrutiny was keen to have CEEAC's advice, and recommended CEEAC review the report.

There was discussion about lobbying to make the upfront costs of retrofitting more affordable or trying to get more demand by publicising more. Currently, the upfront costs were high. This report had been circulated widely to share the work with other Oxfordshire Councils. The repayment scheme for renewable heating ends in April 2022. There appeared to be no replacement for this scheme. Communications and working in partnership was important throughout the County. One suggestion was whether there could be a member of staff in Planning to proactively provide information on retrofit when people send in applications. The report was viewed as a great example of task and finish work that can help drive policy development.

123 Future Oxfordshire Partnership - Environment Advisory Group

Future Oxfordshire Partnership (previously Growth Board) - Environment Advisory Group update (EAG).

Councillor Sue Cooper updated the committee on partnership work. Councillors should look out for a consultation on an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) report – a transport and connectivity policy, which should be out for early November consultation. There had been lots of cooperation at OCC – an OCC climate change officer group had been set up, with partnership working across local councils.

124 Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Report

Chair opened this item. A lot of recommendations in the report were topics we were working towards locally – in the design guide, new local plan, corporate plan etc. A local nature partnership was being set up at present. The first meeting will be soon. We will soon report on how we will achieve / deliver these measures. How do we use the PAZCO report? Should we invite experts (those involved in writing it) to speak to us, to help us to focus on what we can do. Where to start?

Discussion included:

Concerns raised about influence of gas/electricity providers not promoting renewable / green energy systems. A lack of training on installing air source heat pumps. Could we repurpose car factories for heat pump manufacture?

Suggestion made regarding launching a green bond – suggest to Cabinet finance member.

Should we invite experts (those involved in writing this) to speak to us, to help us to focus on what we can do. We could ask for advice to prioritise activities (within the limitations of central legislation). What would be within our powers? We could lobby upwards as well. How much of this can feed into our Climate Action Plan?

125 The Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Fund - Exclusion of fossil fuel investments

The Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Fund - Exclusion of fossil fuel investments

Councillor Jo Robb introduced the item. Councillors Casey-Rerhaye and Cooper declared an interest in this item so decided not to participate.

The responsible officer at the pension fund, Sean Collins, will provide a detailed presentation to all districts separately – to be confirmed.

The progress was well received by the committee. Councillor Robb will circulate the details of this item and extra information in an email to the committee after the meeting.

126 Q1 performance management report

The committee considered themes one and three of the Q1 performance management report. They gave some feedback to Cabinet member Andrea Powell and Harry Barrington Mountford and were invited to email with anything further. In general, the committee were in support of more metrics. Some comments were raised that didn't apply to the Quarter in question but will be noted by officers. There was discussion about wanting an update on farmer clusters. Discussed using influence to help get things done (e.g Thames Water sewage output into river which is not in the council's control). No recommendations were made. Going forward, committee may decide to look at two quarters at a time. It was confirmed that they wished to see Q2 in January 2022.

The meeting closed at 19:57pm

Chairman

Date

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