

Minutes OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee

HELD AT 6.00 PM ON MONDAY 7 JUNE 2021

The recording can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiHK9jvhhsM&t=7s>

Present

Councillors (committee members): Sam Casey-Rerhaye (chair), Sue Cooper, Stefan Gawrysiak, Kate Gregory, Lynn Lloyd, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Andrea Warren (sub), Celia Wilson.

Officers

Harry Barrington-Mountford, Andy Egan, Elizabeth Kingdom, Suzanne Malcolm, Candida Mckelvey, Heather Saunders, Chris Trill and Michelle Wells

Guests

Nick Mariner and Kath Daly, on behalf of Chilterns Conservation Board

106 Chair's announcements

General comments on committee remit.

- The committee members discussed the monitoring role of CEEAC in the Corporate Plan, and the number of Cabinet Members in the committee. It was suggested that Cabinet members on the committee could send a substitute member to committee for monitoring agenda items, for good governance.
- It was confirmed that the item raised by a public speaker, on the formation of a National Park, would be considered by officers. Future ideas for agenda items can be sent directly to committee chair.
- Communication with Town and Parish is important.
- Use of task and finish groups are important to keep up the momentum of the committee's work
- Wanting a standing agenda item for future items

107 Apologies for absence

Cllr Jane Murphy sent apologies. Cllr Andrea Warren attended as substitute.

108 Declarations of interest

None.

109 Urgent business

None.

110 Public participation

None.

111 Chilterns Conservation Board

CEEAC members were presented to by Chilterns Conservation Board. The committee members found the presentation and pamphlet illuminating and were impressed by the work done to engage and support farmers, and the creation of networks/clusters.

CCB are working on helping to prepare farmers for environmental land management scheme. CCB wish to seek strengthened support from district councils.

- A member suggested that a countryside survey could be reinstated, as we need to know what is on the land to protect it.
- The Growth Board was mentioned, as they are setting up an environmental group

112 River Thames Champion

Cllr Jo Robb presented to the committee members on setting up a World River Day celebration, to share all the good work happening and all the results of networking so far. There was a long list of contributors that could be involved. A clean-up day was suggested.

Bathing water quality status was being applied for in Wallingford. District to support Town Council, but it's the Town Council's application.

Real-time information on sewage release into rivers was wanted.

There is a Thames Valley River Network – a group of councillors who have met, with a set of guiding principles. Working towards an end to sewage release, working with Thames Water.

Cllr Robb will keep the committee updated on the clean-up day, and she suggested the committee members could undertake investigation into building regulations and planning, and the connection of water companies. What can we implement in the design guide and joint local plan?

Councillors were agreed that there were issues with the infrastructure not being able to handle demands of new housing and climate changes.

It was suggested that more people need to draw attention to the problems of overflowing sewage and overburden of the system. Do we meet with Thames Water?

It was concurred that the Thames Champion was needed and worthwhile.

113 The Development of South Oxfordshire Tree Policy

A strategic policy on planting on council owned land.

- Committee members felt strongly that this was a high-level policy and that they didn't have enough information to comment on content
- When is a tree not a tree – the importance of hedgerows was raised.

- Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) – we tend to know of threatened trees right before its threatened, we need a system that enables us to protect important trees ahead of any threat.
- The members were interested to see how the tree planting policy dovetails with the TPO policy, and whether the TPO policy is fit for purpose in line with this.
- Suggested penalties. Plant a large number trees if a mature valuable tree is felled without permission.
- It was quoted that the House of Commons Climate Change Committee has proposed that 30k hectares of woodland should be planted every year. There is also a Gov target of 300k new dwellings per annum. So, on average 1 hectare of woodland should be planted for every 10 dwellings.
- A task and finish group were suggested by Chair, as there was some discussion about giving the committee members more time to review content.
- Suzanne Malcolm added that this item presented by Elizabeth Kingdom is specifically regarding planting on Council owned land – we currently have no policy for this. Locals want to get to work on this, but a mechanism is needed. Task and Finish is recommended.
- Felt there was no gain in rushing – tree planting is best in winter. Chair suggested that people need time to apply and for officers to process these. Suzanne Malcolm stated that the month suggested for planting was November. Also need Legal process to go through and have it signed off.
- Other councillors saw it as being imperative to bring this forward soon.
- Confirmed that it will be reviewed yearly, including how it links with other policies.

In summary

- Councillors would like the strategy renamed, as it is specific to council owned land. Councillors wish to see the policy wording beforehand to comment via email.

114 Task and finish group update

Retrofitting update – Cosy Homes and OxLEP- useful sessions had. Oxford Brookes, Aspire, and Abingdon and Witney College will be presenting to the group shortly. DEFRA Task and finish group – 5 environment principles of the environment bill – our response went in by 2nd June. We gave constructive feedback on improving the guidance. Suggested an equity principle and a restoration principle. Committee members saw the submitted response. Some felt strongly that the principles had been diluted from the environment bill.

Closed 20.21

The meeting closed at 20.21

Chair

Date

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