

Climate Change Sub-Group
6 September 2023

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-GROUP held on Wednesday 6 September 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Via Zoom

PRESENT: Councillors J. Weston (Chair)
J. Cragg, R. Grewal, A. Hellyer, S. Kasumu, G. Moore,
A. Nix

ALSO Councillor P. Zukowskyj (Leader of the Council and Executive
PRESENT: Member, Climate Change)

OFFICIALS Service Manager (Asset Management, Building Repairs and Climate
PRESENT: Change) (M. Croft)
Climate Change Officer (K. Murphy)
Landscape & Ecology Manager (O. Waring)
Information Governance Officer (K. Houston)

8. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

The following substitution of a Committee Member had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules:

Councillor J. Cragg for Councillor J. Lake.

9. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J. Lake.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 were approved as a correct record by the Chair.

11. ACTIONS UPDATE

During the last meeting, Members deferred their decision and requested additional Information on the Wenta Action Zero Programme. Following review of this information outside of the meeting, Members agreed to approve drawing up to £9,999 of the Climate Change earmarked reserves to support a maximum of 100 SMEs achieving gold status within the Wenta Action Zero Programme.

During the last meeting, Members requested an update on the Hertfordshire Solar Together Scheme. Below are the most recent figures;

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- 670 registrations (640 solar pv, 30 battery-only)
- 140 accepted and paid deposit (131 solar pv, 9 battery-only)
- 49 confirmed installations so far (45 solar pv and 4 battery only)
- 439 panels
- 38 batteries
- 172 KW installed
- 745 tonnes of carbon reduction over 25 years
- £630,738 local resident investment in the scheme
- 81 dropouts (76 solar pv, 5 battery-only)
- Meaning 10 solar pv participants left who will either be installed or cancelled

Officers requested additional information on if refunds were paid to the 81 dropouts. This information was expected to be released to officers after the meeting.

12. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 15

Air Quality strategy. Please see item 15.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillors P. Zukowskyj declared non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda as appropriate by virtue of being Members of Hertfordshire County Council.

Councillor P. Zukowskyj also declared a non-pecuniary interest in being a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP).

14. UPDATE REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Report of the Climate Change Officer on Climate Change.

Relevant staff members had been appointed to the Climate Officers' Group (COG) and a new Terms of Reference had been created. The first COG meeting was held on 4th September 2023. In the future, it will be held two weeks ahead of the Members meeting, to ensure the most recent updates are reflected in the Members Climate Change update report.

Moving forward the Climate Action Plan (CAP) will be reviewed and updated after every COG Meeting. There are 99 actions that comprise the CAP. 30 actions had been completed, 19 actions were in process, 32 actions were ongoing, and 18 had not been commenced yet. The 18 actions that had not been commenced will be focused on and deemed as a high priority by COG moving forward.

Climate Emergency UK will release the Council Climate Action Scorecards this Autumn. They have arranged a pre-launch briefing session, which officers will

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attend on 14th September. 74% of UK councils responded to the Right of Reply, including WHBC.

Since the Update Climate Change Report was written, the Senior Management Team (SMT) approved the creation of an updated Staff Travel Plan. Additionally, the creation of a Climate Risk Register was approved by SMT and will be added to the Corporate Risk Register.

The following points were noted:

- Members queried who made up the membership of the COG. Officers confirmed that the group was comprised of senior officers from across various services throughout the Council.
- Members asked for an update on the Climate Alliance. Officers confirmed that the Climate Alliance was presently in the process of being organised.
- The Executive Member raised that the CCSG will be subject to changes in the near future following a review of the remit of the CCSG at the Constitutional Review Group and a following discussion at Full Council. It was highlighted this may include a change in remit that would place biodiversity and landscape management plans within the purview of the CCSG, specifically referencing the revised landscape management plans for Danesbury and Singlers Marsh mentioned in the Update Climate Change Report as an example.
- Members queried whether there could be greater community engagement in the CAP. Officers confirmed that 13% of the CAP focused on community engagement and that as the CAP progresses there will be greater engagement.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the update be noted.

15. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

The Executive Member raised that the Air Quality Strategy and Annual Report is being updated and will be reviewed by Cabinet in the near future. The Executive Member noted that they would like the CCSG Membership to have an opportunity to review the Air Quality Strategy before it is presented at Cabinet. It was proposed that the CCSG Membership would be circulated the information outside of the CCSG meeting for review and comment, and may be subject to further action dependent upon the comments received and the CCSG Chair's decision.

Meeting ended at 8.05 pm

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