

Climate Change Member Advisory Board meeting

SUMMARY

**Monday 2 December 2019 at 09:30-11:00
Room 9, Gun Wharf**

Present: Councillor Doe - Chair

Councillors Hackwell, Tranter, Maple, Stamp and Curry

Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation

Ruth Du Lieu, Assistant Director, Frontline Services

James Williams, Director of Public Health

Michael Edwards, Head of Integrated Transport

Dave Harris, Head of Planning

Catherine Smith, Planning Policy Manager

Lucy Kirk, Environmental Protection Team Leader

David Tappenden, Transport Change Manager

Lynette Godwin, Communications Account Manager

Jo Wilkins, Communications Account Manager

Vicki Emrit, Interim Climate Change Officer

Sarah Byrne, Executive Assistant to AD, Frontline Services

Item no:

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chair welcomed the group and addressed introductions and apologies.

2. Summary of previous meeting

2.1 The group agreed the summary of the previous meeting was an accurate reflection and went through the resulting actions as per the next item.

3 Actions from previous meeting

3.1 Cllr Tranter queried whether, as a point of procedure, Councillors should be declaring pecuniary interests. RH confirmed this is not necessary.

3.2 VE confirmed that future meeting dates are on the Climate Change web page and will be added to the public meeting calendar.

3.3 The Chair confirmed that the emerging action plan will be a 5 year rolling plan and is keen for Climate Change to be raised as a public health issue.

3.4 Cllr Curry provided a quick update on "Meadows for Bees". The Chair stated that Medway has aspirations to reduce the number of meadows being cut/encourage wildflower verges, labelling them as such so that they can be better appreciated as a natural asset.

3.5 The Chair thanked officers for creating a new Climate Change web page. It is linked to the KMELES and went live at the end of November. It includes a form for local community groups to tell the Council what they are doing to assess the potential for future partnership working. VE confirmed that the webpage has received a good number of hits already. VM suggested a standing agenda item on the web page.

Action: add web page to agenda.

3.6 LK confirmed that contact has been made with the University of Kent to discuss examples of best practice. It is anticipated that a meeting will be arranged in the New Year. The Chair asked RH to contact the local universities at the top level to promote the Council's climate change projects and engage with students around research to support tackling climate change.

3.7 The Chair also stated that the project needs to increase its engagement with young people and KS1/2 lesson plans. LK stated that there are already some resources in place to work with schools around air quality. JW mentioned work is underway on a partnership project (Cooling Cities) with Luton Junior School and Greenwich University funded by Arches Local.

Action: RH to discuss opportunities with David Watkins for increased engagement with young people.

3.8 VE confirmed Medway Youth Council (MYC) have been invited to attend future meetings. Cllrs Tranter and Maple asked if the timings of future MAB meetings can be looked at in order to make it easier for school age stakeholders to attend.

Action: VE to request sight of MYC's annual conference report on climate change and share with group.

Action: Revise the timing of future MAB meeting to accommodate school age stakeholders.

3.9 VE confirmed a paper to explain the technical terms around climate change will be prepared, and VE will be speaking with colleagues in other Councils to see how they have handled this. VE suggested sharing it to create a wider knowledge base amongst staff also. If the MAB want anything specific to be clarified, they can request it. Cllr Tranter stated that more clarification on the 'big leaders' for change is required to avoid tokenism.

Action: VE to share Friends of the Earth "33 action for Local Authorities" resource: <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/33-actions-local-authorities-can-take-climate-change>

3.10 The Chair noted an aspiration to double the number of trees in Medway. More information is needed to assess what will be required for this. Norse are undertaking a capacity study on number of trees in Medway. Cllr Tranter mentioned sponsor a tree initiative (at around £300 per tree) and suggested a soft launch.

Action: The Chair asked for an update on the sponsor a tree initiative at the next Member Advisory Board meeting.

3.12 **Action:** DH requested a member of staff from Planning is included in any future discussions around mini Citizens Assembly as they have a similar project ongoing.

4. Update on Strategic Plans

4.1 *Corporate Plans*

- 4.1.1 RDL confirmed that progress update reports will go to Cabinet biannually (starting from March 2020) rather than just once a year as stated previously in the July 2019 Cabinet report.
- 4.1.2 RH has agreed with Democratic Services that reports will include guidance notes for officers to consider implications around climate change, where relevant, when completing reports. Cllrs Tranter and Maple requested that the impact of projects or decisions on climate change are considered in the same way that it is necessary to consider financial implications so that opportunities to work towards a positive impact on climate are not missed.

Action: Democratic Services to agree suitable guidance and include proposal in report to Cabinet (March 2020).

- 4.1.3 The group noted CMT are due to consider the inclusion of a climate change program in the Council Plan refresh.
- 4.1.4 VE provided an update on strategic plans. Member Advisory Board were requested to agree the approach to the formal adoption of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (KMELES) so that the appropriate governance/reporting timescales can be planned for. The options will be to either “approve” or “not approve” the strategy (as it has already been through consultation stage) via the following route, which the group agreed:
- RCET O&S Committee
 - Cabinet

4.2 *Local Plan*

- 4.2.1 DH provided a brief update on Planning’s input to tackling climate change, with a full topic presentation to follow at the March MAB. Cllr Maple queried whether a levy can be imposed on developers if pro climate change design is not integrated in to their works. DH confirmed it is a possibility, but there needs to be clarity on how the success of this will be measured. ME suggested going back to review older developments, as this has been done in the past. Cllr Tranter stated that caution may be needed here as there is a balance to be struck between environmental benefits and the competitiveness of the market for developers in Medway.

Action: review success of previous developments. DH to also put Climate Change on the agenda for monthly meetings with developers and feed back to the group.

4.3 *Local Transport Plan*

- 4.3.1 DT gave a presentation on the current work of the Integrated Transport team to increase the use of sustainable transport and reduce congestion on the roads and the subsequent impact on air quality.

Action: The Chair asked the Integrated Transport team to consider a trial road closure outside a school and additional communications work to encourage new volunteers to support the Walking Bus programme.

4.3.2 The Environmental Protection team are scheduled to undertake an anti-idling campaign using Medway's roadside Vehicle Management System (VMS). Schools participating in the KM Green School Awards will be able to participate in a competition to design an anti-idling sign. The winning school will be presented with a printed sign for installation outside of their school. Cllr Hackwell asked the Environmental Protection team to consider prioritising placing anti-idling signs within designated Air Quality Management Areas.

4.3.3 RH noted there are some challenges around reducing car use in Medway and informed the group that more will be done to expand on opportunities to support cycling, referencing Planning and communications.

Action: Officers to explore opportunities to promote bike schemes with businesses, encourage electric bike provisions (potential for tie in with recently announced Future High Streets fund), community engagement around cycling (Transport for South East).

4.3.4 The Cycling Action Plan group still meet quarterly.

Action: Minutes from the CAP group to be shared with the Member Advisory Board and vice versa.

4.3.5 The Chair asked Integrated Transport officers to produce a strategy for introducing electric buses in Medway. RDL to raise with Arriva and other operators. Also requested officers explore opportunities for varying existing contracts by mutual consent and raise the potential for redirecting bus services with operators.

Action: Integrated Transport team to provide an update to the group in March 2020.

4.3.6 ME noted work to refresh the Local Transport Plan is likely to start once the Front Line services restructure is in place and staff resources are in post (anticipated to be from April 2020).

4.3.7 Environmental Protection team will be looking at how to incentivise take up of LiftShare scheme across Medway.

4.3.8 Officers will be progressing a Taxi and Private Hire fleet review and opportunities for the transition to ULEVs. Cllr Maple queried whether the Council are legally able to offer cheaper licences to taxi drivers to convert to electric.

4.3.9 The Chair requested a more rigorous approach to desk space allocation and support for home working where job functions allow.

5. Best Practice/Other Local Authorities

5.1 VE provided an update on work with other Local Authorities including the Kent Carbon Reduction and Climate Change network meeting, the provision of District Data Packs by the Sustainable Business and Communities team at KCC and an update on the Tyndall Centre Carbon Budget Tool. Information and best practice sharing is underway via the SE7 Chief Execs Board. VE asked the group to note the date of the Kent Environment Strategy conference on 25 Feb 2020 which will be used to launch the KMELES and raise awareness and understanding of Kent's net zero target. Members are encouraged to attend. (*The date of the conference has since been moved to 2 June 2020*).

6. Update on Year One Actions

6.1 The group noted the progress to date as per the update note.

7. Communications and Engagement

7.1 Comms provided an update. They will split the focus of their work between what the council are doing (including a small changes campaign) and supporting the public, tying in with national campaigns. Cllr Maple asked that it also ties in with Green Medway. Cllr Maple asked officers to make sure we join up with MHS and Moat on any comms around energy use.

Action: Comms to engage with MHS and Moat as above.

8. Funding Opportunities

8.1 RD provided an update on potential funding opportunities, including up to £25k match funding available for on-street electric vehicle charging points. The Chair stated progress is needed on charge points and asked VE and RD to look in to progressing this. Cllr Maple stated that the distribution of any eventual EV charging points needs to be even across all wards in Medway. There will be more certainty around the availability of funding at the next Member Advisory Board meeting.

Action: Full progress update to be given at next Member Advisory Board.

8.2 RD updated on Heat District Networks, potentially funded through the HIF and also the Heat District Network Unit (BEIS). Cllr Tranter asked how big a “district” is, in this context. RD stated that the master planning will make this clearer.

8.3 RD confirmed that the Workplace Charging Scheme and Urban Tree Fund are also being explored.

9. AOB

9.1 Cllr Curry mentioned the herbicide issue which will be discussed later in the week; it will be good if Medway can lead on this. The Chair agreed but need to look carefully at the cost of finding a replacement for what is used now.

Meeting ended at 11:30am