

CLIMATE CHANGE BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 AUGUST 2021, 10:30AM VIA TEAMS

Present:-

Councillor Jan Harwood
Councillor Diana Jones
Councillor Deborah Seabrook
Councillor Paul Spooner
Councillor Catherine Young

In attendance:-

Dawn Hudd, Director of Strategic Services
Marieke van der Reijden, Head of Asset Management (Climate Change Lead)
Paul Taylor-Armstrong, Climate Change Officer
Chris Burchell, Local Economy Manager
Steve Gibbs, Policy Worker - Communications
Emma McBriarty, Senior Policy Officer - Communications
Carrie Anderson, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Alastair Atkinson GEF Co-optee

Action By

1. WELCOME

The Chairman, Councillor Jan Harwood, welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was explained that the meeting scheduled for June had been cancelled as work was underway and there was nothing to report for that period.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from advisory members of the Board Ian Doyle, Director of Service Delivery and Chris Wheeler, Head of Technical and Operational Services.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. GBC ENERGY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

The Climate Change Officer delivered a presentation setting out the next steps following on from the delivery of the Trajectory Report which had been written by and received from APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) earlier in the year and circulated to the Board previously. It was explained that energy management was not always a highly visual activity but was an important part of the Council's objectives. The presentation aimed to provide the Board with insight and information on progress so far.

Improving monitoring and reporting of the Council's energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions was a time consuming activity but also critical to the taking forward other projects. The Council has two climate change related corporate performance indicators (ENV8 and ENV9) that are updated in the Asset Management team's Service Plan. These form part of a formal performance monitoring report which was shared with Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on a quarterly basis for their comment and review. It was proposed that reporting would be undertaken on energy use on a quarterly basis for Scopes 1 and 2 (gas, fleet and electricity) and annual emissions reporting on Scopes 1,2 and 3. Although the quarterly reports concerned consumption this might be translated into emissions if required for a wider discussion within the Council although it was not yet agreed that there would be a formal reporting of those performance indicators to councillors. It was noted that any such reporting would be dependent upon completion of the collation of the required data, a task significantly enabled through the work being undertaken to improve the Council's energy management arrangements.

It was noted that the APSE Trajectory Report had reported on 2019-20 as a baseline and that the Council was already eleven months on from that point. In that regard it was anticipated that the quarterly reporting would provide a more accurate ongoing picture over the course of the year rather than retrospectively. To support the objective of achieving 'near real-time' reporting the existing energy management software (EMS) was now up to date, included all of the Council's assets and was being maintained. Energy related rolling contracts had been collated and reviewed checking suitability, cost and scope (size of the site); all known invoice data applicable to the last 12 months had been imported into EMS, identifying gaps, errors and inefficiencies (e.g. high specification meters reporting on small consumption site or vice versa); historic bill validation, covering every meter the Council had responsibility for, was scheduled to be undertaken to ensure service optimisation in as much detail as possible; practices were being updated and developed to ensure reliability and consider usability to support service delivery engagement (probably a system of alerts and triggers would update a service that consumption was higher than expected prompting an investigation). A discussion with service areas would take place to understand how their engagement with this information. Overall, the implementation of the above measures would ensure a more accurate progress check against targets and provide detailed emissions recording against specific services and assets. The asset inventory for the Council's estate would be up to date and savings against energy use achieved. It was noted that energy savings equated with financial savings.

It was noted that the existing EMS might be further upgraded to improve the interface functionality and make it accessible to more officers in the Council to interrogate if this was found to be more efficient. The cost of such an upgrade was described as modest at around £1,200 per annum.

5. ASSET DECARBONISATION: FEASIBILITY STUDY OF GUILDFORD LIDO

The Climate Change Officer proceeded with the presentation and set out

the Council's approach to decarbonisation. As previously noted the Council was developing its EMS to monitor site-specific consumption for Scope 1 and 2 emissions. To identify prospective decarbonisation opportunities a more detailed log for each of the Council's key assets was being developed by the Asset Management and Property Services Teams to include information on site-specific energy infrastructure. This log was to include the age of the building and the age and type of energy plant installed with a focus on the key strategic sites and highest emitters where it was possible to make the most effective difference in energy usage. A feasibility study had been undertaken for the Guildford Lido where the changing facilities were in need of urgent refurbishment and new gas boilers required for washing facilities. The Board heard that the Lido building had an aging energy structure with high carbon emissions in the form of six gas boilers three of which were approaching the end of their useful lives and displayed significant intermittent faults. The feasibility study commenced on 20 July and an initial report was expected soon. The study looked not just at the aging changing facilities but at the site as a whole to inform the need for plant replacement, identify options for investment, provide details of outcomes and costs and draw up a plan for action. When the recommendations of the study are known and dependant on those recommendations the Council would be in a position to either commence works or to seek additional funding possibly from one of the Government award opportunities as a ready to go project.

6. SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

It was noted that when the Council committed to net zero it was not made clear if that declaration included Scope 3 emissions. This was a matter for the Board to consider and would affect plans for offsetting. The Climate Change Officer reminded the Board that identification of Scope 3 was a difficult and often 'grey' area on which it was not currently mandatory to report. Presently, it was considered that establishing what the Council's Scope 3 emissions were and originated from was a priority. The Trajectory Report identified the Council's Scope 3 emissions to amount to about 9% of the Council's emissions overall, however this was a figure that could easily increase. To identify and future manage Scope 3 a log of Scope 3 emissions was being developed to include relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and accuracy on a one to five scale. Furthermore, the Council was undertaking a review of purchased goods and services, in order to begin to understand the Council's supply chain emissions.

Action taken to support the measurement of Scope 3 emissions included changing procurement guidelines in the form of updated Procurement Procedure Rules in May in 2019; updated the tender submission template to include a request for volume of emissions associated with the goods or service provided; and collaboration with procurement leads to define climate related questions and to interpret scores and responses. It was hoped this would influence the supply chain and set out the Council's clear climate priorities. Finally, supplier returns would be analysed to the Council's baseline emissions expectations. It was suggested that the Council set out a timeline in place that it would share with suppliers and providers to confirm that by a certain date only carbon-free or low-carbon emission business would be sought. This

would drive the supply chain to begin to de-carbon. Currently, the Council was aiming for 2023 as a date when the supply chain must always provide such information. It was further suggested that Council should seek to educate its own staff to seek to reduce emissions.

A question was raised regarding 'natural capital' and should the Council be seeking to quantify and measure the contribution of green areas with a carbon sequestration function in tandem with reducing its own carbon emissions. It was noted that Surrey Wildlife had been undertaking some mapping work in the county with regard to biodiversity net gain and might be approached for more information. The Chairman agreed that there was an emerging conversation to be had regarding the biodiversity emergency and the connection between that and the climate change work. This would be raised as a future topic for the Board to consider. In the meantime Alistair agreed this was an important discussion and would circulate some information relating to natural capital held by the GEF relating to health and wellbeing cost benefits and funding to the Climate Change Officer and the Chairman with a view to that information being circulated to the rest of the Board in due course. It was, however, noted that natural capital, whilst relevant to climate change, was a divergent topic to the Council's net zero objective.

Marieke van der
Reijden

Alistair Atkins

7. A DISCUSSION AROUND EMISSIONS OFFSETTING

The Board discussed the 'Carbon Management Hierarchy' which set out in terms of most action from avoid, reduce, replace and finally to offset. When to turn to offsetting was at the point of economic and/or technical feasibility. The two main ways to offset was described as exporting renewable energy such as the River Wey hydro-electric project and the solar array installed on the Farnham Road Car Park. Inclusion of these exports contributed to the Council's net carbon emissions. The other way to offset was tree planting (carbon sequestration). There were challenges to offsetting projects, as demonstrated by the recent wildfires around the world where some forests had been planted as offsetting projects and the carbon from those projects had been released and could no longer be viable. Logging was another challenge to tree planting and this was described to the Board as an 'impermanent source' of offsetting. Much of the tree planting offsetting projects were undertaken in non-local areas frequently in other countries. It was difficult to measure the sequestration rates of various planting and conditions which required a lot of monitoring and verification. The cost of offsetting was variable and complex and might increase over time with the requirement to monitor and the increase in cost of suitable land. These challenges collectively explain why offsetting was not preferred and reiterate the importance of following the order of the actions in the Carbon Management Hierarchy.

The Climate Change Officer proposed the discussion also include carbon valuation. The Council needed to understand the impact of decisions relating to emissions so as to avoid negating the savings made from its carbon reduction programme. The cost of removing emissions needed to be factored into all decision making. An internal or assumed price per tonne of carbon would create a cost per tonne of emissions and would help to assess the profitability of projects, future proof investment decisions, indicate where best to allocate capital in a low carbon

economy and demonstrate that the Council was taking its commitment seriously. It was noted that there was no universal cost per tonne of carbon emissions and that different valuation methods exist.

The Board were left with the following questions to consider:

All

1. What do you consider to be the scope of the Council's emissions target?
2. What are your thoughts considering the cost of carbon being included in decision-making?
3. Do you consider that GBC explore the valuation methods for the cost of carbon?

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 14 October at 10:30am to be held via Microsoft Teams.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman was reminded he had an outstanding action from the previous minutes relating to business and communities.

Cllr Harwood

UNIS had started a behavioural insight programme and were seeking funding. The CCO would follow up on progress.

Marieke van der Reijden

There would be an Air Quality Briefing for councillors organised by the Regulatory Services manager with details to follow. The Chairman would confirm if an invitation would be extended to Board members.

Cllr Harwood

Car Free Day was on 26 September

Paul Taylor-Armstrong would be leaving the Council at the end of the month and the Board expressed gratitude for the work he had achieved.