

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. McArthur (Chairman)

Cllr. Cllr Roy (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Alger, Barker, Kitchener, Shea, Varley and White

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Clack, G. Darrington and Cathy Morgan

Cllr. Skinner was also present.

Cllrs. G. Darrington, Lindop, Manston, and Robinson were also present via a virtual media platform which does not constitute attendance as recognised by the Local Government Act 1972.

40. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held 23 November 2023 be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

41. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

42. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

43. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, gave an update on the services within her portfolio. An expedited licensing review hearing was held on 15 February. This resulted in the suspension of the premises license as an interim measure, until a full review hearing was held. All of the Key Performance Indicators for the Licensing Team were green. Licensing fee changes would come into effect in April 2024, as agreed by the Licensing Committee. The review of the Taxi Policy had been agreed, which included a requirement for Hackney carriages to accept card payments.

The CCTV team were fully staffed, and had assisted the police in the arrest of two males last month. They had made positive press releases regarding their successes.

The Safety Advisory Group had considered two events in March. Twenty Senior Managers had been trained as tactical silver command officers, which would aid the

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council's resilience to emergencies. These officers would be given further rest centre training. A meeting with the Kent Resilience Forum would be held regarding collaboration and planning exercises with town and parish councils

The new Environmental Health Manager would begin work in March. The Food & Safety Team Leader was retiring at the end of March. The Portfolio Holder thanked her for her work. Two outbreaks of norovirus had occurred within the district – at the Hever Castle Triathlon and at a public house in Knockholt.

No suitable applicants were received for the vacant Planning Consultation Officer post. This would be re-advertised, with a contractor filling the role in the interim. All Environmental Protection performance indicators had been met.

In response to questions, the Food & Safety Team Leader explained that all samples of water from the month prior to, the day of, and the day after the Hever Castle Triathlon complied with the Bathing Water Directive, and that the source of the norovirus could not be confirmed. Recommendations had been given to the event organiser, and an event held at Hever Castle 10 days after the triathlon had no cases of illness.

44. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit committee

There were none.

45. Climate Change Strategy

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report, which set out the Council's proposed Climate Change Strategy, which would provide a framework for actions relating to reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change. The strategy represented a change of emphasis to prioritise the Council's leadership role, as the majority of emissions within the district could be influenced but not controlled by the council.

The Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer outlined the report. The council's aspiration to reach Net Zero by 2030 was no longer realistic, due to a number of factors and restraints, including cost and a lack of infrastructure. Work would continue to reduce council emissions where practicable. The council was responsible for less than 0.5% of the district's emissions, and was limited in its ability to influence the two main sources of emissions of transport (60%) and domestic use of gas and electricity (26%) across the district. The strategy thus prioritised community leadership and engagement, and sought to work with residents, businesses, partners, visitors, and community groups to raise climate awareness and combat climate change. The officer outlined the six climate change priorities within the strategy. A new action plan would be developed for the strategy, which would identify projects across the council to deliver the strategy's aims.

In response to questions, the Policy Officer explained that the main sources of the council emissions were from fuel use in large vehicles, and gas use for heating at its

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two leisure centres and offices. A carbon reduction plan had been commissioned, focusing on heat reduction plans for council assets. This plan set out three scenarios, for conducting business as usual, mid-level intervention, and high level intervention. The mid-level intervention would require an investment of around £3.24 million, including costs for offsetting emissions that could not be reduced. The high-scale action scenario, which would bring the council closest to its goal of Net Zero by 2030, would require heat pumps and solar photovoltaic panels at all assets, and the total conversion of the council's fleet to electric vehicles, and was calculated to cost around £7million. The Commercial & Property Team would continue to work on these issues, but it was not possible to achieve this by 2030.

In response to further questions, the Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer explained that the strategy's focus was on the district-wide emissions that the council could readily influence. The action plan would set out the specific projects through which this could be done. These actions would be supported across the council's range of service areas, such as the integration of Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling routes with planning applications. It was explained that the council would continue to address the issue of climate change, and that a change in timeframe would not impact the work being undertaken. A number of projects were reliant on external funding, and a set deadline would not impact how these schemes were delivered.

Members discussed the aims and key measures of success within the strategy. The officer explained that the strategy was a high-level document, which would reinforce the council's commitment to tackling climate change and set a clear direction of the council's plans. The associated action plan would set out in further detail the key performance indicators and work necessary to achieve these aims.

Members discussed the mechanisms for including member feedback into the development of the action plan, including the possibility of the formation of a working group.

Members discussed specific elements of the strategy. They raised the possibility of including elements of a circular economy within the strategy, in relation to waste and businesses. They were advised that the council were working with Kent County Council on this issue, details of which would be included within the action plan. Members also suggested including specific reference to reducing the use of single-use plastics under the "Resources, consumption and waste" priority. It was further suggested that a stronger first line should be incorporated to the strategy.

Resolved: That

- a) It be recommended to Cabinet that the Climate Change Strategy be approved, subject to final design and any associated amendments; and
- b) that subject to the approval of the Climate Change Strategy, the associated Action Plan be brought to the committee within the year.

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46. Domestic Waste and Recycling

It was moved from the Chair that consideration of the item be deferred until a future meeting of the committee. The Chairman explained that the council were still awaiting further government guidance, which may expand the options available. Furthermore, the council had appealed against the amount of funding provided by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs for food waste collection, which could change the recommended course of action.

Resolved: That consideration of the item be deferred until a future meeting of the Committee.

47. Food Safety Service Plan 2023/24

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report, which set out the Council's Food Safety Service Plan, in line with Food Standards Agency requirements. The plan targeted resources towards frontline services and high risk food activities. Its objective was to ensure public confidence that food was prepared and sold in safe and hygienic conditions.

The Food & Safety Team Leader outlined the report. All high risk establishments had received inspections within their deadline, and all non-compliant establishments had received revisits to check compliance. The team had a part time food officer vacancy, and had thus occasionally utilised a contractor to ensure the performance target for inspecting medium-risk premises was met. Service delivery was balanced between education, encouragement, and enforcement. The officer outlined efficiencies that had been made within the team, including the introduction of new technologies, and increasing the skills of administrative support.

In response to questions, the officer explained that all food services within the district were required to register. The council were responsible for inspecting and rating mobile food businesses that traded within the district, even if they were based outside of the district when not trading.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet, that it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the 'SDC Food Safety Plan 2023/24' and support the adoption of this document.

48. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted, with the following additions:

June 2024

- Domestic Waste and Recycling Update
- Environmental Health Update

September 2024

- Parking Management 2025/26

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- Climate Change Action Plan

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8:18PM

CHAIRMAN