

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

Minutes



Wednesday 14 September 2022

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Nicole Trehy (Chair), Laura Janes, Stala Antoniadou and Jose Afonso

Other Councillor: Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology)

Officers: Bram Kainth (Strategic Director of Environment), Hinesh Mehta (Head of Climate and Ecology), Jim Cunningham (Climate Change Strategy and Policy Lead), David Abbott (Head of Governance), and Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

External guests:

Morag Carmichael (member of Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission, and Biodiversity Commission); and Chris Dodwell and Helen Dell (Climate Change Commissioners)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ross Melton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TO NOTE)

Members noted the Committee's Terms of Reference.

4. H&F 2030: CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY STRATEGY AND 2022-23 PRIORITIES

The Chair remarked that the Labour Administration in Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) had declared a climate emergency and set out to achieve the ambitious target of net

zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. In the Administration's commitment to work with residents, it had launched a resident-led Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission. The Chair thanked the residents who had generously given their time.

The Chair advised the meeting that the Climate Emergency Unit was the cross-departmental team set up to develop and implement a strategy and action plan for reaching net zero by 2030. She had asked officers to put together presentation of how the manifesto pledges were being translated and actioned into the Council business plan.

At the invitation of the Chair, Hinesh Mehta (Head of Climate and Ecology) gave an overview of the Council's Climate and Ecology Strategy 2030 which set out the Council's approach to delivering its target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions in the borough by 2030. It was shaped by the work of the resident-led Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission (CEEC) who had worked closely with the Council's Climate Unit composing 10 cross-departmental officer working groups, throughout 2020.

Jim Cunningham (Climate Change Strategy and Policy Lead) presented the H&F 2030 Climate and Ecology Strategy.

Following the presentation, Councillor Jose Afonso sought information on the initial cost projection of achieving the target of having zero carbon impact under the 2030 vision for homes, buildings and energy. Hinesh Mehta referred to a high-level cost analysis done about two years ago when the estimate was about £1 to £2 billion to decarbonise the borough, including £250 million to decarbonise Council assets. The Council had approved a £600 million housing capital programme which would target energy efficiency throughout, and of which £106 million was specifically earmarked for retrofit works. He explained that the costs would depend on the extent of activity undertaken, and detailed cost and benefit analysis would be needed at project planning stages.

On Councillor Afonso's further enquiry about appropriate investment, Hinesh Mehta said the Council was developing business cases for areas of significant investment, including the retrofit of its housing stock and corporate properties. Responding to the concern of Morag Carmichael (CEEC member) whether the properties under the Housing Associations (HAs) would be included, Hinesh Mehta said that while some HAs had been advanced in pursuing measures to achieve their own net zero targets, the Council had started engaging those which were behind. He undertook to find out more details about the situation in Notting Hill HA.

ACTION: Hinesh Mehta

Noting that the 2030 vision for travel required fewer vehicles on the borough's roads and a greater proportion of electric vehicles, Councillor Afonso asked if there was a plan for this or if it relied on people changing their habits. Hinesh Mehta advised that there were plans to increase the number of electrical charging points across the borough. Coupled with national legislation disbanding the use of diesel vehicles by 2030, the Council would also discourage the use of cars for short journeys and encourage people to travel by foot, bike, or public transport.

Councillor Afonso asked about the way forward for the South Fulham clean air neighbourhood scheme in respect of the western extension. Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) highlighted the success of the South Fulham scheme covering the streets to the east of the Wandsworth Bridge Road which made it the only area meeting the WHO standards in terms of air quality while reducing traffic by a significant amount. The scheme began as a pilot in July 2021 and was later made permanent in December 2021. With the aid of smart camera technology, the Council was stopping out-of-borough traffic using side streets as cut-throughs and reducing the emission of carbon dioxide from the area. The Council intended to extend the Scheme to the west and ensure Wandsworth Bridge Road benefitted in the same way as the residential roads.

Councillor Laura Janes appreciated the initiatives and goals under the Climate and Ecology Strategy and asked about the evaluation of the performance for individual items. In response, Hinesh Mehta highlighted the monitoring role of the Climate Emergency Unit which sought to scrutinise internally and prepare progress updates for individual challenges on a regular basis. He agreed to share the information with this Committee.

ACTION: Hinesh Mehta

Councillor Stala Antoniadis welcomed the forward-looking priorities. She noted that there were some concerns about the effectiveness of air source heat pumps, particularly around retrofitting old properties, and asked if a detailed evaluation would be carried out before proceeding to implementation. Hinesh Mehta remarked that the Council was taking a fabric-first approach and measures such as insulation would be made first. Heat pumps would be fitted in the better insulated buildings. A number of pilot projects related to insulation and heat pumps were in progress across the borough, for example at the Macbeth Centre and Brook Green Community Centre. Once those projects were completed, officers would have more information on the best approaches to take. He noted that Charing Cross Hospital had secured funding to retrofit air source heat pumps recently.

Councillor Antoniadis raised concerns about achieving the net zero target by 2030 given the current technology available. Bram Kainth (Strategic Director of Environment) remarked that technology was advancing quickly and noted that the goal would be achieved with a raft of measures including improving efficiency and making people more aware of their energy use.

The Chair asked if the Council had considered a financing scheme to help residents buy and install solar panels on their properties. In response, Bram Kainth said it was something the Council could explore. The Chair thought it would be particularly attractive to residents given rising energy costs.

In reply to Councillor Janes' question, Hinesh Mehta confirmed that it was the Council's policy to consider installing solar panels at new homes and corporate buildings such as the Civic Campus. Councillor Wesley Harcourt noted the next Planning Committee was due to consider the redevelopment of the Hartopp and

Lannoy Points site which was targeting net zero operational emissions and included the provision of solar panels.

Chris Dodwell (Climate Change Commissioner) said that among the options available for warmer homes, insulation for walls, lofts and floors came before heat pumps/heating system improvements or solar panel installations. He suggested councils could share experiences and learn from each other in developing the markets as well as the required level of acceptability for insulation. Helen Dell (Climate Change Commissioner) added that insulation and heating system improvements contributed to better EPC ratings which would affect the viewing rate of the property concerned.

The Chair expressed concern about heritage rules making retrofitting and insulating old properties overly complex and expensive. Bram Kainth considered it necessary to find a way to balance different needs. He believed it was possible to address the Chair's concern but required more efforts to work with colleagues in Conservation and Planning.

The Chair reflected the view of the residents that Idverde had not been doing a good job in local parks and suggested their staff received more training. She also suggested that they ran youth training scheme for school leavers interested in horticulture to become qualified gardeners. Bram Kainth said it was likely they already had such a programme in place but officers would bring the matter up with them.

ACTION: Hinesh Mehta

In response to Morag Carmichael's concern about providing more tree green space for the public, Hinesh Mehta advised that a survey was being undertaken to identify more opportunities to develop green space and rooves in the borough. Bram Kainth also advised that the Council had a 'greening the grey' scheme that planned to develop spaces under the highways into green spaces, removing concrete and adding soft landscaping, which also improved drainage.

Councillor Antoniades enquired if some of the green spaces could be used for allotments. Councillor Wesley Harcourt noted there were two sets of allotments in the borough already in Bishops Park and Emlyn Road and he supported the idea of using unused spaces for small allotments where appropriate.

The Chair considered it was necessary to put up signage and distribute flyers there to let people know what was happening in the neighbourhood. Bram Kainth said it was sure the Council would follow up the idea.

Councillor Janes noted that there was a resident-led initiative to develop a small community garden in Linacre Court, but they needed financial support to pay for ongoing maintenance. The Chair advised that microgrants of £500 were available from the Council. Hinesh Mehta confirmed that individuals or groups in the borough might apply for Climate Action Microgrants of up to £500 to help a project or event in the neighbourhood, with ideas of making the borough greener or teaching people about the environment.

Councillor Janes enquired about ways of promoting the Council's Library of Things (a place where people could borrow seldom-used household items) to everyone in the borough, in particular those who were less well-off. In response, Hinesh Mehta said that the Library of Things could have a real impact locally as besides saving money and cutting household clutter, it helped reduce waste. He shared Councillor Janes' view that it could be promoted through schools.

Councillor Janes requested additional in-depth training for members on the issues discussed in the strategy and priorities. Hinesh Mehta advised that the Local Government Association ran regular courses for elected Members and would send on the details.

ACTION: Hinesh Mehta

The Chair advised that the Committee had received some written questions. She invited officers to respond to the questions at the meeting.

Question 1:

Recent events (including high temperatures, drought, fire and flood) underline the importance of taking serious and urgent steps to reach net zero as soon as possible. How will the targets set out in the borough's climate and biodiversity strategy be monitored and reported on to councillors and residents, and how is the strategy being updated to ensure the borough is on track to reach the net zero target by 2030?

Council response: Currently, the targets set out in the H&F 2030: Climate and Ecology Strategy and Action Plan, are monitored by the council's dedicated Climate and Ecological Emergency Unit (CEEU), through various tools, analysis and dialogue. The CEEU are responsible for ensuring the council is on track to meet the overall net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 target. Officers in the CEEU and other service areas analyse datasets and track progress against the action plan and across key performance indicators. An annual carbon audit is completed on the council's organisational emissions, and an annual footprint of the borough's emissions produced by the London Emissions and Greenhouse Gas Inventory is used. Councillors are updated on a regular basis including a monthly briefing to the responsible Cabinet Member. The H&F 2030: Climate and Ecology Strategy and Action Plan was developed with a resident-led Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission in 2020 and adopted by Cabinet in September 2021. The next phase of the strategy's development is more detailed planning in key service areas to outline how those sectors are likely to reach net-zero carbon by 2030.

Question 2:

Does the council have contingency plans to provide cooling centres for local people at high risk, including homeless people and older or vulnerable residents living in HMOs or other accommodation which cannot be kept cool. What steps are being taken to reduce tarmac and increase tree cover and green spaces including shady community gardens?

Response: The following are on the London GLA Cool Spaces map for Hammersmith & Fulham:

- 5 cool spaces: Westfield (x2 areas), Livat (shows as Kings Mall on the GLA map), Fulham Library and Shepherds Bush Library.
- 5 water fountain locations: in Hammersmith Park, on/near Shepherds Bush Green, Lyric Square, opposite Fulham Broadway centre and in Hurlingham Park.
- There are shaded areas in our various parks and also along the river Thames that runs through the borough.

We are committed to greening the grey, removing paved surfaces and increasing green space along the highway, and this is being measured quarterly as a climate key performance indicator. We are aiming to increase tree canopy cover, and we continually measure this with every tree inspection, adding to our data set on canopy cover for council owned trees.

Question 3:

Food waste collection: how many households are included in the pilot study, and what proportion of borough households is that? When will the pilot be assessed and reported on? What steps are being taken to extend food waste collection for more borough residents, particularly those living in HMOs, on estates, and in homes that do not have front gardens for bin storage?

Response: the current prototype service, which includes food waste, covers approximately 6,000 properties. This is around 7% of the total number of properties in the borough. We are also running food waste collections in several schools at the moment, which is working very well so far. We're currently undertaking survey work in the prototype areas and expect to roll food waste collections out more widely as part of our new waste contract. The new contract (which is scheduled to begin at the end of January) includes provision for food waste collections across the borough. Food waste will be introduced with careful consideration of properties' specific requirements, e.g. communal collections and storage capacity issues. It's worth noting that detail on the requirements of the new Environment Act is currently awaited, this may also impact regulations for waste collection and recycling, including collection of food and also garden waste. In addition, we are part of a London wide project to look at reducing food waste and the carbon impact of our food consumption and we continue to promote home composting to help further reduce food waste.

Then, the Chair invited questions from members of the public in the meeting.

In response to Morag Carmichael's enquiry about the progress of opening an ecology centre, Hinesh Mehta said that the Climate Change and Ecology Centre, to be opened by April 2023, would be located at the south of the borough near the pier of the Wandsworth Bridge.

The Committee requested items on the Housing Retrofit Survey and the key performance indicators (KPIs) of the Climate Emergency Unit at the next meeting scheduled for 29 November 2022.

ACTION: Hinesh Mehta

Concluding the discussion, the Chair thanked everyone for attending or watching the meeting. She stressed the need for action and the importance of staying engaged and positive about the impact we could have on climate change mitigation and management.

RESOLVED

1. The Committee noted and commented on progress towards net zero.
2. The Committee noted and commented on the strategic priorities set out for 2022-23.
3. The Committee gave feedback on the strategy, progress, and priorities.
4. The Committee requested items on the Housing Retrofit Survey and progress updates on the Climate Emergency strategy at the next meeting scheduled for 29 November 2022.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of future meetings as follow:

- 29 November 2022
- 31 January 2023
- 28 March 2023

Meeting started: 19.00
Meeting ended: 20.34

Chair

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