

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Climate Change Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 28 January 2020 at 6.30 pm

Councillors Present:

K L Jaggard (Chair)

R S Fiveash, J Hart, T Lunnon and A Pendlington

Also in Attendance:

Councillor B J Burgess, G S Jhans and P C Smith

Officers Present:

Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Louise Skipton-Carter	Sustainability Manager
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Councillor Fiveash to the Climate Change Scrutiny Panel.

It was confirmed that there would be no public question time as instead there was an item on the agenda for public and organisational consultation and engagement which would include a short question and answer session between each spokesperson and Panel. The Panel was keen to seek views from the public, interested persons and organisations that have specific interests in Climate Change.

1. Disclosures of Interest & Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor K L Jaggard	Consultation with the Public and Organisations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Friends of the Earth Support

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Scrutiny Panel held on 20 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Witness Sessions

The Head of Economy and Planning and the Sustainability Manager (CBC) updated the Panel on the draft Climate Emergency Baseline Audit. The key points included:

- The audit provided an evidence base to support the Council in its response to the Climate Emergency as it outlined the current emissions profile of the council and the borough. It was important to understand the proportion of emissions that can be influenced locally.
- Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy inventory data 2017 provided direct and indirect emissions within Crawley (Industry/commercial = 36%, domestic = 23% and transport = 41%). Although it was noted this excluded aviation. It would be important to acknowledge those areas where the Council had direct control.
- Overall Crawley had higher emissions compared to other areas of West Sussex due to its industrial strength, compact town and lack of rural land. In contrast its domestic emissions were lower than other districts and boroughs. The increased number of SUVs on its roads had resulted in a negative impact on transport emissions. There would be a need to compare structurally similar areas in order to obtain a direct comparison.
- In terms of the Council's own emissions they represented approximately 6% of the borough wide emissions. The largest single emissions source category from Indirect, Direct and Other emissions was from the Council's procurement spend, contributing to 83.49% of total emissions. Indirect impacts included Buildings & Other Assets – with K2 Crawley, Town Hall and the Hawth contributing to a substantial amount of the Council's own emissions, together with other emissions including Vehicle Fleet and Employee Commute.
- The baseline audit provides a platform to monitor and produce actions to support the Council in reducing its current emissions.

Panel Members raised a number of queries. The issues raised and the key responses included:

- Confirmation that aviation and emissions from Gatwick were not included in the audit data.
- It would be beneficial to establish further data on the various commercial buildings (K2 Crawley, Hawth and Town Hall) and additional information would be provided at the Commercial meeting in March.
- It was highlighted that districts and boroughs had distinctive commuter patterns that would equate to different carbon emission data.
- Confirmation that the transport emissions included all surface transport cargo to and from Gatwick.
- It would be important for Panel Members to analyse the data further and utilise each specific segment for the future meetings; Transport; Commercial & Business; Domestic Building & Residential.

In addition, a discussion took place on the [Draft Crawley Transport Strategy](#). The Strategy highlighted the importance of enhancing the Borough's sustainable transport infrastructure and access, together with a vision for the way the Council planned to respond to the UK commitment to cutting net carbon emissions to zero by 2050.

The Head of Economy and Planning and the Sustainability Manager (CBC) updated the Panel on various aspects including:

- The draft Transport Strategy was currently out for consultation until 9am on 17 February 2020 and it was felt beneficial to seek the Scrutiny Panel's input.
- Transport and access had been developed around the town at a time when car ownership was much lower. As the population and the business district grew, more road space had been provided to try to keep pace with the growth. Transport was the biggest contributor to carbon emissions across the borough and adopting a new approach focusing on 'planning for people and places' may provide a better solution for everyone, alongside advances in technology and the need to reduce vehicle emissions.
- The Strategy highlighted the advantages of providing sustainable transport and access whilst addressing the wider issues such as health, air quality, community cohesion and the environmental impacts.
- There was a need to invest in infrastructure and technology to build on the current proposed advantages and the document would work alongside the Crawley Growth Programme Schemes.

Panel Members raised a number of queries. The issues raised and the key responses included:

- It was highlighted the importance to ensure contingency for maintaining cycle paths, together with improving transport links.
- It was noted the town has a large number of commuters coming into Crawley, particularly to Manor Royal and it was important that the infrastructure was in place so as not to prevent employees or companies conducting business.
- It was recognised that transport was a challenge and there was a need for additional electric vehicle charging points together with incentives for providing electric vehicles.
- Air quality was raised as a concern and it was noted that the air quality management zone (AQMA) was potentially to be extended from Hazelwick roundabout towards Three Bridges.
- It was noted that a low emissions zone had been implemented within London and it was questioned whether something similar could be introduced within the town centre or the AQMA.
- It was discussed that idling, particularly at level crossings needed to be discouraged.
- The benefits of the neighbourhood system was discussed in detail with added advantages of encouraging community use together with attractive, connected neighbourhoods with leafy, safe and accessible streets. It was thought this would promote local shops and services.
- The use of community car/bike sharing and car clubs was welcomed.
- The benefits of more pedestrianisation was raised, with more tree and seating areas, particularly along The Boulevard to link the New Town hall public realm to the shopping centre.
- With a growth in numbers of people cycling, it was noted this would need careful development to ensure sufficient secure storage, that safety concerns were addressed for all users. It was noted that shared cycle and pedestrian paths did not really work.
- The role of autonomous vehicles in the future transport mix should be considered.

RESOLVED

That Panel Members thanked all officers for their attendance and contribution.

4. Consultation with the Public and Organisations (20 minutes)

Councillor Jaggard thanked the public, interested parties and organisations for attending and commented that it was now their opportunity to inform the Panel on the areas identified within the agreed scope and objective set by Full Council and what they felt could be improved in this respect. The public were reminded of the Panel's scope focusing upon the workings and activities of Crawley Borough Council in relation to carbon emissions.

Following a request from a member of the Public, the Head of Economy and Planning explained the role of the Scrutiny Panel which had the ultimate remit to develop recommendations to assist the Council in identifying its action plan. It was emphasised that the Panel itself does not have the ability to implement any changes directly, instead its role was to produce evidence based recommendations. The remit of the Panel was to look into and make recommendations focusing upon the workings and activities of Crawley Borough Council relating to carbon emissions and to report to Council as soon as is practicable, (via the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and normally the Cabinet).

Listed below were many of the key issues and themes that were raised during the consultation:

- The need for replacement trees once others were felled. It was noted there was current planning policy surrounding the investment and replacement of trees. Furthermore the draft Local Plan which was currently out for consultation, had been revised with regards to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Recognition that changes in transport provision needed to reflect a variety of issues; those in transport poverty, isolation of people on low income, young, elderly, disabled, together with the condition of streets.
- There was support for community garden projects and potential links to working with the voluntary sector and obtaining future funding.
- It was queried whether the Council could obtain its energy through green energy.
- There was a keenness to work with the Council to progress actions and it was suggested the Council consult and compare with other Councils. It was confirmed that the Panel had and were continuing to investigate other councils and undertake further research.
- It was felt by some that reducing the target date for cutting carbon emissions from 2050 to 2030 would highlight ambition, intent and commitment. However it was stressed that it was important to have the finances and resources to deliver the changes.
- It was hoped the climate change agenda would feature highly throughout each area of the council's work.
- It questionable how much influence and power the Council had with partners, stakeholders and businesses.
- Confirmation was provided that any action plan needed to be practical in terms of what the Council could achieve and actually deliver with assistance with partners and stakeholders. It was anticipated this would be costed and combine CBC and private funds. The action plan would be available for consultation as and when available.

The Chair thanked the public for attending and expressing their views and it was reiterated that what had been discussed would certainly help shape the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations.

5. General Updates & Actions for Next Meeting

The Chair updated Panel Members that invites had been issued to Metrobus, WSCC, Executive Director of MRBD and Councillor Peter Smith (February Transport meeting). Responses had been received from all parties to confirm.

A request was made from the public gallery that it be considered that given the success of the public consultation, that an opportunity be made at every meeting. The Chair agreed to consider this.

6. Recommendations

Proposed actions to be picked up for further discussion included:

- Contingency plans to maintain cycle paths.
- Improve number of electric charging points.
- Incentives for electric vehicles.
- Extend the air quality management zone towards Three Bridges.
- Emissions charge in town centre.
- Encourage community use / car/bike sharing.
- Document the benefits for increased pedestrianisation of the town centre.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Climate Change Scrutiny Panel concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.11 pm

K L Jaggard (Chair)