

MINUTES OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

13 MARCH 2023

PRESENT:

Members of the Working Group: Councillors Mrs Crane (Chair), Edwards, Harrington, Ms Livesey, Picker and Roodhouse

24. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2023 were approved.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Working Group that work was underway in relation to the long-term plans for trees. A meeting with officers was due to be held to discuss progress.

25. IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

The Chief Officer for Regulation and Safety provided a verbal report giving an overview of the background to air quality work and highlighting the key issues and challenges.

Background

- The overarching priority was to protect human health and minimise the impact on the environment.
- As a regulator, the Council needed to balance the enforcement of legislation or a duty or responsibility to. There were a number of pieces of legislation that mainly applied to external air pollution including:
 - Environment Act 1995 (updated 2021) – principal air quality legislation giving powers to take action to deal with traffic and major polluters.
 - Clean Air Act 1953 – recently updated to allow continued powers for smokeless control zones principally to control solid fuel burning.
 - Statutory Nuisance - allows us to deal with poor air quality usually in specific locations e.g. within houses or neighbouring properties causing issues.
 - Housing Act 2004 - allows us take enforcement action where a house is a hazard or a risk to occupants.

Some successes included:

- Western Relief Road – reduced traffic in the town centre.
- Improvements to the Dunchurch crossroads – reduced direct exposure to air pollution.
- Shilton – Covid and the increase in people working from home resulted in a general reduction in traffic.

The Working Group were informed about the current workstreams and schemes in place that would result in positive environmental and community impacts.

The Group welcomed the opportunity to feed into the Air Quality Action Plan at an early stage including the actions and timelines.

Wherever possible the air quality strategy and climate targets should align and crosscut to link to all relevant strategies.

It was recognised that encouraging behaviour change was a huge task and actions such as the introduction of electric bikes would send the right message. The Group were keen for more innovative ideas to be brought forward.

The Working Group received an update from the Deputy Chief Executive on some further current schemes and workstreams.

CHAIR