

**CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY PANEL
8 JUNE 2022
6.30 - 8.40 PM**



Present:

Councillors Dr Barnard, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Leake, Mossom, Virgo and Temperton

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs McKenzie-Boyle

2. Election of Chairman

Councillor Tony Virgo was appointed as Chairman.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle was appointed as Vice-Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the Climate Change Advisory Panel on 25 April 2022 were approved.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Countryside Partnerships presentation on Climate Change : Pathfinder - Marking out the route to net zero.

Percy Mullany and Robert MacDiarmid of Countryside Partnerships attended the meeting to give a presentation and answer questions.

The presentation set out Countryside's approach to sustainability and detailed how they planned on tackling issues in relation to net zero carbon and wider sustainability issues.

Robert spoke of Countryside's purpose: to create places where people love to live, with sustainable communities built to last. This aim had been broken down into three broad pillars: 'built to last', 'sustainable communities' and 'thriving together'. Each pillar was underpinned by various targets.

Concerning the 'built to last' pillar, targets had been set relating to safety performance, sustainable materials and modern methods of construction – all geared towards building a high-quality home.

On the second pillar, Robert spoke about a mix of social and economic targets. There were clear commitments to tree planting and biodiversity net gain, job creation schemes and EV charging port installations – among other targets.

The final pillar contained more internally focussed targets relating to, for example, the training of the workforce.

Robert spoke about Countryside's net zero reduction strategy. In reducing the emissions that Countryside were forecast to make during the period of 2020 to 2030, three interventions were to have an effect. There were:

1. A change to the building regulations to the Interim Future Homes Standard in 2022.
2. The Future Homes Standard in 2025 when gas boilers were no longer to be fitted.
3. A commitment to build 50% of homes by timber frame.

Robert spoke about some of the key challenges Countryside would face when building homes at scale:

- An increase in build costs was mentioned, although economies of scale would likely bring these down over time.
- Whilst an issue with the supply of heat pumps themselves wasn't likely, there were not enough contractors to install them.
- Homes being completely electrified was to increase pressure on local infrastructure.
- The drop off in performance from a gas boiler and a heat pump was likely to take time to acclimatise to and emphasis was placed on the need to bring the customers along on the journey.

During a period of discussion, the following points were made and answers were given:

- There was less concern relating to the manufacture of heat pumps as manufacturers will scale up their operation. More concern was attributed the lack of contractors able to fit the heat pumps at the time.
- A modern heat pump works better when it heating water to a lower temperature than a gas boiler would. Therefore, a higher level of thermal efficiency were to be required in new build homes. Heat pumps were starting to come onto the market that could heat water to a temperature not dissimilar to a gas boiler.
- Air source heat pumps are effective and have lower infrastructure costs than water or ground source heat pumps.
- An emersion heater has an coefficient performance of 1 unit of electricity to 1 unit of heat. An electric heater has a coefficient performance of 1.1:1. A heat pump has a coefficient performance of between 1:2 and 1:5.
- Draughts coming into the home results in reduced efficiency and increased heating costs. Therefore, homes with heat pumps require more airtightness. Because of this, air would have to be mechanically moved around the home.
- Houses with 2-3 bedrooms or more were likely to need a water tank.
- The same regulations applied to apartments as they did to low rise housing. A move away from gas heating to renewable heating was required. This were to be achieved by having an energy centre in the building with pipes carrying

water around to individual apartments. There was to be provision in certain apartments to top up the water temperature.

- From June 2023, every home that has an associated parking point was to have an EV charging point made available to them.
- It was advised that anaerobic digestion would not have been economically viable on a small scale.
- Both of the planning applications that the joint venture was looking at included provision of solar panels.
- Air source units were to be placed inside homes.
- The government had issued guidance to direct local planning authorities to take into account some of the newer design features of buildings with heat pumps.
- Heat pumps worked more efficiently when heating water to 19-20 degrees.
- Concerns were raised as to whether the district operator could meet the demand during peak EV charging times.
- Public subsidies were going to be needed for homeowners with lower value homes to support the retrofit. The economic outlay for upgraded insulation was to be such a large sum that it would not be recovered in its sale value.

8. **Annual report on Climate Change Strategy**

Damian James presented the Annual Report on the Climate Change Strategy.

The Council had adopted a four pronged approach to the Climate Change Strategy from 2020-2024. This was to involve working with partners, working with schools and young people, preserving the climate beneficial elements of the COVID-19 emergency and preserving the natural environment sustainably in line with the Bracknell Forest Strategic Plans.

Damian illustrated the general trend of reducing emissions across the borough.

Some of the strategic highlights of the year prior were detailed:

- The Council had altered the corporate decision making process so that climate considerations were incorporated in the matrix.
- Climate change elements had been added to service plans for 22/23.
- A number of programmes within the public service team had impacted on climate change in the previous 12 months.
- In the Business Survey 2021, 51% of businesses had the intention of being more environmentally friendly.
- The Council had had a number of Ministers at landfill sites to discuss a range of possible eco-projects.
- The Schools Climate Conference had been a success.

The Council had been successful in obtaining grant funding for various environmental projects over the previous year.

An overview was given of the work various teams across the Council were doing to contribute to the Councils climate efforts.

During a period of discussion, the following points were made and answers were given:

- Due to the economic climate at the time, many businesses were primarily concerned with survival.

- Many organisations, including the Council’s partner The Economic and Skills Development Partnership, had been doing excellent work to help businesses with their climate efforts.
- The ‘looking forward’ section of the report was to be expanded.
- Statistics relating to Borough emissions not directly under the control of the Council – about 98% of Borough emissions – were to be provided.
- Small businesses were facing many of the same pressures as individual households. They were to be able to access and make use of some of the same Council initiatives as individual households.
- A number of EV charging points were being installed at Lily Hill Park for community use.
- The Council was engaging with Silver Homes to help them receive grant funding in the next tranche.
- The Council held a database containing information on the least well insulated properties within the Borough. The Council was to target the individuals most in need and the least efficient homes with funding as a priority.
- Residents were thanked for the excellent effort they had made so far. Lots of people making small changes had the cumulative impact of a large change.
- 8 schools within the Borough were to receive funding for climate projects.
- Some revisions to sections of the report were suggested.

The Chairman proposed that ‘This Panel would like Executive to consider a proportion of the SIL money so go towards home insulation’. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Leake.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Panel will be held on Thursday 29th September 2022.

CHAIRMAN