

Amplifi Public Sector Group

Notes of Meeting on 6 June 2024

Attendees: William Benson, Cllr Justine Rutland, Paul Taylor, Gary Stevenson Hilary Smith, Henry Saunders, Jack Wellard, Jessica Berry, Suzanna Chisholm (Kent Fire), Rob Robinson (KCC)

Apologies: Philip Belton

1) Key Objectives / Group Purpose Refresh

WB reminded the group of the purpose of Amplifi and the Public Sector Group and ran through the notes of the previous meeting.

2) Borough Climate Change Strategy Update

HS briefed the group on progress with the Council's Climate Change Strategy. He noted that a draft would be going to Cabinet in July following which it would be subject to extensive consultation. He noted that Amplifi would be included within a specific chapter on businesses.

We discussed other organisations' strategies. KFRS have an organisational strategy (green strategy) but noted that it does need invigorating (and they are looking to review it). KCC have led on an Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and also have other strategies for trees and transport. They are now trying to focus more on action rather than strategy.

3) Engagement & Knowledge Sharing Opportunities

We discussed some of the thoughts, issues and initiatives emerging from other groups – in particular, incentivising employees to switch to renewable energy, exploring opportunities for collaborating on waste and recycling, tackling transportation/scope 3 emissions (in particular employee commuting and promoting alternatives such as EVs, bikes, car pooling, walking, etc.) and how we approach the procurement and replacement of equipment – how can these be thought about differently to reduce their impact?

GS noted that (in respect of waste collection) that there were new responsibilities for businesses in terms of collection arrangements and there was an opportunity to work with businesses (through the BID) to look at whether there was anything we could do collectively to capitalise on this and reduce the number of vehicles and improve recycling rates in the town. Canterbury BID have done something similar. We noted that the market was pretty competitive. We also agreed that the Council would explore whether it could incorporate an option for any waste provider providing services for the Borough

Council (as part of a retendering option in 2027) to bid to provide a service to local businesses.

On the issue of equipment and consumables, it was noted that KCC have moved their servers to Crystal and are looking at evaporative cooling. There were also various schemes for refurbishing and re-using equipment. An example was given of Reyooz in Canterbury who had done a lot across the city and were keen to expand. Other examples included 'Enviromate' and the NHS had buddied up with another company that was doing the same thing. There was also a reuse locator map (including household waste sites) on the KCC website.

We then discussed commuting. There were various websites promoting car-sharing (<https://kentconnected.org/commute-smarter/car-share/>, [Carsharing - Kent Connected](#), [Kent and Medway Journey Share community - part of the Liftshare network](#)) but we questioned whether they had been adapted to post-Covid working arrangements (which were increasingly flexible). Rob noted that this was something he could raise with the Kent Connected Transport Innovation Hub.

We discussed other ideas including season tickets in the car parks for car-sharers, the need for Secure Cycle storage, the use of route planning software for business travel, active travel (including the better streets initiative in St John's and St James' and the Langton/Rusthall cycle route).

HS noted that TWBC was making a small grant fund of £25k available for decarbonisation with 10 grants looking to deliver outcomes by January 2025.

Action:

- Rob Robinson to provide details of companies promoting re-use of equipment and furniture.
- Gary Stevenson to explore opportunities for improving waste collection.
- Hilary Smith to talk to Tim Middleton about transport.

4) Employee Engagement

We discussed a range of initiatives to promote behaviour change amongst employees. RR noted a 'green guardians' scheme within the County Council. We also noted the '[Take the Jump](#)' initiative. RR also noted training provided by Low Carbon Kent and noted that it could be offered to local businesses (<https://lowcarbonkent.com/training/>). Other initiatives were mentioned such as 'Carbon 99 ([Carbon Reduction Plans for Small Business - Small99](#))' and 'Take the Shift'. SC said that KFRS might look at this in relation to their workforce.

We discussed ways in which we could promote these amongst both the public and amongst local businesses.

HS, HS and JB undertook to produce a blueprint which might be shared as a starter for 10 in terms of employees. We agreed that we could make the relevant pages on the Business Portal more visible and include something on measures to promote net zero in every business newsletter.

We also discussed leveraging the national 'Green week' and Greener Kent (running awareness exercises)

Actions:

- Rob Robinson to share details of the training and how we could make it available to local businesses and to share details of their 'Green Guardians' scheme
- Hilary Smith, Henry Saunders and Jessica Berry to look at articles in the business newsletter and promoting ideas through the Business Newsletter.

5) Trees and Green Habitat

PT explained work that the Council was undertaking to explore 'planting a tree for every resident' – a Lib Dem manifesto commitment. Doing it in one go would require 8 hectares of land and 116,000 trees. Alternatively the Council was exploring whether it could be delivered in a more 'distributive', community-based fashion. RR referenced the Kent Nature Recovery Strategy:

<https://kentnature.org.uk/nature-recovery/local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

6) Next Steps

The following actions were agreed:

- Rob Robinson to provide details of companies promoting re-use of equipment and furniture.
- Gary Stevenson to explore opportunities for improving waste collection
- Rob Robinson to share details of the training and how we could make it available to local businesses and to share details of their 'Green Guardians' scheme
- Hilary Smith, Henry Saunders and Jessica Berry to look at articles in the business newsletter and promoting ideas through the Business Newsletter.

We also noted that when the Draft Climate Change Strategy was published, HS would consult and involve Amplifi, that HS would be looking to deliver grants for decarbonisation and that HS would talk to Tim Middleton about the Kent Connected Transport Innovation Hub.

7) AOB

We discussed whether we should involve the local churches in our work (possibly through the Community Sector Group?)

WB also noted that he would talk to parish and town councils about Amplifi (Charles Mackonochie).