

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AUDIT PANEL AT WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021, 10:00AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.**

**PRESENT:** - Councillors C. Jay, S. Ager, S. Hicks.

**Staff:**            J        Sheehy        -        Town Clerk  
                         H        Andrews      -        Assistant Town Clerk

**4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for late arrival were received from Councillor S. Hicks.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record and subsequently signed by the Chairman.

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO DATE**

The panel reviewed recommendations made to date and discussed District Council priorities in respect of its draft climate change strategy and Horizon 120 construction project. The panel **AGREED** that a further policy and scrutiny exercise should take place at the next meeting to review principal authority commitments to climate change.

Members **AGREED** for Councillor S. Hicks to seek clarity on District Council policy via member-to-member interaction and report back to the next panel.

Members **AGREED** for Councillor S. Ager to review local Neighbourhood Plan documents for climate related sections and policy to report to the next panel.

Members **AGREED** for Councillor C. Jay to review request information from BDC and ECC on funding streams and grants available relating to climate initiatives.

Members discussed the scope for improving the Town Park public conveniences in ownership of the Town Council and considered that the impending business rates rebate could be used to improve the carbon footprint of the public toilets. Members **AGREED** to perform an audit of this asset for climate improvement potential, utilising Burnham-on-Crouch's "Indestructible Toilets" as an example.

**8. SOLAR CAPABILITIES ON WITHAM INDUSTRIAL ESTATE**

Members discussed the potential of solar capabilities for traffic lights, street furniture and CCTV and noted the difficulties in sourcing professional, technical advice for such items. It was subsequently considered that a priority list of items should be compiled by the panel for action.

**9. PANEL BUSINESS**

Members considered priority actions of the panel to take forward for delivery. It was suggested there could be scope for a community led event concerning climate change. Members discussed the Essex County Council initiative "Essex Library of Things" and considered the scope for aligning Town Council awareness campaigns with District &

County Council events, taking note of a recent “0 emissions” bus tour that had taken place.

Members **AGREED** that up to date material for signposting local citizens to various recycling services should be included in the next edition of The Voice in the format of a removable ‘scissor cut’ page to create a poster that can be retained.

It was further **AGREED** that a comprehensive list of recommendations be compiled by the panel for receipt by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in order to enrol climate priority items into policy and content formulation at an early stage.

Members discussed the role of the Climate Audit Panel in respect of District & County functions and identified County Councillor Peter Schwier as the appointed ‘Climate Czar’. Members considered there may be scope to invite District & County Council members to future meetings to discuss policies.

It was further **AGREED** that the Council’s Youth Working Group should identify opportunities to work with schools on climate change subjects, with a proposal to create a mobile phone recycling, town-wide competition between all schools, with an award to be given to the most successful school. It was **AGREED** this proposal would be put to the Youth Working Group to deliver.

There being no further business, the panel concluded at 12:39pm.

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Councillor C Jay  
Chairman

JS 01.07.2021