

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AUDIT PANEL AT WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD 7TH MARCH 2022, 6:30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

PRESENT: - Councillors S. Ager, P. Barlow, S. Hicks, R. Williams

Staff: H Andrews - Deputy Town Clerk

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Jay, members agreed that Councillor Ager would chair the meeting.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

13. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

14. PUBLIC TOILET AUDIT

Members discussed the options available to improve the Town Park public toilets to improve carbon footprint. Options of either rainwater collection facility or solar panels were discussed. Members **AGREED** that investigations should take place to establish which option was more advantageous for reducing carbon and to explore potential installation costs. Members noted that a rent rebate was available and spoke of the general costs involved in maintaining the toilets.

15. GENERAL DEBATE

Councillor Ager provided feedback on the recent EALC Climate Change Conference and had emailed the resources pack to members. Items included for discussion were electric dial-a-bus services and a climate change app for children.

Members **AGREED** to explore grants available for improving churchyards with regards to carbon reduction in relation to the closed churchyard and the proposed closed churchyard management plan due.

Members also **RECOMMENDED** that reduction of carbon emissions should be reviewed on Council services and that an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) should be obtained for the Town Hall. Improvements to the Council's fleet should also be explored. It was noted that a review of the Council's fleet is part of the Environment Committee's business plans. Discussions took place regarding the initial cost of electric vehicles, financial benefits, reduction of carbon emissions and the life cycle of the Operations Team's vehicles. It was suggested that the option of a mini-moke style vehicle could also be explored.

Members discussed the Neighbourhood Plan and that climate related sections should be included. It was **AGREED** that the 'Neighbourhood Planning in a climate emergency'¹ document should be explored when considering WTC's Neighbourhood Plan.

It was noted that consultation is currently taking place with Witham Industrial Watch with regards to exploring solar panel options on the industrial estate.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

There being no further business, the panel concluded at 7.15pm.

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Councillor C Jay
Chairman

HA 08.03.2022

¹ Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency to be circulated to Climate Audit Panel members separately.