

Topics: Continuation of Climate Commission Model

Present:

Cornwall Council (CC):

Cllr Martyn Alvey: Portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change

Mark Holmes: Manager: Carbon Neutral Cornwall Team; Environmental Adaptation Service; Nature Recovery Team

Cllr Linda Taylor: Lead for CC (joined for most of the meeting)

Cornwall Climate Action Coalition (CCAC):

Karen Jeffereys

John Carley

Andrew Stott

Tom Pine

i. Welcome by CCAC

1. Progress towards a Climate Commission

Question 1: Could we start with an update on progress towards the Climate Commission set up?

- CC started their update by indicating their wish that someone from the CCAC attended meetings to be organised by PECAN over the shaping the Commission.
- CC confirmed that this did not need to be the same CCAC representative each time. An invitation to the first meeting was about to be sent out by CC.
- Following the first meeting, the commission launch would be placed in the public domain.
- From the CC, Jo Banks and the Carbon Neutral manager Nick Hayden would sit the meetings.
- Mark Holmes' remit had widened to include nature recovery, resilience, and adaptation.
- CC advised that Martin Siegert the vice chancellor at Exeter University was keen to commence his chair role in the Commission. He would be working with both Peter Lefort and Jessie Hampshire whose surname had recently changed.
- With the summer recess coming up in academia, the prospective start to the Commission was likely to be September.

2. CCAC role

Question 2: Could we therefore establish an understanding on what you see as CCAC's role regarding wider communication?

- CC confirmed that CCAC would not be the only communication strategy, but as in the case of the other stakeholders the CC anticipates that their respective networks would be used to publicise the work underway.
- CCAC responded expressing relief in that it did not want to be seen as a tick box as regards disseminating communication.
- CCAC added that the Cornwall Climate Action Network (CCAN) should also be added to the list of stakeholders for communication, since they networked with a range of other groups that the CCAC does not. CC pointed out that to avoid criticism it had held back on communications until the “timelines” were firmly established.
- CC added that there had been a delay because one of the PECAN leads had gone off on long term sick leave and was another staff member who was still finding their feet.
- It will be a further 2-3 weeks and then the move to a Commission will be announced.
- To accompany this and to flesh out the public engagement a slide show has been prepared which majors on the three key pillars of work: Local Area Energy Plan, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and The Climate Adaptation Strategy. Moreover, it details how a commission will feed into that.
- CC added that in relation to communications, twelve Community Area Partnerships (CAPs) are starting in which the wider CC team will engage with those developing approaches on climate and nature resilience. These are to replace Community Network Meetings.
- With a budget behind them, CAPs will be more prescriptive. Notwithstanding that, the chair positions will be down to the individual partnership concerned and not the Council!
- CAP meetings are to be held on Tuesday evenings.

3. Climate groups

Question 3a: Does CC see a benefit in physically reaching out to these groups to seek their participation in creating a plan for their area and in so doing give them the sense of purpose that would maintain their vitality?

- CC said that much of what is suggested in the question is already underway. For example, the Environment Agency funded “Flood Forum” (£25,000) which works with community groups to set up community flood plans and wardens.
- Another example is the ‘**Making Space for Sand Project**’ funded by DEFRA which works through community engagement, also around coastline adaptation.

- The CC also referred to Carbon Neutral Team member Beverley Hill, who engaged with various groups across the county and at shows etc.
- CC indicated that physically reaching out to climate groups was ultimately down to resources. They had created the various tool kits that are available through the hive.
- CC referred to the crowdfunding pot they had created for community groups and local councils for action planning / feasibility (which had received no applicants).
- CC also referred to the City Science contract which in developing the Local Area Energy Plan (LEAP) would be reaching out, particularly to young people.
- CC added that they needed to look through the commission for ways to fund more one-to-one support, maybe by using the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).
- CCAC pointed out that Essex Council were running climate related webinars, albeit orientated towards their EALC members.
- CCAC suggested that the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) members could draw in their local climate action groups to try and build engagement that way on the matter of developing bespoke adaptation strategies for their respective local area.
- CC responded suggesting that common interests find one another, but the focus on CAPs could be a way to progress contact with local climate groups.
- CC added that there was the “Green Shoots” funding stream, and the CC would be looking to mount a bid. It is effectively going to be **‘Making Space for Nature’** version 3 with a focus on urban sites that have low amenity and low green space. It is also a way of bringing communities together (detail is on the Hive).
- CC added, on the back of when CAPs are announced as starting, that the local nature recovery strategy, LAEP and local adaptation strategy will all be codesigned and developed with residents, businesses, and communities. This will run along with CC funded community and T & P council carbon literacy training which it is hoped will bring people together. Of course, the oncoming commission will be working in this space, where because of its ability to attract third party sponsorship and apply for grant funding through crowdfunding, there should be more money to fund bringing people together.

Question 3b: If yes to Question 3a, would CC see the means of reaching out as an early scoping role for the Commission?

- CCAC expressed a reservation that CAPs might, like the community networks, become a forum for dealing with current issues on a reactive basis and not covering strategic matters going forward.
- CC responded saying this was indeed true of the community networks but that the hope for CAPs would be that this would be overcome.
- CCAC wondered if CALC representatives could be approached to flush out the contact details of all the disparate climate action groups across the County so that they could be drawn in for participation.
- CC indicated that only about half of T & P Councils are members of CALC for which membership attracts a cost.

- CCAC mentioned that there was a “Society of Local Clerks” to which virtually all clerks were members and that this could be a way of making the contacts with local climate groups.

4. “People’s Assemblies”

Question 4a: Why was the term “People’s Assembly” held as being unacceptable?

Question 4b: Why was protocol apparently set aside in allowing a councillor's decision to be overridden by an officer?

- CC said that there had been a breakdown in communication. It had become apparent that in fact democratic services oversight always covers any event in the Council Chamber. In this instance democratic services and the Chief Executive cancelled the Assembly event.
- CC continued, indicating that there was also discomfort with the term “Peoples’ Assembly”. This was based on the potential for confusion with a “Citizen’s Assembly” where attendees are selected as distinct from a Peoples’ Assembly where attendees are self-selected.
- To avoid this, the term “Climate Conversation” could be adopted, as it is in the LEAP context. CCAC said that maybe it should be phrased “Climate & Ecological Conversation”.
- CCAC asked whether the next C & E Conversation could follow the next full Council meeting on the 26th of July as this was always a short Council meeting?
- CC responded that it probably would not work as there was the annual cricket match and other distractions that would draw members away (school runs etc.).
- CC added that in the context of managing expectations there was no full Council in August and so the next one would fall on September 19th.
- CC indicated that they would push it, including getting the Chair to promote it during her announcements at the start. However, it was not possible to force members to attend.
- CC confirmed that staff will be made aware should they be interested in attending.
- CCAC said that they would feed this back to Myghal in the wider CCAC.

5. Supplementary Question

Question 5: In relation to a discussion with Tamsyn Widdon regarding the meeting on Monday 22nd May hosted by Ernst & Young, was anyone in accounts going to start looking at funding sources?

- CC indicated that they already do have a low carbon technology investment into renewables; that they were about to build a solar canopy across County Hall plus there was investment in a wind turbine.

- CC added that they had other plans to invest in renewable energies which would be partly commercial projects providing a return to underwrite the wider council budget.
- On actions underway CC referred to Justin Honorsunday (sp) who started in banking before moving onto into education at Cornwall College. More latterly he had been involved in offshore wind with the university and more latterly has gone back into investment banking but as a civil servant employed by the SW hub.
- CC added that he would be talking to the CC pension fund about bringing private investment to environmental projects.
- CCAC mentioned that the pension fund already carried 2 relevant mandates, one on renewable energy and the other on affordable housing
- CC continued by pointing out, that aside from offsetting via carbon credit registered woodland “The Forest for Cornwall” (which will offset far more carbon than the CC emits), they were looking at seagrass. These actions were linked to an evolving carbon market but were proceeding on a cautious path given that public money was involved.
- CC pondered whether it would be worth asking the Council’s pensions investment officer to attend a CCAC / CC exchange to talk to this subject?
- CCAC mentioned government pressure on council pension schemes to invest in levelling up including in the renewable sector and the conflict any actual compulsion would pose with fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of scheme members.