

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Minutes**

**THURSDAY, 16 JULY 2020**

PRESENT: Councillor J Aberley (Chair)

Councillors J Davies, K Flunder, J Aberley, I Herdman, B A Hughes, Mr M Jones, J T Jones, L A Malyon, I Plant, D Price, D Shaw, P Taylor, R Ward, Mr N Williams, Mr G Worth and N Yates

IN ATTENDANCE:

14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Garry Cornell.

15 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

Some attendance details were incorrectly recorded. Mike Jones stated that SMDC agreement was given for £250 funding towards the 'Refill Scheme'. Cllr. Yates confirmed that the transfer of the Council's country parks was 'in the process of being transferred to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust' rather than 'had been transferred.....' as minuted.

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2020 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

*(Proposed by Cllr. Jones and seconded by Cllr. Shaw).*

16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest made.

17 **REMIT/TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE.**

The Chair stated that the break in meetings caused by COVID-19 gave an opportunity to reset how the Sub-Committee operated. The proposal was to break into smaller Working Groups, each one dealing with one of the topics as outlined previously. This would cover all the ground quicker, with each group then feeding into the main meeting. It was felt that the smaller numbers involved in discussions may well lead to better results.

Members felt that this would lead to better scrutiny and would achieve results quicker if set up on a 'Task & Finish' basis. It was important that members should be able to cross over between groups and that officers should assist where necessary. An elected member was to be the spokesperson for each group.

**RESOLVED** – That the proposals outlined above be **AGREED**.

18 **SMDC CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE.**

Cllr. Joe Porter – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity – outlined progress made in the 12 months since SMDC declared a Climate Change emergency. Points made included:-

- SMDC committed to carbon-neutrality by 2030;
- 10 year fleet replacement programme, looking at possible hydrogen powered vehicles;
- Procurement with an increased ‘green’ focus;
- Parks management contract under review, looking to use pollinator plants where possible and encouraging ‘re-wilding’ and wildflower meadows;
- Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan for release in September / October 2020 in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) and working with DEFRA;
- Training sessions provided by Keele University for members and staff;
- All council reports now included an assessment on Climate Change and Biodiversity;
- Management of all 12 Country Parks to be transferred to SWT;
- Meetings with the Midlands Energy Hub so that suitable locations for renewable energy projects could be identified, thus generating income;
- £10,000 per annum Climate Change Community Fund created, principally for school projects. Government grant aid was also available to schools;
- Some Parish / Town Councils visited, more when time / COVID-19 allows;
- Working with ‘Friends of’ groups;
- Engaged with ‘Staffs Climate Matters’ network;
- Visited Lafarge;
- Trying to encourage more cycling by creating more cycle-friendly routes;

The specific amount of carbon emissions saved so far was not available, as it was not possible to separate the inevitable ‘saving’ resulting from the COVID-19 effect.

Members expressed concerns that so little progress had been made since the declaration of a Climate Change emergency in 2019. Mike Jones confirmed that a Green Party response to the recent SMDC report would be issued in the near future.

19 **SMDC PROCUREMENT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT - DISCUSSION.**

Mark Trillo – Executive Director – advised that the Council’s Procurement Strategy (PS) was currently under review. The review was to be completed by the end of 2020 and the overall aim was to secure value for money for the taxpayer. He introduced Elaine Hallworth – Lead Procurement Officer – to detail the strategy.

Elaine confirmed that the review was to shape the PS for the next 3 years and gave the opportunity to build in key actions for sustainable sourcing. The draft PS was to be presented to members in the weeks to come and a discussion paper was available for comment.

It was necessary for the Council to adhere to transparency rules when compiling the PS. Mandatory requirements regarding emissions etc could be incorporated into tender documents. Procurement was now done electronically, drastically cutting

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down on printing, travel etc. The Council had new print rationalisation systems which also significantly reduced paper usage.

Energy contracts were determined as part of a national framework and options were being explored in that area. The Council was actively working with its partners AES and Parkwood to develop a fleet strategy focussing on a longer term vehicle replacement programme. This would ensure that minimum environmental requirements for basic specifications of new vehicles includes the required Euro standards on emissions are met and that opportunities to source alternative fuels should be appraised.

Members raised queries as follows(*Responses in brackets*):-

- Could we use the 'Preston' model in procurement? (*Elements to be built in where appropriate.*)
- Should we not be 'ISO 14001 accredited if we're asking tenderers to be? (*The accreditation requirement was proportionate to the value and nature of the contract. On lower value contracts the selection questionnaire would be tailored to suit and assistance would be given to help in compliance. SMDC were accredited until members decided not to continue with it on a cost basis.*)
- Environmental requirements in tendering were likely to increase the cost. Could we look for 'Value Engineering' as a mechanism to counterbalance the increased cost?
- The Sub-Committee was trying to achieve too much and, as a result, achieving very little. Of the 2 elements – Environment and Climate Change – the Sub-Committee should concentrate on carbon-based energy consumption, with a need to be proactive for substantial savings to be made.

### 20 CLIMATE ACTION GROUP UPDATE.

Mike Jones shared a document onscreen outlining progress made by 'Moorlands Climate Action' (MCA) since January 2020.

Activities listed were under 3 headings – Practical, Organisational and Community.

Cllr. Yates noted that a grant had been awarded to establish a 'Pocket Park' including a wetland area. MCA had agreed to give some voluntary hours to help out in the venture. Final agreement was awaited from SMDC as the landowner. Cllr. Porter agreed to follow this up with the SMDC Assets Team, stating that he was happy to meet up with MCA.

### 21 WORK PROGRAMME.

Given discussions on the earlier agenda item (Remit / Terms of Reference) the Work Programme was deferred for further discussions.

Cllr. Taylor advised that, as £250,000 expenditure had been earmarked for improvements at Brough Park Leisure Centre, such improvements should have regard to the green agenda. Could SMDC apply for 'Green Flag' status, which was a useful kitemark? A strategy would be needed for this.

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The next meeting would be held in August 2020 at a date to be decided.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date