

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

THURSDAY, 30 JANUARY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor J Aberley (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, Cornell, I Herdman, Jones, D Price, P Taylor, Williams, Worth and N Yates

ALSO PRESENT: G Cornell, M Jones, N Williams, G Worth, M Hawkesworth, M Worth, Councillors J Davies, P Elkin, K Flunder, B Johnson, J Porter and S Scalise

IN ATTENDANCE:

Forrester	Head of Democratic & Community Services
P Trafford	Member & Community Services Officer
M Trillo	Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES: Councillors J T Jones and I Plant

9 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

11 PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME

Mark Forrester outlined the intended approach to the Work Programme, identifying 6 main issues as follows:-

1. The Natural Environment;
2. Travel / Transport;
3. Industry & Agriculture;
4. Housing;
5. Energy;
6. The Council.

The aim was to cover all 6 of the above by the end of June 2020, which would inevitably mean some months with 2 meetings. There were likely to be practical difficulties in synchronizing all external consultants to specific dates and so flexibility was essential. With that in mind, the Work Programme enclosed with the agenda was agreed.

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Cllr. Flunder detailed the approach to the same subject from a Staffordshire County Council (SCC) perspective. There were clear parallels in the approach from both authorities. Most Staffordshire authorities were represented at Climate Change meetings at county level. The Chair felt that it would be appropriate to have the SCC update as a standing agenda item for future meetings.

Members suggested various contacts / organisations to be invited to specific meetings. The process of inviting organisations and setting dates was to commence as soon as possible.

12 UPDATE FROM STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SMDC Portfolio Holder for Climate Change – Cllr. Joe Porter – updated members on progress to date, advising that a report was to be published shortly illustrating the current picture. The Council was working towards a ‘Carbon Neutrality Strategy’, which this sub-committee would feed into. A strong partnership had been forged with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) who had a Green Infrastructure Strategy. Stewardship of the Council’s 12 Country Parks had been transferred to SWT.

Professor Zoe Robinson NTF PFHEA, of Keele University, had presented 2 lectures on 16 December 2019, to which all interested parties had been invited. She was to present further lectures on 25 February 2020 for anyone who missed out, with SMDC staff also to be invited. Zoe was happy to help with her expertise as and when required.

Cllr. Porter was conducting a tour of Town & Parish Councils (so far Cheddleton, Brown Edge & Leek, with Biddulph & Cheadle arranged during February). He was happy to visit any others as requested.

The current focus within SMDC was in the Assets department, looking at the vehicle fleet and the Procurement Strategy.

Imminent meetings were to take place with Lafarge (air quality) and the Midlands Energy Hub (sustainable energy).

An Officers Team had been set up and was looking to secure better data on emissions. A Climate Change Fund was a ‘work in progress’.

13 UPDATE FROM CLIMATE ACTION GROUP

Mike Jones (MJ) – Climate Action Group (CAG) Representative – identified that, with various organisations approaching the same topic, there were inevitable duplications and suggested that a ‘Blog’ be set up with updates then available for all to see. CAG had established 6 working groups, each of which met on a monthly basis. They were looking to obtain funding from ‘Community Organisers’ of up to £5,000. It was felt that there was a need to clarify exactly what was (and wasn’t) recyclable for better public knowledge. There was to be a ‘HUG’ event held at the Foxlowe during the summer. Mike wondered whether SMDC were able to help with funding for the ‘Water Refill Scheme’, which started on 22 February 2020.

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SMDC Executive Director Mark Trillo confirmed that, in conjunction with Alliance Environmental Services, campaigns were imminent to educate and inform the public on recycling practice. Enquiries were welcomed regarding the Water Refill Scheme and he thanked members for their suggestions regarding procurement.

It was generally agreed that good communications were key to making progress, with social media proving to be very useful elsewhere.

George Worth asked whether it would be possible to install recycling bins in schools. Cllr. Sav Scalise – Portfolio Holder for the Environment – confirmed that previous problems with contamination had led to some recycling bins having to be removed. However, a change to the current recycling collection system was imminent to ‘co-mingle’ paper in with the recycling bins, leading to less journeys for the refuse wagons and saving fuel. The amount of paper collected had reduced from 8,000 tons p.a. to 800. Trials were ongoing at some councils to introduce electric vehicles onto the fleet but this was some way off due to cost and the necessary charging infrastructure. With regard to single-use plastics, alternatives were available. There was a need to push central government into a deadline to ban its use.

MJ asked, with regard to the 5 pledges made by SMDC in July 2019 as part of its declaration of Climate Emergency, whether any progress had been made on 2 specific ones:-

- Call on The Government to provide guidance, powers and resources to make carbon neutrality possible by writing to local MPs and all relevant government departments; and
- Ensure that all Council Bodies and Scrutiny Panels consider the impact of climate change and the environment when making decisions and reviewing Council policies and strategies.

Mark Forrester – SMDC Democratic & Community Services Manager – confirmed that a start had been made on the 1st pledge shown above, with detail to be contained in the Climate Change report shortly to be issued. With regard to the 2nd pledge, there was a ‘Sustainability’ section inbuilt to every SMDC report, with a pro-forma drawn together to guide the officer writing the report. Professor Zoe Robinson had agreed to give training to managers on how to assess the sustainability implications when preparing reports.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date