

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Questions to Portfolio Holders

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel Monday, 5 October 2020

1. Questions received from Councillor Salt:

“Between instigating the climate emergency and today – please inform the council by how much SMDC’s actions have reduced carbon emissions? When presenting the data, could you explicitly demonstrate what has been Covid’s impact and what has been down to our own efforts?”

Response:

The stated intention of the Council is to produce a comprehensive climate change plan effective from the year 2021/22. This year the Council set out key enabling actions which taken together with the work of the Climate Change Subgroup will inform that Climate Change Plan. This year’s activity was set out in the form of an information digest. Data collection and analysis is one of this year’s key activities. This activity is ongoing with the aim of ensuring data used to underpin the Council’s targets is as comprehensive as possible and consistent to ensure we can compare like with like. The Council has engaged the Energy Saving Trust to assist with data analysis and options for consideration. Some key illustrative data is below:

2019 Data: Indication of CO2 emissions for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council - CO2 emissions from fleet vehicles (Waste, Street Scene, Parks), staff business mileage.

- Fleet: 636 metric tonnes of CO2
- Business Travel: 63.75 metric tonnes (shared with HPBC) = 31.875 metric tonnes for SMDC
- Property: Gas and electricity (Leisure Centres not included and Moorlands House not apportioned to using organisations) = 421 metric tonnes
- **Total 1,089 metric tonnes of CO2**

Note:

- Alliance CO2 from business travel has been reducing year on year - from 110.34 metric tonnes in 2013 to 63.75 metric tonnes in 2019. Mileage has reduced in that period from 459,407 miles in 2013 to 284,985 miles in 2019.
- **Covid-19** Comparing Alliance business miles/CO2 for the 5 month period April to August 2020 with the same period in 2019 – 27 metric tonnes of CO2 (2019), 9.1 metric tonnes CO2 (2020).

- Further work is required on the data (to check data is fully inclusive, takes account of recording systems which have changed over time to make sure year on year comparisons are robust and to provide a detailed breakdown by area of operation). The data for the Council's CO2 emissions will be ready in December 2020 in time to inform targets for the 2021/22 plan.

2. *“When will Biddulph TC receive its funding for the Covid grant application that it made months ago?”*

Response:

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.

3. *“When will SMDC complete its tree planting strategy so that Town and Parish councils can get on with the task of planting trees in their areas on SMDC owned land (where appropriate)?”*

Response:

SMDC formally adopted its Tree Strategy in 2016. The main document notes the context of the Council's tree-related policies and objectives, with links to the corporate plan aims, and sets out our policies in areas such as tree protection, tree management and planting. This is supported by appendices comprising a set of more technical Good Practice Guides covering:

1. Tree Work
2. Tree Management
3. Trees and Development
4. Tree Risk Management

Several factors now suggest a review/update of the Tree Strategy would be appropriate - it's coming up to 5 years since the Tree Strategy was first adopted, a climate emergency has been declared by the Council, there is a new Corporate Plan and the Local Plan has been adopted.

A key strategy to consider in the context of the question is the Green Infrastructure Strategy which is part of the Local Plan. To ensure the delivery of that strategy the Council has commissioned Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to work with us to develop the delivery plan (the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan). Development this year has involved comprehensive mapping and assessment of current habitats and species and opportunities to join up and extend otherwise isolated pockets. Development has reached the stage of identifying projects (in 3 categories) – large scale strategic projects, bringing forward development sites, and community projects.

The Delivery Plan provides detailed mapping and an evidence base which supports the development of nature recovery networks and corridors and in turn can inform decision making about what species of plants and what kinds of habitats it would be best to create, enhance or safeguard in particular locations. With this in mind and

under the heading of community projects, the expectation is that over the next two months the team leading the Delivery Plan development will start to engage with Parish and Town Councils and Community Groups in relation to specific sites and local opportunities that they identify.

In parallel with the work to develop the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan Staffordshire wildlife Trust have agreed to assist the Council's team responsible for parks and open spaces to develop Council policy with regard to the maintenance of council land so as to increase opportunities for wildlife. This will form a revised Parks Management Strategy and be linked to the revision of the Tree Planting Strategy.

The Green Infrastructure delivery plan provides an evidence-based context within which we can make a site specific decision about what should be planted - it will not necessarily be trees. We will want to plant as many trees as possible on our land where that is the right thing to do – the 'right thing' in terms of enhancing wildlife (informed by the plan), balanced with the needs of the particular amenity we are planting on, impact on neighbours, community safety considerations and cost of maintenance etc.

4. Received from Councillor Swindlehurst:

“What is the present role of community and voluntary groups in maintaining public assets such as benches, planted areas and bus shelters?”

Response:

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.

5. Received from Councillor Hoptroff:

“What progress has the Leader made in her bid to improve rural bus services as she promised to full council on the 19th October 2019?”

Response:

A verbal response will be provided at the meeting.