

Appendix A: Recommendations from the Working Groups

A) Natural Environment

1) In order to increase tree canopy covering urban areas ,all new housing developments in the Moorlands should have a significant tree canopy cover. The Council should commit to stating that a maximum of trees should be planted for for every new house constructed, say five or six trees

This should be achieved through a Supplementary Planning Document.

In order to protect existing trees in urban settings, the Council should replace every tree removed by the planting of three new trees..

This proposal was intended to be in Part One of our climate change strategy and was approved by both the Natural Environment and Housing sub.groups.

I was asked to submit this in writing to the full Climate Change group for a vote. .

However, the proposal was never voted on and in effect it was blocked.

It could still be introduced retrospectively into Part one or reconsidered for inclusion into Part Two

2) Staffordshire Moorlands Council should delegate money to town and parish councils to produce their own mini climate action plans, eg tree planting, wild flower meadows and rewilding This would increase awareness of climate change and encourage a sense of ownership of local schemes.

It would be unfair to expect councils with very low financial resources to deliver climate change objectives without support from SMDC. This proposal would lead to significant

Carbon capture across the whole of the Moorlands and sums delegated would be clearly earmarked for climate change.

This is a Part Two proposal

3). SMDC should take the opportunity to plant trees on all council owned propert where this is feasible.This proposal would not in itself lead to significant carbon capture, but it would be relatively inexpensive and more importantly it would demonstrate to our partners that we are totally committed to combatting Climate Change.

This should be included in Part one Scheme.

4). Where utility companies do remove trees to enable them to carry out maintenance work, the Council should have a policy of asking these companies to replace these trees at their own cost. This may be legally unenforceable, but we could stress that it would be seen as an act of goodwill on the part of the utilities.

B) Housing Subgroup

1) Existing Homes

As the insulation of existing homes was considered crucial to meet our climate objectives, the initial discussions focussed on promotion of the Green Homes Grant. However, this Government scheme was ultimately axed in March 2021 after just 6 months of operation. As the Green Homes Grant was withdrawn during the time that the Housing Sub Group was meeting the group regretted the ending of the initiative, but as it had been poorly conceived and poorly managed it seemed inevitable.

Addressing the poor insulation and inefficient heating systems of the large, old and draughty housing of the Moorlands is a massively expensive undertaking, well beyond the resources of SMDC alone as such the group agreed that the Council should use its influence in a variety of ways to strongly promote any successor schemes to the GHG that encourage the insulation of existing homes across the District as well as the installation of other green energy solutions.

2) New Homes

The group discussed at length the potential for the Council to develop it's own Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and examined excellent examples of these from other places, notably the one from Guildford which can be downloaded here:

https://www.guildford.gov.uk/media/32748/Climate-Change-Sustainable-Design-Construction-and-Energy-SPD/pdf/Climate_Change__Sustainable_Design__Construction_and_Energy_SPD1.pdf?m=637370643994400000

It should be noted that since the Housing Group stopped meeting, our neighbouring authority, the similarly second-tier, District Council in the Derbyshire Dales has adopted their own Climate Change SPD which can be viewed here.

https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/images/documents/C/Climate_Change_SPD_July_2021_-_final.pdf

This is clearly an action that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council can as the Local Planning Authority undertake on its own and is one that will shape all future development in the Moorlands, including all new housing.

The argument is essentially that climate-focussed improvements to national policy, in the form of the NPPF and Building Regulations, whilst welcomed does not preclude the development of our own locally-focussed planning guidance designed to help attain our own very ambitious target of 2030, which is significantly more imminent than that of the UK Government.

As a result of all of this it was unanimously agreed that the Council should proceed to produce our own locally focussed Climate Change and Sustainable Design SPD to shape all future development and ensure that it meets our climate objectives.