

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, G Bentley, G Heath, I Herdman, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, B Johnson, J T Jones, T Riley, P Roberts, P Taylor, R Ward and N Yates.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C J S Atkins, M Bowen, B Cawley, M Deaville, M Gledhill, A Hart, L Page, J Porter, D Price, J Salt, S Scalise and P Wilkinson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors K Martin and L Swindlehurst.

66 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY.**

Councillor Wilkinson was substitute member for Councillor Martin and Councillor Cawley substituted for Councillor Swindlehurst.

67 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS, IF ANY (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN)**

There were no urgent items of business.

68 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda Item 9 – Draft Climate Change Part 2 Plan	Cllr P. Roberts	Other – Co-owner of a heating and plumbing business which installed gas and other types of heating systems.

69 **SMDC DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE PART 2 PLAN**

Councillor Porter – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, introduced a report which presented the Council’s approach to tackling the climate change emergency.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council recognised the global climate emergency and was committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 15 November 2021

The District Council could not solve the problem on its own, but could take a lead role in the district and use its powers and influence to support wider local action to reduce emissions and prepare for a changing climate.

The national Climate Change Committee estimated that local authorities had powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas and are believed to be responsible for between 2 and 5% of local emissions. The Committee recognised that more than half of the cut in emissions required to meet national reduction targets rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions.

When developing its plan for reducing district-wide emissions, the Council drew upon three main sources of information: Information gathered by Working Groups, Data Analysis and a Climate Change Attitude Survey.

The plan, which can be found at Appendix D of the report, was intended to provide a clear vision and strategy for achieving net zero emissions from the district by 2030.

Councillor Aberley – Chair of the Climate Change Working Group, gave thanks to all of those involved with the various sub-group meetings and it was still possible for comments to be submitted by the Chairs of these groups.

Cllr Yates – Vice Chair of the Climate Change Working Group, also commented on the high quality of presentations received by the groups, the positive nature of the meetings and the importance of working together. In future, when specific climate change projects were scoped, he requested that a more inclusive approach was taken.

Other members commented that it had been a long journey to arrive at this point, with frustrations along the way. However, they were delighted that the Council could now move forward with a plan based on sound research.

The following comments and suggestions were made by members:-

- For further face-to-face consultation to take place.
- Timescales to be reviewed and the plan to be monitored.
- In relation to the target around fuel poverty, further action was needed for vulnerable private sector tenants.
- The EPC ratings could be more ambitious.
- The reference to the re-opening of the Local Plan was welcomed and it was important for supplementary planning documents to be produced. However, it was felt that work should commence on this earlier than 2025. Development of zero carbon buildings would only happen if robust policies were in place.
- There was a laudable commitment to fuel poverty. However, the Warmer Home Scheme had provided subsidised installation of gas boilers which shouldn't be encouraged.
- A query as to the reason 'Eat Well' was included in the documents as it had no relevance to carbon reduction.
- An opinion that The Green Homes grant was a failure, as only 15,000 properties had received a grant and the scheme hadn't been replaced with an alternative grant fund.
- In relation to the reduction of emissions from Council owned vehicles and activities, apparently, the white lines hadn't been painted by a local company

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 15 November 2021

on a car park in Cheadle. It was also queried as to whether during the works, if the infrastructure for EV charging points had been installed.

- The Werrington Community Orchard was well received by the community and an update on the tree planting in Cheadle was requested.
- Although LED lighting had been introduced in the leisure centres, there was disappointment that the installation hadn't progressed in other Council owned buildings.
- High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council seemed more advanced with the installation of EV charging points. Limited places to charge electric vehicles deterred visitors to the Moorlands and this needed to be pursued more urgently.
- The Council should concentrate on areas it could control and strongly influence e.g. retro-fitting housing, fuel poverty and excessive winter deaths.
- There was an omission of involvement with Your Housing Group in the document.
- More detail was required on how zero vehicle emissions would be achieved by 2030
- A gap in partnership working with the Peak Park and sustainable travel was identified.
- The use of solid fuel to heat homes in the Moorlands was a major issue for the Council to focus on as heat pumps were not a feasible alternative, particularly for old rural properties.
- To ensure any County Council funding was received by the north of the County.
- The target for the recycling of waste should be more ambitious.
- The reason for the Bottle Refill Scheme not being supported was queried.
- It was felt that the policy to charge residents for replacement brown bins was counter-intuitive. An example of a resident who had been charged for the provision of a brown bin after they had moved into a property without one was described to the Panel.
- An over-arching assembly for Town and Parish Councils was requested.
- The key to the success of the strategy was for SMDC to work with community groups such as Moorlands Climate Action.
- As 87% of the people surveyed were concerned about climate change, this gave a mandate for the Council to move faster with its plans to tackle climate change.
- Waste recycling centres should have the ability recycle items and sell items to the public.
- Buses travelled through the villages to Alton Towers and only transported employees. This was an opportunity for the vacant seats to be taken up by members of the public.

Councillor Porter agreed with the importance of public consultation, had visited many community groups, parish and town councils and would continue to do so. The higher than average levels of fuel poverty in the area was also a concern to him and he mentioned the need for more power and resources from the Government to deal with the retro-fitting of homes.

The Panel was advised that the tree planting sites in Cheadle would commence soon and a comprehensive review of LED lighting in Council owned properties was currently being undertaken. The Council had a local first policy in relation to procurement and where possible, would procure services locally.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 15 November 2021

This year, young people and schools had been prioritised to receive the community climate change grant funding. Other projects could be considered in the future. The projects which had been supported and amounts spent would be supplied after the meeting.

Councillor Hart represented SMDC at the Peak District National Park and worked closely with the Authority. He would continue to work on sustainable travel opportunities. The Council worked in partnership with the Air Aware initiative, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and attended the Joint Waste Board.

Councillor Porter would look into the matter of the painting of the white lines at the car park in Cheadle and the charge for brown bins would also be investigated by Councillor Scalise – Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

In response to the query around EV charging points, Councillor Hart – Portfolio Holder for Assets, explained that the technology installed at sites in the High Peak wasn't the correct solution for the Moorlands. He highlighted the importance of the system being easily maintained, future-proofed and the best value for money for residents and visitors.

David Smith – Head of Communities and Climate Change, informed members that a report was being produced on the ways that local authorities could support the delivery of EV charging points by the end of this calendar year. It was understood that this will indicate that County Councils should take the strategic lead on delivery and that district councils could play an important role in supporting them. AMEY had been commissioned to map hot spots and greatest usage of the electric vehicles. This scope would potentially exclude large parts of the Moorlands so AMEY had been requested to look specifically at our area and the proposals would be considered by this Panel

The Panel would receive 6 monthly updates on the Plan and specific aspects would be considered in due course.

Overall, members considered it to be a comprehensive report which was a living document and could be strengthened. Economic opportunities should be embraced, actions were now key and it was important they were progressed as quickly as possible. It was vital for the public to be assured that the Council was taking the climate emergency seriously.

Cllr Porter thanked members and made notes of the feedback provided during the meeting.

DECIDED:

- 1) That the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel recommend that the Cabinet approve the Climate Change Strategy 2021 – 2030;
- 2) For the Panel to receive an annual Climate Change Strategy report and 6 monthly update report.

70 SCRUTINY REVIEW - DISCUSSION ITEM

Mark Trillo – Executive Director (People), introduced a report which contained the feedback provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) following completion of their recent review of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 15 November 2021

CfGS were commissioned to conduct a 'step back' review of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny arrangements. The review was conducted earlier this year and the conclusions were reported back to the Council in April. Their report was attached at Appendix A.

An all member workshop was held in September to enable CfGS to share their findings and to provide an opportunity for councillors to give some initial feedback. The notes from the discussions at the workshop were attached at Appendix B. It was suggested and agreed at the workshop that each of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panels should be given the opportunity to discuss the findings further and consider how the Council should take the recommendations forward.

CfGS made 12 recommendations for improvement. In order to assist members of the Panel with their considerations attached at Appendix C was a summary of CfGS's recommendations within a suggested response.

Following the consideration of this report by all of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panels a final report would be prepared for consideration by a meeting of the Full Council.

DECIDED: The Panel considered the:

- feedback from CfGS as detailed in Appendix A of the report; and
- suggested response to the recommendations set out in Appendix C.

71 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY.**

There were no questions.

72 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Due to a number complaints, particularly around communication with Your Housing Group (YHG), a request was made for the YHG report to be received by the Panel well in advance of the meeting in January.

DECIDED: That the Work Programme for 2021-22 be agreed.

73 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

DECIDED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 6th September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

74 **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL.**

DECIDED: That the report of the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel be noted.

75 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

"That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 15 November 2021

in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 10 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

76 **EXEMPT URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS.**

Members discussed CCTV in Cheadle.

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm

_____Chairman_____Date