

PUBLIC

**MINUTES** of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION** held on Monday, 22 May 2023 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock.

**PRESENT**

Councillor W Major (in the Chair)

Councillors S Bull, A Clarke, M Ford, A Hayes, T Kemp, G Kinsella and D Taylor.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor R Redfern and B Bingham.

**8/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**9/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** to confirm the non-exempt minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Scrutiny – Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction Committee held on 13 February 2023.

**10/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**11/23 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL'S NATURE RECOVERY - DERBYSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST**

Scott Blance and Ben Carter from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust attended the meeting to inform the Committee on the work that was being undertaken by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) to embed a natural capital approach and payment for ecosystem services in Derbyshire.

The Committee received an update on three areas of work:

- Project delivery: work DWT were currently implementing on the ground that deliver multiple benefits for people and wildlife;
- Contributing to the Evidence Base: partnering with local universities to produce relevant information for decision makers, whilst upskilling the student and research communities of Derbyshire; and
- Collaboration with the Financial Sector: working with financial experts to build pioneering commercial models around conservation.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Scott Blance and Ben Carter for their very informative presentation and suggested that the Members would like to see at first hand one of the projects they were currently working on.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee:

- a) Notes the work of the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in enhancing natural capital and welcomes their continued and close involvement in developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; and
- b) Recommends the Council use the Natural Capital Strategy as the basis to develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan for Derbyshire.

### 12/23 **IDENTIFYING THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN NATURE RECOVERY**

The Committee was informed of the nature recovery implications for the Council arising from the Environment Act 2021 and the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.

The Environment Act 2021 had included a suite of interrelated measures which underpinned the objectives of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. These were also of relevance to and complemented the Council's intentions to ensure nature recovery across Derbyshire. They were summarised as the following five statutory drivers for change:

- New legally binding national targets to protect the environment.
- An amended and strengthened general duty for Councils (and other public bodies) to see to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- A Local Nature Recovery Strategy for each area.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as a mandatory requirement for planning permission.
- Biodiversity Net Gain offsetting.

The Committee was provided with further details on each of these drivers.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the nature recovery implications for the Council arising from the Environment Act 2021 and Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 as detailed in the report.

### 13/23 **SINGLE USE PLASTIC POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Committee was presented with an update on the implementation of the Council's Single Use Plastic (SUP) Policy and Action Plan.

Following the approval of the SUP Policy in October 2021, an Action Plan to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the Policy was developed. A

summary of progress made to date to deliver the SUP Policy and Action Plan was presented.

Caroline Toplis informed the committee that the Climate Change Team had been working with Facilities Management to map the Council's corporate waste contracts and processes, and to form recommendations for improvements. Work was also being carried out to enable consistency in the provision of bins and signage across the corporate estate. The first stage was an audit of waste facilities that had been carried out at County Hall in January 2023.

In January 2022, the Council had engaged with Surfers Against Sewage to understand the criteria that must be met to become an accredited Plastic Free County Council. The main criteria to be met was for at least 70% of the County's Parish and Town Councils to have signed up to the commitment and become accredited in their own right. This was a challenging target which would require a significant amount of promotion and co-ordination by the Council and so was not currently being pursued, but would be reassessed on a regular basis.

The Chairman welcomed this report and praised the progress that was being made.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the update provided on the implementation of the Council's Single Use Plastic Policy and Action Plan.

14/23

**DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICATION OF THE SPATIAL RENEWABLE ENERGY STUDY, CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT AND AN ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT TOOL, PROGRESS UPDATE**

Steve Buffery and Richard Sandbach attended the meeting to inform the Committee of the progress in the collaborative working relating to the Derbyshire Renewable Energy Spatial Study, Climate Change Planning Guidance and associated assessment tool (metric).

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) were bound by the requirement in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Planning Act 2008, for development plan documents to include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the LPA's area had contributed to the migration of, and adaption to, climate change.

The Planning Guidance had been drafted by the officer working group and had addressed current Derbyshire local plan climate change-related policies and considered good practice from across the UK. To support the Guidance, an innovative climate change metric had been produced which at planning application stage, quantified the degree to which a development

contributed to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience. Both the Guidance and metric were now being used in the revision and drafting of new local plans and in the development management process across the County. The Guidance and metric had also been taken up by authorities outside of Derbyshire, including Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee acknowledges the progress in the collaborative working, relating to the Derbyshire Renewable Energy Spatial Study, and the Climate Change Planning Guidance and associated assessment tool, as summarised in the report.

#### **15/23 CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE REPORTING - 2022-2023 Q4**

Caroline Toplis, Programme Manager – Climate Change presented the Climate Change Programme Dashboard 2022-2023 for Quarter 4. The Dashboard had been developed to provide details on performance against delivery of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy: Achieving Net Zero (2021-2025).

The report was accompanied by a presentation that highlighted the key points including:

- 17 priority actions (53%) had been allocated a Good rating
- 15 priority actions (47%) had been allocated a Review rating
- No priority actions had been allocated an Action rating

The Committee was informed that steps were being taken to bring the 15 Review rated actions back on track, particularly those that had the potentially biggest negative impact on achieving net zero targets if not achieved.

The main focus areas were:

- Council Estate and operations
- Low Carbon Economy
- Decarbonising the domestic sector
- Transport, travel and infrastructure
- Waste

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the content of the Climate Change Programme Dashboard detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

#### **16/23 WORK PROGRAMME (VERBAL REPORT)**

Members were invited to suggest possible items for consideration for the work programme for 2023-24.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the 2023-24 work programme.