

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION** held on Monday, 18 September 2023 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor W Major (in the Chair)

Councillors B Bingham, J Bryan, D Collins, A Hayes, G Hickton, D Taylor and A Gibson.

Also in attendance was Councillor B Lewis.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor S Bull and M Ford.

23/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24/23 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 03 July 2023.

25/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Question received from Councillor Gez Kinsella:

At the last full council meeting in February a question was asked by Anne Thoday about the limited decline in projected emissions from DCC's core and grey fleet over the next 10 years.

On the issue of the core fleet Anne asked, how long it would take to convert all the council's vehicles to ZEVs. No specific answer was provided by Cllr Lewis. The counties core fleet stands at 550 vehicles, and I understand five vehicles were replaced by ZEVs in 2022 with plans to replace another four this year.

On the matter of the grey fleet Anne also asked about the plan for reducing the carbon emissions from the council's grey fleet; Cllr Lewis responded saying DCC are 'working with industry experts across local government and academia'.

When will you publish a clear plan, including a projected target date to replace all core business fleet to ZEVs? Secondly, is there a plan and targets in place for the reduction of carbon emissions from grey fleet and can these be shared? Will employees be consult on this plan, as they can offer expertise on effective business practice change to reduce grey fleet mileage?

Response provided:

The Derbyshire County Council core fleet (excluding non-core school minibuses and plant) at the end of September 2023 will be 398 vehicles in total, this is following current disposals of non-CAZ compliant vehicles and the delivery of 10 new gritters and 5 new EV vans.

The table below shows the number of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) and Full Electric vehicles per vehicle type.

Vehicle Type	Internal Combustion Engine (ICE)	Full Electric
Car	7	8
Car MPV	5	0
4x4	55	0
Light Commercial Vehicle (vans)	227	5
Minibus	16	0
HGV	75	0
Total	385	13

A core fleet replacement programme for vans to transition from diesel to electric is in place. The implementation of this programme and the target for replacing 20 vehicles per year will be achieved once the necessary EV charging infrastructure is in place, which will include additional charge points installed at County Hall and new charge points installed at all Council depots where scheduled replacement vehicles are sited. The Sustainable Travel Team is developing the strategy for a comprehensive charging network across the Council’s estate, which includes undertaking the necessary feasibility assessments and charging technology option appraisals.

A new policy is being considered to support the transition of 60% of Council diesel vans to electric that are based at employees’ homes. Solutions for either providing charge points at home for these employees or changing the way services are provided so that electric replacement vans can be charged efficiently at other charging locations are being investigated, with preliminary discussions between Fleet, relevant Services and HR having already commenced.

In addition to vans, the Council currently has 75 HGVs within its fleet. Most of these vehicles are now Clean Air Zone (CAZ) compliant and the remainder will be CAZ compliant by April 2024 or will be on order and awaiting delivery. There will be four remaining library HGVs where discussions are ongoing to replace these with smaller, more effective electric library vans.

The aim is the full transition of core fleet to zero emission vehicles by the Council's net zero target date of 2032, or sooner, although is subject to the following being achieved:

- The availability of an extensive EV charging infrastructure at home addresses, roadside and depots which includes direct fast charging for larger HGV vehicles.
- Advance in HGV technology and hydrogen readily available at depots or fuel stations.
- Departmental Services being able to change Service Delivery Models to allow for the reduction in load carrying capacity of light and heavy commercial vehicles and the reduction of available miles per day achievable due to time loss for recharging of EV vehicles.

With regards to grey fleet emissions, the report titled 'Reducing the Environmental Impact of Business Travel' presented at today's meeting outlines the current strategies and ongoing initiatives aimed at reducing these emissions. In addition to today's presentation, the Sustainable Travel team will be presenting a comprehensive forward plan for reducing grey fleet emissions at the next meeting of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction on 4 December 2023.

Targets for grey fleet emissions are developed annually for each Department, with each Departmental Management Team tasked with incorporating these targets into Departmental and Divisional Service Plans and each taking responsibility for achieving the targets. A revised set of targets are currently under development for implementation in 2024-25. These targets will be included in the Council's annual report of progress against delivery of its climate change targets and ambitions, which is due to be presented to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction on 4 December 2023.

The Council has consistently maintained a commitment to fostering employee engagement on climate change and wider environmental matters, including hosting regular events to gain valuable insights and ideas from the workforce. Most recently, a Journey to Net Zero employee engagement event was held at County Hall in June 2023, which sought to promote awareness regarding sustainable travel options and highlight the associated benefits. The Council will continue to engage proactively with

employees through events such as these, through the monthly Journey to Net Zero edition of Our Derbyshire, and through climate change training and engagement activities led by the Climate Change Team.

2. Question received from Councillor Gez Kinsella:

The installation of solar panels is a simple and relatively cheap way of reducing emissions. Renewable energy sources, such as solar provides cheap energy and maximise energy security. Given the administration have been in power for over two years, why are solar panels not being installed as a matter of course for new schools or where schools are being extended?

Response provided:

The identification and implementation of opportunities to install solar panels on the Council's maintained schools is ongoing. One recently completed new school (Harrington) has roof mounted solar panels installed and has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B and has scope for further provision of solar panels to achieve an A rating, subject to Department for Education (DfE) funding. Another recently completed new school (Breadsall Primary) has had the maximum number of solar panels possible for its roof space installed.

Design standards developed by Corporate Property recommend that any new build over 1,000m² has the maximum number of solar panels feasible for its roof space installed, with design standards also developed for smaller builds and refurbishment projects. These proposed design standards were presented to the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction on 13 February 2023. Subject to agreement by the Corporate Property Senior Management Team during Q2 2023-24, the standards are ready for formal implementation on all projects.

In addition to the funding received by the Council from the DfE for implementing carbon reduction measures at schools, approval was given at the Full Council meeting held on 15 February 2023 for the allocation of £4m of capital funding to support carbon reduction projects in maintained Derbyshire schools. Children's Services are in the process of identifying which schools should be prioritised for investment in carbon reduction measures, which includes solar panel installation.

3. Question received from Councillor Gez Kinsella:

An update on DCC's climate change performance has not been published since 2022/23 quarter 4 data was shared with this Committee in May.

When will 2023/24 quarter 1 & 2 performance information be shared?

Response provided:

The Improvement and Scrutiny Committee for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction has taken the decision that the quarterly Climate Change Performance Dashboard will no longer be a standing agenda item at Committee meetings to allow more time for consideration and scrutiny of live and planned projects and initiatives.

The Climate Change Performance Dashboard for Q1 2023-24 (April – June 2023) was presented to and endorsed by the Council's Climate Change and Environment Programme Board, which is chaired by the Executive Director for Place, on 17 July 2023 and is readily available to the Committee if requested.

The Climate Change Performance Dashboard for Q2 2023-24 (July – September 2023) will be developed in October 2023 and made available to the Committee if requested.

4. Question received from Lisa Hopkinson (Transition Chesterfield):

The report on Decarbonising Derbyshire's Housing (item 7) suggests that not only are 98% of homeowners interested in energy efficiency measures, but that there is an acute skill shortage in the retrofit sector. What measures has the Council taken to work in partnership with FE colleges in Derby and Derbyshire to ensure that future construction workers are being trained in the necessary skills and will the council consider setting up a Net Zero Training Hub similar to Portsmouth City Council and their local College? And given that the retrofit sector is 'under high demand from work generated by social housing retrofitting programmes' what measures are being developed to ensure that any learning from social housing retrofits is being captured and transferred more widely to the sector?

Response provided:

Derbyshire County Council recognises the acute skill shortage in the retrofit sector and over the last few years has been working with partners on practical solutions to educate, improve awareness, train, upskill and reskill the county's workforce to support the alleviation of this shortage. This recognition is based on the scale of the housing sector retrofitting required to deliver the net zero commitments of the Council and central Government.

As part of the overall growing green skills sector, the Council is developing a more comprehensive understanding of the green skills, jobs and vacancies being created across the Derbyshire so that skill gaps and challenges, such as for domestic retrofitting, can be fully understood. This

will enable the Council to work effectively in partnership with others to maximise the skills and employment opportunities for Derbyshire residents.

The Council is taking active steps as a supporting partner to tackle the skills shortage in this area in a number of ways, with examples being:

Working in partnership with FE Colleges across Derbyshire

The Council has excellent working relationships with the four Further Education (FE) colleges in Derbyshire. These colleges are spread geographically across the county, which would pose logistical and delivery challenges for developing just one hub. One of the areas where the Council is a key partner is the Construction Skills Hub being delivered by Chesterfield Borough Council as part of the Staveley Town Deal where an on-site construction training facility will serve to develop a pipeline of skilled construction workers through training provided by Chesterfield College and Derby University.

The Council also promotes the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) Home Decarbonisation Skills Training scheme. This scheme provides grant funding to registered retrofit training providers, including FE colleges, to deliver accredited training at scale to support the whole retrofit sector.

Social Housing retrofit partnership with Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH)

Supported by the Council and the district and borough councils, MNZH are managing local skills training competitions on behalf of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, providing opportunities for upskilling the local retrofit workforce across a range of areas that include:

- Heat Training Grants: Heat Pumps – this offers grants that will support trainees to undertake heat pump installation and maintenance training.
- Heat Training Grants: Heat Networks – this funds the delivery of training to upskill heating engineers to install and maintain heat networks.
- Green Home Grant Skill Training – this scheme (now closed) funded 18 training providers to deliver courses on installing individual energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures.

Social Housing retrofit partnership with the Local Authority Energy Partnership (LAEP)

The Local Authority Energy Partnership (LAEP) offers a forum (funded by subscription and hosted by the Council) for all councils across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to collaborate on alleviating fuel poverty, reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable

energy generation. The LAEP plays an important role in supporting the capture, collation and transfer of knowledge, experience and learnings from the Green Homes Grant Scheme, Local Authority Delivery Scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund that are delivered by district and borough councils. This includes monthly meetings, webinars, and bespoke training sessions from subject matter experts.

Partnership working between Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) and the national Retrofit Academy also facilitates learning and sharing good practice through activities such as online sessions and learning courses for different aspects of housing retrofit management and delivery. Training through this mechanism has been delivered to district and borough council employees directly involved in housing retrofit programmes across D2N2.

26/23 CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIO UPDATE

Councillor Barry Lewis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Leadership, Culture, Tourism and Climate Change, gave a verbal presentation, providing an update to the Committee on the climate change work of the Portfolio Holder.

Building on the launch of the Derbyshire Climate and Carbon Reduction Manifesto in 2019, and the establishment of the Council's net zero target of 2032, or sooner, the Derbyshire County Council Climate Change Strategy: Achieving Net Zero (2021-2025) was developed and subsequently approved for adoption by Cabinet on 14 October 2021. The Strategy was now almost two years into its implementation and the majority of the actions and targets within the Strategy were on track to be achieved, with some already exceeded.

The Council's emissions had fallen by 64.2% between the baseline year of 2009-10 and 2021-22. This included a 43% reduction in emissions from Corporate Property since 2009-10 and an 83% reduction in emissions from streetlighting.

To ensure further emission reductions the Council remained on track to achieve net zero by 2032, or sooner, Corporate Property had been developing a decarbonisation plan for the Council's corporate estate. The Sustainable Procurement Policy was approved by Cabinet in July 2022 and was being applied on contracts. The Council had also produced a policy to reduce the amount of Single Use Plastics it uses in its buildings and the services. It was recognised that, even with significant effort to reduce emissions from the Council's estate and activities, there would be some residual emissions that would need to be offset to ensure the Council meets its net zero target. As such, opportunities for an increase level of renewable energy generation on Council buildings and land, as well as increased carbon sequestration through tree planting, were actively being

investigated and implemented.

The Climate Change Planning Guidance and Metric had been developed, which achieved a commendation in the Best Plan of the Year category in this year's East Midlands Royal Town Planning Institute's Awards for Planning Excellence. As well as this, the Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study and the Derby and Derbyshire Minerals Local Plan had also been developed as well as the Strategic Framework for Council action for progress to net zero energy in Derbyshire.

The Council was formally supporting a number of community energy projects. As well as proving funding and support through the Green Entrepreneurs Fund, Derbyshire Grants and DE-Carbonise.

With recent Active Travel England Capability fund grant awards, the Council would now begin to develop a series of local market town scale active travel plans. This workstream would be a primary focus of the next 12 months and look to explore the opportunities, barriers and interventions required to ensure walking, wheeling, and cycling can play a key role in daily movement needs of Derbyshire's residents and visitors. A Public/Stakeholder Engagement Report for the joint D2N2 Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was being finalised for publication and to inform the final Plan for Cabinet Member endorsement.

In 2021 the Council commissioned a Natural Capital Strategy for the county. The Strategy was now being used to identify the priority areas for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural capital assets. As part of the Council's commitment to tackling the effects of climate change, the Council planned to facilitate the planting of a million trees in the county by 2030. As of 1 September 2023, 315,098 had been added to our online Million Trees totaliser.

A joint Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy (2022-2025) had been developed that set out how Derbyshire councils could work together to reduce emissions across the county to net zero by 2050. There had been collaboration across D2N2 through the Innovate UK funded two-year Fast Followers project; as well as Collaboration across D2N2 through the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero funded Local Energy Advice Demonstrator project.

27/23 REDUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF BUSINESS TRAVEL

Alan Marsden, Head of Strategic Transport and Sustainable Travel, introduced the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and gave an update on activities within the Council that sought to reduce

the environmental impact of travel, including work being undertaken to reduce the Council's 'grey fleet' mileage, electrify its fleet vehicles and promote/raise awareness of public transport and active travel initiatives for staff.

The report was accompanied by a presentation that gave further detail into reducing the environmental impact of business travel.

The key strands to reducing the environmental impact of business travel were:

- Roll out a Council wide electric vehicle sharing programme and electric vehicle charging points at all key Council sites, coupled with a behaviour change campaign and evaluation of working practices to facilitate a zero emission fleet;
- Develop car share and cycle to work schemes;
- Provide discounted bus and rail ticket offerings; and
- Advocate and create awareness through support of national campaigns, such as Cycle To Work day and Travel Wise week.

By the next meeting of the Committee in December 2023 officers would have received Government Guidance and 'policy playbook' to support quantifying carbon emission reduction from transport (to support preparation of a new Local Transport Plan). Would be able to provide an update on the delivery programme for the electric vehicle charge point network across the County Council estate. And would have completed a review of sustainable travel initiatives offered to employees and their effectiveness in reducing grey fleet emissions.

Following a number of questions on the subject, committee members agreed that an item on the bus networks be added to the work programme. As well as be provided with further detail on avoiding unnecessary trips, insisting on alternative methods of travel, and what was in place to encourage employees to purchase electric vehicles.

RESOLVED to

1) Note the update on activity to reduce the environmental impact of travel, including work being undertaken to reduce the Council's 'grey fleet' mileage, electrify its fleet vehicles and promote/raise awareness of public transport and active travel initiatives for staff; and

2) Discuss and consider the progress being made, share issues and raise questions as appropriate.

Caroline Toplis, Programme Manager for Climate Change, introduced the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and gave an update on the work being undertaken by the Council in supporting the decarbonisation of Derbyshire's housing.

The report was accompanied by a presentation.

There were a number of existing schemes and funding; UK Government Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, UK Government Homes Upgrade Grant, UK Government Local Authority Delivery, and ECO 4 Local Authority Flex.

Derbyshire County Council:

- Supported the Warmer Derby and Derbyshire Helpline;
- Delivered the Healthy Home project, which offered people with a long-term health condition help with cold homes; and
- Provided online advice on saving energy and information on the help available with paying fuel bills

The challenges that Derbyshire faced were that a fifth of homes in Derbyshire were off-grid, the difficulty retrofitting homes in conservation areas and historic buildings, limited information and support available to homeowners, as well as a limited supply chain already under high demand.

Officers had been holding a number of engagement exercises; a multi-stakeholder community engagement exercise on retrofit, three online surveys, face-to-face meetings and focus groups, attendance at community events, and dialogue with community groups.

The outcomes of the engagement informed the draft Action Plan to 2025 which had been out to consultation. The Action Plan was to be co-delivered with local authorities, communities, and other stakeholders.

The Action Plan included knowledge and advice for residents to help them gain a further understanding into the options available to them. As well as further work on skills and training and supply chain development.

The Council worked with a number of community groups on skills and training, officers would provide Committee Members with a list of these groups.

RESOLVED to

- 1) Note the work being undertaken by the Council in supporting the decarbonisation of Derbyshire's housing.

Committee members agreed that an item on the bus networks be added to the work programme.