

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION** held on Monday, 29 April 2024 at Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor W Major (in the Chair)

Councillors G Hickton, J Bryan, S Bull, M Ford, A Gibson, A Hayes and D Taylor.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor B Bingham and D Collins.

Officers present: Karl Apps (Assistant Director Sustainable Growth), Richard Bonner (Head Of Countryside Service), Rupert Casey (Assistant Director - Climate Change and Environment), Ruth Marshall (Million Trees Project Officer), Juliette Normington (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Luis Ramos (Local Nature Recovery Strategy Officer) and Caroline Toplis (Programme Manager - Climate Change).

9/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were made for minute reference 12/24 - Councillor Ford had a personal interest as Chairman of the Derbyshire and Derby Development Plans Joint Advisory Committee and Chairman of the Regulatory – Planning Committee and Councillor Hickton had a personal interest as a Committee Member of the Regulatory – Planning Committee.

10/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – to confirm the non-exempt minutes of the Improvement and Scrutiny – Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction meeting held on 5 February 2024.

11/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

12/24 COLLABORATION WITH THE COUNTY'S MINERAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY ON NET ZERO

Karl Apps introduced the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting providing Committee with an overview of the work the Council had completed with the Derbyshire mineral products to support Derbyshire to achieve New Zero emissions by 2050.

The Council's ambitions to de-carbonise the Derbyshire economy and grow the local skills offer were well publicised and set out in key strategy documents, which were listed in the report. A different approach to working with the Mineral Products Industry was taken, starting with the development of 'A collaboration to achieve Net Zero Memorandum of Understanding.

Much lobbying for systematic change, such as planning implications that may impact the minerals industry, was undertaken with future skills requirements identified to transition to a net zero industry. The Council would also undertake a piece of work in collaboration with the Institute of Quarrying to map the careers options, occupations, the skills needed for those occupations and whether there was the training available in the Derbyshire.

The joint bid to secure funding to develop place-based decarbonisation plans for the mineral products industries was unsuccessful however the concept developed was still considered to be appropriate and would be further developed whilst a funding source was secured.

The barriers to EV haulage adoption and the activity that the mineral products industry was doing around travel policies, skills gaps, and whole lifecycle of their vehicle fleet had helped to inform the Local Transport Plan (LTP) evidence base.

The Institute of Quarrying continued to be supported in their aspirations to develop a new training centre and head office - the detail would be included in the draft D2 Economic Strategy and would be promoted to the East Midlands Combined Council Authority (EMCCA) to secure funding for its delivery.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions on the information given. It was confirmed that there was still a shortage electric HGV kit in quarries due to weight restrictions. The rail network was a big part of discussions however there were challenges around capacity and value and was something that would be considered by the EMCCA.

RESOLVED – to note the overview of the work the Council has completed with the Derbyshire mineral products to support Derbyshire to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050.

13/24

MILLION TREES PROJECT UPDATE

Richard Bonner and Ruth Marshall presented the report which had been

circulated in advance of the meeting to provide an update Committee on the work being undertaken by the Council to deliver the Million Trees Project. The report detailed the primary goals of the Tree and Woodland Strategy including actions to be met by 2050 and listed progress to date.

The Project was working with many stakeholders to reach the target of planting a million trees in Derbyshire by 2030 whilst districts, boroughs, town and parish councils facilitated tree planting and collated data from businesses and organisations operating in Derbyshire. This was included in the Million Trees totaliser and to date, half a million trees had been planted.

Activity was now focussed on the development and delivery of the new Derbyshire's Heartwood Community Forest, with a target of 75 hectares, or 300,000 trees to be planted by March 2025. The forest would be funded by the Government's Trees for Climate programme and offers generous tree planting grants to landowners and communities to increase woodland cover. Existing work streams within the Project would continue to completion where possible and the Council's revenue budget for the Project would fund the Council's Million Trees Officer post.

The Million Trees website, launched in March 2023 had proven to be an effective tool for engaging with the public. A key feature was the interactive map, where individuals and organisations were encouraged to log trees planted and to be included in the total number of trees. Two businesses had donated £4,500, which had funded approximately 11,000 trees. Staff from Griffith Foods, one of the donors, joined a volunteer day and planted some 600 trees at Brook Park.

The Million Trees project remained well ahead of its annual targets with work continuing on promotion of its objectives and collaborative engagement. The Chairman congratulated the team for the outstanding work done.

Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions. The types of trees planted were determined by the type of soil and geography of the land. The ambitious target was in line with other councils' targets and community work. The maintenance and upkeep of the trees and land was included in the budget and allowed for re-growth.

RESOLVED – to note the update on the work being undertaken by the Council to deliver the Million Trees Project.

Rupert Casey and Luis Ramos presented the report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting to inform Committee of the work being led by the Council in its role as responsible authority for the preparation of Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The report was accompanied by a presentation detailing the reasoning behind the production of the Strategy together with how areas of particular importance were mapped.

It was recognised that prompt action was required to address society's neglect of nature. This needed to be done in a strategic, collaborative and evidenced-based manner, by means of a more biodiverse environment. It would allow important new net zero, climate change resilience, social, health, regeneration and economic growth benefits to be realised through the creation and restoration of wildlife-rich habitats, improving the landscape's resilience to climate change, reinforcing the natural, geological, and cultural diversity of England's landscapes and enabling people to enjoy and connect with nature.

The Strategy would protect, enhance and benefit Derbyshire, bringing much needed attention on the varied wildlife and landscape of the county. It was hoped the Strategy would be published by the end of March 2025.

Committee members welcomed the report and were given the opportunity to ask questions. It was established that there was extensive collaboration and participation from all Derbyshire's local authorities and recognition that the Strategy would be key for planning authorities.

15/24 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED - Members agreed the work programme for the July 2024 meeting and were encouraged to propose items for future consideration by the Committee.

The meeting finished at 3.24 pm