

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION** held on Monday, 23 May 2022 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG.

PRESENT

Councillor W Major (in the Chair)

Councillors R Redfern, B Bingham, S Bull, A Clarke, M Ford, A Hayes, G Kinsella, J Wharmby and S Swann.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor T Kemp.

Officers present: Roz Savage (Improvement and Scrutiny Officer) and Ivan Walters (Democratic Services Officer).

5/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Kemp.

16/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17/22 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction held on 14 February 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18/22 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTES MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)

There were no public questions.

19/22 DERBY, DERBYSHIRE AND PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK RENEWABLE ENERGY STUDY

Members had been provided with a detailed report in advance of the meeting, to inform them of the commissioning of the Derby, Derbyshire and Peak District National Park Renewable Energy Study ('the study') and its implications for the constituent local authorities in the study area regarding the development of planning policies in guiding the provision of renewable energy technologies. Steve Buffery, Team Leader Policy

and Monitoring – Place, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to compliment the report and to help members understand the Renewable Energy Study and how its recommendations could contribute to meeting carbon reduction targets at the national and local level within Derbyshire.

Following an Open Tender process, the contract to carry out the Study was awarded to Scene Connec in December 2021, who commenced work in early January 2022. The consultants had held regular progress update meetings with the Climate Change and Planning Sub Group and, as each stage progressed, provided drafts for comment by officers of the Sub-Group, which have been taken into account. A final draft of the study report was due for completion at the end of May 2022. This would then be provided to the Sub-Group for final comments prior to full completion of the study expected mid-June.

Members were given the opportunity to make observations/comments or ask questions which were duly answered or noted by the officer present. Particular reference was made to whether the Consultants were working with Renewable Energy Groups within Derbyshire; it was confirmed that this was the case and that the consultants had a lot of experience in working closely with such groups.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his presentation and requested that the findings and conclusions of the study be made available to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED to note commissioning of the Derby, Derbyshire and Peak District National Park Renewable Energy Study and its relevance to the constituent local authorities in the study area in informing the development of planning policies for the provision of renewable energy technologies in their areas, as referred to in this report.

20/22

EMBEDDING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Members had been provided with a report in advance of the meeting, to outline the ways in which environmental sustainability was embedded in Council activities, policies and strategies with a specific focus on climate change considerations. Caroline Toplis, Programme Manager, Climate Change attended the meeting and gave a presentation to compliment the report, with focus on those measures and activities that were relevant across the whole Council. She explained that the information provided was not exhaustive, with further examples available at Departmental and Service levels.

She explained the measures that were in place to embed environmental

sustainability in Council activities, policies, and strategies. This would help ensure the Council continued to recognise the impact it had on the environment and society through the delivery of its operations and continued commitment to protecting the environment by minimising any adverse environmental impact, while creating opportunities for enhancing positive environmental effects to improve the quality of life for people.

Members made a number of comments/observations and asked questions around the Strategy and Action Plan, which were duly noted or answered by the officers present. Members welcomed the Strategy and particular reference was made to the excellent recent Carbon Literacy training that had been attended by some members of the Committee and who encouraged others to attend. Members indicated that they would like to receive a copy of the Single Use Plastics Action Plan when it became available.

The Chairman thanked the officer for her update.

RESOLVED to (1) note the ways in which environmental sustainability was embedded in Council activities, policies, and strategies, with a specific focus on climate change considerations, as detailed in this report; and

(2) acknowledge that the information provided within the report was not exhaustive, with further examples available at a Departmental and Service level.

21/22 NATURE RECOVERY - BIODIVERSITY OF HIGHWAY VERGES

Tom French, Ecologist, Place Department attended the meeting and gave a verbal update on the work that had been undertaken on Nature Recovery and Biodiversity of Highway Verges. In December 2021 the authority had hosted a conference involving District/Borough Council and partner organisations to discuss how the situation with Highway verges could be improved without compromising highway safety.

A new Road Verges Officer had been very recently appointed and it was hoped that once in post he would continue to explore collaborative working with the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and move this important area of work forward.

Members made a number of comments/observations and asked questions, which were duly noted or answered by the officer present. There was a general frustration that progress was slow since the initiative was first announced in June 2021. The Chairman suggested

that the new Road Verges Officer should attend a future meeting of this committee and present the work programme/alternative options and a timeline for implementation.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his update.

RESOLVED to note the verbal update.

22/22 CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE REPORTING - 2021-2022 Q4

Members had been provided with a report in advance of the meeting, detailing the Climate Change Performance Dashboard for Quarter 4 2021-22. Caroline Toplis, Programme Manager, Climate Change attended the meeting and gave a presentation to compliment the report.

She explained that the report had been developed to provide assurance to the Committee on the role of the Climate Change and Environment Programme Board (CCEPB) in monitoring this performance and to assist the Committee in fulfilling its role of providing oversight and undertaking scrutiny of the climate change programme's governance procedures and processes.

The Dashboard included a narrative:

- at the start of the document on which actions were not on track, why, the potential impact and the mitigations being carried out to get the actions back on track; and
- against overall performance against the Long List actions by 2025 that were likely to have the biggest positive impact on emissions reduction, and those which required the most immediate action and implementation.

Members made a number of comments/observations and asked questions, which were duly noted or answered by the officer present. Whilst the performance indicators were very much welcomed, members emphasised that they would like to see the actions set out in the Performance Dashboard to be more outcome focussed. Members also indicated that they would like to receive further information about the three priority actions relating to the Council Operations and Estate theme that had been allocated an Action rating.

RESOLVED to note the content of the Climate Change Performance Dashboard as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

23/22 **WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

Members were invited to consider the draft work programme for 2022/23 and to propose additional items to be considered for inclusion. A number of comments/observations were made and questions asked, which were duly noted or answered by the Improvement and Scrutiny Officer.

Reference was made to the Sustainable Travel area of work and how this would tie in with the Integrated Local Transport Plan, with specific reference being made to consideration being given to the Local Mineral Plan. The Improvement and Scrutiny Officer explained that the Mineral Plan came under the remit of the Improvement & Scrutiny – Places Committee, but suggested that should members of this Committee wish to attend the Places committee when the matter was discussed, then that would be appropriate.

RESOLVED to approve the 2022/23 work programme, note that it was a flexible document and that additional issues could be added throughout the year.

The meeting finished at 3.20 pm