

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION** held on Monday, 3 July 2023 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor W Major (in the Chair)

Councillors J Bryan, S Bull, D Collins, M Ford, G Hickton and D Taylor.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor B Bingham and A Hayes.

Officers present: Daniel Ayrton (Assistant Director Resources & Waste), Rupert Casey (Assistant Director - Climate Change and Environment), Stuart Etchells (Principal Procurement Officer), Juliette Normington (Democratic Services Officer) and Caroline Toplis (Programme Manager - Climate Change).

The meeting commenced with the Chair offering his condolences to the family of Councillor Roger Redfern, member of this committee, following his recent sudden death.

17/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18/23 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 22 May 2023.

19/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question from Mr Ring (in relation to the workstream on Decarbonising the Domestic Sector, within Derbyshire CC's Climate Change Strategy 2023-25):

“A draft action plan was published in April of this year, on "Homes fit for the Future: Decarbonising Derbyshire's Housing", setting out a major multi-sector programme of work beginning in May (2023), with the Council assuming lead responsibility in many of the actions proposed. This followed an extensive consultation with Derbyshire householders and local community groups about the barriers to retrofitting. Early findings were considered by the Committee (in

November of last year), when it was resolved to "co-design and co-deliver a programme of activities to support homeowners to undertake energy efficiency work".

The closing date for comments on the draft Action Plan was 5th May. It is now July 2023. A final action plan has not been published. Many of the goals set out there cannot be achieved without this, and the extensive leadership from the County Council envisaged in the plan.

What steps (beyond increasing the capacity of the Officer Team in the Climate Change Section, which is in progress) do the Committee consider are needed to ensure immediate and effective leadership by the Council of this urgent programme of work to decarbonise Derbyshire's housing?"

Response:

"Thank you for your question, Mr Ring. The County Council, along with Derbyshire's district and borough councils, undertook extensive community engagement during late 2022 and early 2023 to understand the barriers that exist to Derbyshire's homeowners undertaking energy efficiency retrofitting activities on their homes, and to ascertain the support that could be provided by local authorities and their partners to help remove these barriers.

The Homes Fit for the Future Action Plan was developed in response to the engagement findings and, following the securing of support from the Council's senior management and Elected Members, the draft Action Plan was shared with groups and individuals for comment between March and May 2023. Feedback received on the draft Action Plan has been positive and we do therefore not expect there to be any significant changes to the final version of the Action Plan, which will be signed off for delivery this summer.

The Action Plan is seen as the foundation of a long-term strategy and approach to decarbonising Derbyshire's housing. There are two crucial factors that will underpin the effectiveness and success of any approach: funding and partnership working.

In terms of funding, running in parallel to the Action Plan development, officers have been exploring funding opportunities to enable the Action Plan and any subsequent long-term strategy to be delivered. This includes a collaborative bid with local authority partners in Derby, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to help fund the provision of face-to-face and tailored retrofitting advice and support to homeowners. We are hopeful that this bid will be successful and expect to hear the outcome

over the coming weeks.

In terms of partnership working, and recognising the scale of the challenge, the Action Plan needs to be delivered through joint working with residents, other local authorities and wider stakeholders. As such, officers are establishing plans for the co-delivery of many actions in the Action Plan, which also includes working with contractors, colleges and training providers to enable a growth in the domestic retrofitting supply chain in the county.

We recognise that this is an important area of work that requires urgent action locally, but that it is also a national challenge, and therefore greater action, funding and commitment is needed from national government. Through its membership of organisations such as the UK100 and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) the Council will continue to use its influence to lobby government for greater national commitment and action.”

The following supplementary question was asked by Mr Ring:

“Does the Committee envisage that the County Council's other resources can be used to (1) engage householders in the "Homes Fit for the Future" programme of work eg via printed media such as Derbyshire Now and the Derbyshire Adult Learning Service; (2) to enlist the support of further and higher education providers in developing the "green skills" workforce; and (3) engage with local planning authorities to encourage applications to retrofit Derbyshire's Housing stock?”

The response of the Chair of the Committee was:

"Thank you for your question. Regarding publication, I think we all agree that the methods suggested including going in Derbyshire Now should be utilised. As a committee we will make the request however, I suspect it would have happened as a matter of course anyway.

I understand there is always a desire to be speedier on these projects however, we need to ensure they are done correctly and deliver on our aims.

Finally, to cover your last point, as a committee we are aware of the lack of capacity to deliver at scale. This needs to be a focus going forward so the Derbyshire economy has the skills and trades to adapt people's homes to reduce emissions."

Councillor Wayne Major, Chairman

Question from Councillor Gez Kinsella:

“The 32 Priority Actions against which the Climate Change Strategy is monitored are divided into themes. The traffic light indicators against the Low Carbon Economy Theme shows two of the actions are denoted as green and five as amber. This has not changed since the performance reports were devised 18 months ago.

There are other examples within other themes, but focusing on the Low Carbon Economy theme we see there are two actions that are not within timetable and are not delivering the required outcomes. What does it take for an action to be recorded as red – ‘unlikely to achieve timetable and/or to deliver required outcome’?”

Response:

“Thank you for your question Cllr Kinsella. We understand that the two actions referred to in the question relate to:

1. Taking forward the COVID Recovery Strategy to identify and work with high carbon commercial industries
2. Working with the district and borough councils to develop a Strategic Joint Planning Framework for Derbyshire

In these two cases, the specific deliverables referenced in the actions (the COVID Recovery Strategy and the Strategic Joint Planning Framework) have not been progressed as originally planned due to delays in national government action, including delays to publication of the Planning White Paper, which has paused the development of a Strategic Joint Planning Framework.

As a result, delivery of the required benefits and outcomes are being progressed through other mechanisms, such as the Council’s work with the Minerals Products Industry on net zero, and the development of Climate Change Planning Guidance and an associated Assessment Metric.

However, your comments have been taken on board and will be considered during the ongoing quarterly review and reporting of performance.

The Council’s Programme Manager for Climate Change, Caroline Toplis, would be happy to meet with you separately to discuss any specific

points of query.”

Councillor Wayne Major, Chairman
Improvement and Scrutiny – Climate Change, Biodiversity and Carbon
Reduction Committee

20/23 SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

Stuart Etchells, Principal Procurement Officer introduced the report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and gave an update on the implementation and impact of the Council’s new sustainable procurement policy and the use of the Social Value Portal.

The report was accompanied by a presentation that highlighted the three key principles of sustainable procurement and the three projects that had been trialled and were progressing to contract award:

- Supply of Disposable Gloves;
- Road Marking, Studding Works, and High Friction Surface Treatment; and
- Supply of Traffic Management

One of the key criteria identified in the Sustainable Procurement policy was to drive sustainability through the Council’s procurements and to begin getting the supply chain to commit to sustainable goals and measures. A wider review of procurement documentation was under way and County Procurement were working with its provider, Procontract, to ensure availability of documentation on line where possible and to reduce duplication for suppliers.

Members asked a number of questions which around the social values, medium-term framework and SCAPE.

RESOLVED to note the update provided on the implementation and impact of the Council’s new sustainable procurement policy and the use of the Social Value Portal.

21/23 WIDER UPDATE ON WASTE MANAGEMENT TEAM AND PROJECTS

Daniel Ayrton, Assistant Director of Resources and Waste gave an overview of resource and waste management. This was supported by a presentation which gave a review of performance; a summary of objectives and actions for 2022/23; a review of outcomes for 2022/23; an overview of national waste strategy landscape; and future actions.

The presentation gave a breakdown of the responsibilities of district,

county and unitary councils with the County Council being responsible for green waste – it shared responsibility with other councils in the county around strategy.

Performance data showed a steady decline in the proportion of waste being landfilled locally and nationally. A 1.8 percentage point improvement had been seen locally however a marked reduction in residual waste had been seen due to the cost living crisis. The presentation outlined the specific and country wide targets for the department and gave actions and objectives progress for 2022/23. There had been a 42% carbon reduction since 2024/15 from landfill with an increase in recycling performance.

Climate outcomes were presented, some of which included carbon recycling, provision for the development of up to three re-use shops at the County's recycling centres plus the creation of a new Waste Strategy and Engagement team.

Members initiated discussion around the differing practices experienced around the county on waste collection, composting and monitoring of practises. Mr Ayrton advised that councils need to consider a number of components in order to provide economical and practical systems including the introduction of incentives and stated that it would soon be unlawful to collect garden waste with other waste. Fly-tipping was an area that needed consideration.

The Chair thanked Mr Ayrton for his presentation and attending Committee.

22/23 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair informed the Committee of the need to consider the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy; the final draft would go to Cabinet on 21 September 2023. The Chair invited Committee members to form a working group where the draft Strategy would be considered.

The Chair made two suggestions for future consideration by the Committee:

- Grey fleet – to consider the impact on the environment by the Council's grey fleet (use of personal vehicles for business use), best practice and incentives in place to help improve effects; and
- The decarbonising of Derbyshire's homes.

RESOLVED – to

1. Form a working group made up of Councillors Major, Hickton and Ford to meet with officers outside of the Committee to consider the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy and to circulate the draft document to all committee members; and
2. Accept the suggestions made by the Chair for future consideration.

The meeting finished at 3.15 pm