

PUBLIC

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

**PRESENT**

Councillor W Major (in the Chair)

Councillors B Bingham, S Bull, D Collins, M Ford and D Taylor.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors G Hickton, J Bryan, A Gibson and A Hayes.

Officers present: David Beard (Head of Projects), John Kinderman (Principal Climate Change Officer), Daniel McCrory (Sustainable Travel Team - Team Leader), Juliette Normington (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Caroline Toplis (Programme Manager - Climate Change).

**16/24     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**17/24     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 29 April 2024.

**18/24     PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**19/24     REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE ROLL OUT OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Daniel McCrory introduced the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting providing Committee with an update on activities within the Council's Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy that sought to increase the uptake of electric vehicles across the County through the provision of an enhanced public electric vehicle charging network that utilised both private sector and Government funding. The report was supplemented by a comprehensive slide presentation.

The report gave details of the Council's Low Emission Vehicle

Infrastructure (LEVI) Strategy (2019-2029) which set out the Council's vision going forward. It was noted that there were significant challenges in delivering electric vehicle charge points and that the Council was working with various partners to develop five workstreams, which were detailed within the report, to deliver a minimum of 4,500 additional charge points to provide good coverage across the County. The sites selected support the reduction of grey fleet mileage with a shift to electric pool cars with a pilot scheme delivering up to 10 points at five sites across the county, allowing the Council to evaluate and test mechanisms and processes.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions on the information presented. It was ascertained that more charge points would be provided closer to homes and that technology was improving around rapid charges. There was discussion around the future of electric vehicles and what was going wrong. Much was reliant on policy and other options in the market place, such as hydrogen vehicles however it was stressed that a lot of work was being done to move forward with contracts, financing and technological advances.

**RESOLVED** to note the update on activities within the Council's Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy that sought to increase the uptake of electric vehicles across the County through the provision of an enhanced public electric vehicle charging network that utilises both private sector and Government funding.

20/24

### **THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN DECARBONISING DERBYSHIRE'S SCHOOLS**

John Kinderman introduced the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting providing Committee with information on the carbon impact of Derbyshire's schools, current UK Government strategy and support relating to the decarbonisation of schools; the progress that schools and relevant supporting Council service areas were making to reduce the carbon impact of Derbyshire's schools and the proposed next steps to explore what further action the Council could take to support the decarbonisation of schools. The report was supplemented by a comprehensive slide presentation.

The report focussed on Derbyshire maintained schools where the Council had budgetary control of the school estate and school transport. Emissions from school buildings formed the largest part of a school's carbon impact through heating and power and this was detailed in the report. The Council had a statutory duty to provide transport to and from schools and this was the next main contributor to the carbon impact.

The decarbonisation of individual schools was not the responsibility of one particular organisation or individual and the Council's involvement depended on the aspect of decarbonisation being undertaken. Overall progress was being made with actions being delivered and emissions being reduced. The report summarised the main areas of Council activity.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to make comment and ask questions on the presentation. As well as central government funding, charities and the Council's Children's Services were being considered as other sources of financial support. There were also a number of schemes in place to build awareness plus initiatives such as the installation of solar panels – the Chairman requested figures on the return on these investments.

**RESOLVED** to note:

- 1) The carbon impact of Derbyshire's schools and current UK Government strategy and support related to the decarbonisation of schools;
- 2) The progress that schools and relevant supporting Council service areas were making to reduce the carbon impact of Derbyshire's schools; and
- 3) The proposed next steps to explore what further action the Council could take to support the decarbonisation of schools.

**21/24**

**DECARBONISING THE ESTATE - ASSET DISPOSAL AND RENEWABLE ENERGY**

David Beard introduced the report which was circulated in advance of the meeting providing Committee with progress on the plans to decarbonise the Council's estate, with particular emphasis on property rationalisation and proposals for renewable energy generation. The report was supplemented by a slide presentation.

New data for 2023-24 indicated a further 6 million kWh reduction in energy use associated with corporate buildings in 2023-24. The installation of photo-voltaic (pv) panels on corporate buildings had been paused due to funding issues however an alternative had been identified and progressed to approval to procure.

The estimated maximum energy saving associated with assets in scope for disposal was currently 17.5 million kWh. The current programme for disposals scheduled 22 buildings with a total energy saving value of 8.6

million kWh, based on total energy use for buildings during 2022/23.

Given the increased scope of the property rationalisation project, and the updated potential savings from future property rationalisation, the forecasted projected total energy use in 2032 was currently 15 million kWh.

Annual project programmes had been proposed to meet and exceed proposed targets. With limited allocation of funding for carbon reduction projects there had been little opportunity to implement projects which would transition away from fossil fuels.

The proposed solar farm at Williamthorpe was estimated to offer the potential to generate 3 million kWh of renewable energy per annum. Funding was allocated and the project was currently submitted for planning approval. Feasibility assessments had identified opportunities for additional solar farms elsewhere in Derbyshire, but grid connections could not be secured.

A county-wide review of the potential for wind turbines had identified two sites of interest which were currently subject to further technical assessment.

**RESOLVED** to note progress on the plans to decarbonise the Council's estate since the previous report to committee in February 2024, and the current proposals for renewable energy generation.

## **22/24**     **EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Chairman introduced the report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, asking Committee to note the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol as a framework for the relationship between the Executive and the scrutiny process.

**RESOLVED** to note:

- 1) the Executive Scrutiny Protocol at Appendix 2 to the report; and
- 2) the Scrutiny Co-ordination Group would review the operation of the Protocol in 12 months' time.

## **23/24**     **WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

The Chairman introduced the report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, asking Committee to review its work programme and invite committee members to suggest possible agenda items for the municipal

year 2024-25.

**RESOLVED** to note the 2024-25 work programme.

The meeting finished at 3.41 pm