

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 at 10:00 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders in the Chair

Councillors Mark Hinman, Cathy Jeffery, Emma Stevenson and Carol Wood.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor Jeanne Raspin, Junior Portfolio Holder for Environment.

### **CLI1-24/25            APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ashley Taylor, Catherine Tite and Anne Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Environment.

### **CLI2-24/25            URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to be considered.

### **CLI3-24/25            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Emma Stevenson and Carol Wood declared they were Members of the Dragonfly Development Ltd. Shareholder Board.

### **CLI4-24/25            MINUTES – 21<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2024**

Moved by Councillor Cathy Jeffery and seconded by Councillor Carol Wood

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

### **CLI5-24/25            LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE**

In response to a Member's query, the Strategic Director of Services explained the Executive had delegated powers to authorise the purchase of items like the refuse vehicle fleet replacements. It was expected the new vehicles would be starting collections January-March 2026.

The Monitoring Officer informed Committee the proposed sale of land at Elmton Lane,

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Bolsover had been delayed and would not meet the Executive meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**RESOLVED** that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in the private document be noted.

### CLI6-24/25      REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ENERGY POLICY FOR LOCAL HOUSING

The Chair presented the Review of the Council's Energy Policy (the 'Policy') for Local Housing to the Committee, praising the Scrutiny Officer for the fine work.

The Committee had agreed to review the Policy as part of the 2023/24 Work Programme to ensure the Council had a clear energy efficiency Policy and the District had long-term energy resilience across all housing stock.

The Policy would be presented to the Executive on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

Key issues identified included the following:

- Restrictions placed on energy related grants;
- Current impact of energy costs on the cost-of-living crisis and long-term health impact of cold homes;
- National changes in expected Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings; and,
- Potential to generate income via Dragonfly Development Ltd. offering energy improvements to private sector.

The Chair stated most of the recommendations would likely be accepted and developed, though recommendation 4 was the Committee likely formulating Council policy rather than fulfilling its role as a Scrutiny; this recommendation would likely be developed by the recently recruited Climate Officer in the future.

The Chair noted the establishment of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for all new build property within 3 months was the main aim of the Committee's work.

The Chair referred the Committee to Page 49 of the report where stakeholders were listed. Thanks were expressed for the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Scrutiny Officer. A Member added the Scrutiny Officer had done very well collating the Committee's thoughts into one document.

A Member noted the report would prove highly useful in the future and help identify and support opportunities moving forwards. The work accomplished had been marvellous.

Moved by Councillor Mark Hinman and seconded by Councillor Carol Wood

**RESOLVED** that; 1) the Council establish a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for all new build property within 3 months. Upon completion of the Housing Stock Condition Survey (estimated April 2025), the Council must establish a strategy for improving energy efficiency within Council Housing Stock;

2) that the Council publishes information regarding grants and energy efficiency on the Council website;

3) that the Council continues to feature educational articles in Intouch

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magazine and Bolsover TV on energy efficiency grants for homes;

- 4) that following the Council's appointment of the new Climate Officer, opportunities be investigated for realistic ways that the Council and Dragonfly Development Ltd. can work together to offer energy improvements to the owner-occupier sector and to assess whether a pragmatic package can be put together to achieve this; and,
- 5) that the Council consolidates all existing policies, strategies and plans regarding EV charging stations for Bolsover District into one clear document/web page article dedicated to the topic of the Council's approach to EV charging points.

### **CLI7-24/25            AGREEMENT OF WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 AND DISCUSSION OF SUBMITTED REVIEW TOPICS**

The Chair presented the Work Programme 2024/25 to the Committee and listed the Terms of Reference of the Committee's remit.

To a Member's question on the Terms of Reference, the Scrutiny Officer explained small overlaps existed, such as the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee seeking to review the Council's security; this could be covered with a joint session with the Committee through its Community Safety Partnership/Police remit.

The Monitoring Officer stated the Council was always looking to make improvements of Scrutiny, and the Scrutiny Officer added most local authorities had only two Scrutiny Committees – finance and thematic. A Member noted they did not want to see the topic of Climate Change diluted; it was a key responsibility. The Monitoring Officer added other local authorities had numerous thematic sub-committees to help discuss specific issues like Climate Change; this could be a possibility if Scrutiny arrangements changed for 2025/26.

The Scrutiny Officer agreed to share with Members the current Terms of Reference of the Committee, and the Council's other Scrutiny Committees, after the meeting.

The Chair referred the Committee to Page 57 of the report, explaining there was substantial work to review for the coming year as well as 6 topics suggested by Members and Officers listed from Page 59 onwards. There either could be one large item reviewed by the Committee over 2024/25, or invitations extended to Officers outside the Committee to present multiple reports.

Topic 2.1 was a wide-ranging topic of District construction, but this was a substantial topic with overlap of previous work undertaken by the Committee. The Local Growth Scrutiny Committee would also likely have greater responsibility on such a topic.

A Member noted the topic's title, "Mitigating Environmental Impacts of District Construction", needed clarifying; would it cover Dragonfly Development Ltd. construction or all constitution taking place in the District. The Monitoring Officer suggested any topics chosen needed a clear scope; the last review had been a little ambiguous. The Member added the topic would likely benefit from a clarified title.

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**RESOLVED** that the suggested topic's title is clarified before it is considered further.

The Chair explained topic 2.2 was for a presentation of Council governance and disclosure of interest arrangements in relation to Dragonfly Development Ltd.; members of the public had previously expressed concerns, and a short, public presentation could be made to explain/address the interest of Members. The Monitoring Officer added a presentation could be brought to a future Committee meeting, limited to governance arrangements and set a disclosure of interest in all Council business as set out in the Council's Constitution.

A discussion was held on the merits of a public presentation focussed wholly on Dragonfly Development Ltd., given concerns raised were not broadcast throughout the District. It was further discussed that the Director of Development of Dragonfly Development Ltd. be invited to comment on this matter and that Members discuss informally before a presentation took place.

A vote was held with four Members in favour and one, Councillor Emma Stevenson, abstaining.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Carol Wood

**RESOLVED** that: 1) the Monitoring Officer lead and the Director of Development of Dragonfly Development Ltd. be involved in the creation of a public presentation explaining the governance arrangements of Dragonfly Development Ltd.; and,

- 2) the Committee review this presentation informally before a public presentation takes place.

Topic 2.3 was to create a short presentation on the Council's approach to carbon reduction. The Chair noted the Council had recently recruited a Climate Officer and in 2023 the Council had declared a Climate Emergency.

The Committee discussed topic 2.3, which was similar to topic 2.5 (a review of the Climate Reduction Plan 2019 – 2030) and agreed a short presentation could take place with an introduction from the Climate Officer. This presentation could provide a helpful direction for the Climate Officer moving forwards.

A Member noted topic 2.5 could be worked on after this and other topics, due to the size and required detail expected. The Monitoring Officer added a review of the Council's approach to carbon reduction (an Interim Report) was due at the Committee meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024; the Climate Officer would be expected at this meeting and a discussion could be held then.

Moved by Councillor Carol Wood and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson

**RESOLVED** that a short presentation on the Council's approach to carbon reduction takes place with the involvement of the Climate Officer.

Topic 2.4 was to review environmental despoilment education and enforcement covering littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping. This had been submitted by the Strategic Director of Services and was similar to topic 2.6 (which sought an investigation on fly tipping and the

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Bulky Waste Strategy).

The Strategic Director of Services explained these issues were important to the public. The Council was excellent in responding to acts of fly-tipping, but the District average of instances taking place was 1,200 per annum – nearly double the average in neighbouring districts.

Bulky Collections had remained priced at £10.00 since their introduction in 2009; this was unlikely the reason why. What was likely the cause was the multiple main routes and throughfares crossing the District; it was those outside the District who were likely the responsible parties for these fly-tipping incidents.

The 20 hotspots of fly-tipping were listed in the report, with Outgang Lane, Pleasley recording 37, Wood Lane, Shirebrook recording 24, and Batley Lane, Pleasley recording 15.

A Member was surprised a known hotspot in their ward was not on the list and asked if the matter of enforcement of policy on private land was required; would a one-month, free spring clean help reduce acts of fly-tipping. The Strategic Director of Services explained the British Spring Clean campaign related to promoting local groups undertaking local litter picks with the Council, supported with equipment and a collection of collected waste.

This was, therefore, not a theme of the Spring Clean initiative; albeit the Council did support households recently hit by flooding with free bulky collections. The Committee was further informed that the Council had provided a bulky collection service to a Parish Council which had met collection costs. However, this had resulted in substantial waste being collected and it was theorised that migration of waste from other areas had occurred.

The Strategic Director of Services gave an overview of the impact of the increasing residual waste (black bin) stream (by 200 tonnes). This had a negative impact of reducing the Council's combined recycling performance by 1%. The emphasis was therefore to reduce the residual waste stream (black bins) and increase the amount of recycling (burgundy bin) and composting (green bin) waste streams.

To a question on why the District faced almost double the acts of fly-tipping compared with other areas, including North East Derbyshire District Council, the Strategic Director of Services stated he could not answer why. Since 2010, the District, despite being small and rural, had always encountered higher instances of fly-tipping than other areas. The issue could be influenced by the main roads crossing the District being attractive to perpetrators of drive-by fly-tipping.

The Community Action Network Rangers were an option and could enhance proactive enforcement by providing CCTV monitoring of hotspots and main roads; this was currently managed by the Joint Environmental Health Service. The Chair asked if a representative from the joint service be invited to a future meeting, and the Strategic Director of Services confirmed the Joint Assistant Director of Environmental Health could be invited.

A Member asked if the education of children on correct waste disposal could be developed. The Strategic Director of Services noted that when waste education at schools had taken place this had been successful, and while contact with schools had

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dropped since the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, in truth fly-tipping was more the result of actions by adults.

The Strategic Director of Services argued, with regards fly-tipping hotspots, those dumping illegally could be caught, fined, and shamed for their actions. Members agreed, citing the use of Bolsover TV. The Strategic Director of Services' view was that the Council should be an authority that is excellent at keeping the District clean, rather than an authority which is excellent at cleaning the District. Education and enforcement were essential features of a proactive approach in the prevention of environmental despoilment.

The Scrutiny Officer explained a scope could be written before the next meeting, with the Strategic Director of Services and the Member who had submitted topic 2.6 be involved. The scope could also be discussed informally before being accepted. The Monitoring Officer noted this would likely be a considerable piece of work and that specific, individual reviews on fly-tipping, dog fouling, and littering may be more appropriate.

A Member felt fly-tipping should be a priority, with the Chair agreeing that a scope should be produced on this for the next meeting.

The Scrutiny Officer noted that a similar and substantial piece of work on this topic had taken place in 2018, with 15 recommendations produced; it would be best not to replicate work already achieved. The Strategic Director of Services stated a comparison of the data in the intervening years could be made, with the 2018 data setting a useful benchmark.

Moved by Councillor Carol Wood and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson  
**RESOLVED** that: 1) topics 2.4 and 2.6 be merged; and,

2) for the Scrutiny Officer to complete a scope for the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:17 hours.