

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, 26th November 2024 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders in the Chair

Councillors Cathy Jeffery, Emma Stevenson, Catherine Tite and Carol Wood.

Officers:- Chris Fridlington (Director of Devolution & Development), Richard Winter (Climate Change Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, was Councillor Anne Clarke, Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

CLI15-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ashley Taylor and Jeanne Raspin (Junior Portfolio Holder for the Environment).

CLI16-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to be considered.

CLI17-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

CLI18-24/25 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Catherine Tite and seconded by Councillor Cathy Jeffery
RESOLVED that the minutes of a Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 8th October 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

CLI19-24/25 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

The Chair presented the updated List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CLI20-24/25 REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CARBON REDUCTION - POST-SCRUTINY MONITORING (SECOND INTERIM REPORT)

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Post-Scrutiny Monitoring Report to the Committee.

The Committee had previously received updates on progress against the Carbon Reduction Plan 2019-30 (CRP). Following structural changes in 2021/22 and a change in lead officers, the existing action plans were reviewed.

In March 2022, the Executive had agreed to accept the proposed changes and move away from the more traditional monitoring to a live document that would track and evidence progress across all schemes and / or initiatives.

The Committee received an update in May 2022 and put together nine recommendations. These were attached as Appendix 1. Progress of the recommendations were attached as Appendix 2.

To date, five recommendations had been achieved with four extended and on track for completion in 2025. The Scrutiny Officer introduced the Climate Change Officer, recruited July 2024, who would be overseeing the completion of the outstanding recommendations.

One key achievement was the Council ensuring that a lead Portfolio Holder for Carbon Reduction from within the Executive was agreed postelection May 2023.

A reason for the delay with outstanding recommendations was the recruitment of the Climate Change Officer. The Scrutiny Officer reiterated it was expected all outstanding recommendations would be completed in 2025.

Since the previous Committee meeting, Figure 2.2 of Appendix 1 – *“That a dedicated operational post be recruited to, in addition to the designation of a lead senior officer, to ensure that the delivery in relation to carbon reduction maintains momentum to reach the 2050 target”* – with the recruitment of the Climate Change Officer.

Figures 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.8 were intended to be completed in the next few months. The Climate Change Officer added these recommendations were all on track.

The Scrutiny Officer informed the final interim report would be in six months' time.

To a question on the Low Carbon Thematic Group, the Director of Devolution & Development informed that this was an opportunity to review and explore the purpose of the Low Carbon Thematic Group in the future and how it would work closely with the Bolsover Partnership.

With the recruited Climate Change Officer, new ideas could be brought forward to shape the Low Carbon Thematic Group. The Committee were also informed that the Council could not achieve all desired aims; it was important to review the Low Carbon Thematic Group's remit to help achieve maximum results.

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment agreed with the Director of Devolution & Development; it was important to review and find the appropriate purpose for the Low Carbon Thematic Group moving forwards.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To a question on why the Minutes of a Committee meeting held on 4th July 2023 had stated recommendations were on track, the Scrutiny Officer explained the Committee had agreed at its 21st May 2024 meeting to extend the original target dates to take into account the recruitment of the Climate Change Officer in the summer of 2024.

Moved by Councillor Emma Stevenson and seconded by Councillor Carol Wood

RESOLVED that: 1) Scrutiny Members note the progress against the review recommendations;

- 2) Scrutiny Members acknowledge any exceptions to delivery and clarify the additional action required by the service;
- 3) Scrutiny Members make its report and findings public, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Council's Constitution; and,
- 4) Officers continue to implement the recommendations and submit a further report in six months' time highlighting progress and any exceptions to delivery.

CLI21-24/25 PRESENTATION OF COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CARBON REDUCTION (VERBAL PRESENTATION)

The Climate Change Officer provided a presentation on the Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction.

The Committee were shown figures of the Council's own carbon emissions. It was noted these were not comprehensive, and that Members should not focus on carbon emissions alone – this could lead to missing other important factors which would be explained.

In the weeks prior to the meeting, the Met Office had released its [Local Authority Climate Service](#). The service provided essential climate information to support local authorities (the Council) which was tailored to local areas (the District). The Met Office's aim was to provide an easy to use platform for climate risk assessments to be researched and allow local authorities to produce adaptation plans and develop climate resilience.

A copy of the [District's Local Authority Climate Report](#) was provided after the meeting.

The current overall conclusion of this work was that summers would be hot and dry, and winters warm and wet. The service predicted likely future rainfall, growing days for agriculture, frost days, and of note, while winters would be milder and so less energy intensive to heat homes, this would be offset by the need for more energy in summer months for processes like air conditioning.

A diagram representing direct emissions of the Council's buildings and activities was presented to the Committee. Missing from this diagram was fleet consumption and the mileage that staff undertook to attend work.

The Arc used 70% of total gas used for heating – this was largely due to the leisure centre.

While Pleasley Vale Business Park used as much electricity as The Arc, electricity was increasingly becoming greener from the development and use of renewable forms of

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

energy.

The Climate Change Officer stated a full breakdown of the Council's emissions would be provided in March 2025.

Council buildings produced around 1,100 tonnes of emissions per annum. The Council's fleet produced 600-700 tonnes, though this would need to be confirmed with the Strategic Director of Services.

In comparison to the above, 900,000 tonnes were produced by the whole District in 2022. This was due to heavy industry and transport links (99.7% of all transport emissions was from the M1 Motorway and A38 Dual-Carriageway).

It was noted 300,000 tonnes was produced from one heavy industry alone – this was out of the Council's control, but not influence (e.g., the Council could work with / lobby regional and national governments).

It was reiterated carbon intensity was being reduced from electricity generation due to the increase in solar power and windfarms. Reducing consumption would also help reduce emissions.

The District could also help reduce emissions by increasing Biodiversity Net Gains (BNG), work to reduce poverty, and improve residents' health and wellbeing – this was why it was important to look beyond carbon emissions alone.

The District had high levels of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and poverty. Residents would be less resilient to climate change and more negatively impacted than healthier, wealthier areas.

Air pollutants from industry, transport, and BNG loss were all linked to poor quality of health.

Ecotoxicity and eutrophication were also factors that would negatively affect health.

Several Council projects were listed that would aim to address the issues above, including the mine water project of Creswell and Whitwell and the local energy plan. There had also been two bids to the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) for the retrofit of social and privately owned properties.

To a question on what the Council could achieve on the District's emissions and environment, the Climate Change Officer stated it was a financial and moral obligation for the Council to do its part to mitigate climate change and improve lives. The Council could influence 30-40% of the District's 900,000 tonnes of emissions by working with groups like the mineral industry.

Also, focussing on the larger picture would have the lasting impact.

The Climate Change Officer was attending meetings like the Derbyshire Energy Group and Climate Change Group. The EMCCA was also researching the worst performing areas to help address items like health and economic wellbeing.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To a question on researching other carbon reduction methods, the Climate Change Officer explained efficient, infrared electric wallpaper was being deployed by Nottingham Trent University at Pleasley Vale Business Park to research its effectiveness on such a site.

The Chair encouraged all Members and the public to share potential ideas with the Council and the Climate Change Officer.

A Member noted solar panels and heat pumps would have cost implications for residents. The UK National Government had previously provided schemes and programmes to improve energy efficiency (e.g., the installation of cavity wall and loft insulation, which was a national project and had made a substantial difference). The Member noted no large national project had taken place in recent years.

The Climate Change Officer explained the ECO4 scheme had received some bad press, but two bids had been submitted that would provide support to social and privately owned properties in financially disadvantaged areas. The Council would learn the success of these bids in early 2025.

The Climate Change Officer informed that the Council's website had been recently updated with a section on grants that residents could apply for (if eligible).

The Chair stated it was appropriate for the Committee to remain a scrutiny body of the Executive and Council and allow the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, the Director of Devolution & Development, and the Climate Change Officer to develop policies and procedures.

It was reiterated that through the work of the Climate Change Officer, a baseline of the Council's carbon emissions would be identified in March 2025, with a report expected on the Council's governance in relation to handling climate change and future targets for 2025/26.

The Committee discussed the possibility of an informal session in early 2025 with the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, the Director of Devolution & Development, and the Climate Change Officer.

The Chair thanked the Climate Change Officer for the verbal presentation.

CLI22-24/25 WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that the meeting in January 2025 would include the six-month interim report for the Review of the Council's Energy Policy for Local Housing, with the final report expected in July 2025. The Climate Change Officer would be involved in this.

The Annual Review of Community Safety Partnership was due in April 2025, with the final report expected in May 2025.

An extraordinary meeting could be arranged to provide the Climate Change Officer the time to carry out work in either March 2025 or early May 2025 (before a meeting of the Annual Council).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair noted an informal meeting could be arranged on the Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction to provide a governance framework for the Climate Change Officer.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Emma Stevenson **RESOLVED** that the Work Programme 2024/25 be noted.

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 10:56 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The working party concluded at 12:05 hours.