

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING

Minutes

THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillor J Aberley (Chair)

Councillors Mr G Cornell, I Herdman, B A Hughes, Mr M Jones, I Plant, J Porter, D Price, R Ward, Mr N Williams and N Yates

IN ATTENDANCE:

M Forrester	Head of Democratic & Community Services
P Trafford	Member & Community Services Officer
M Trillo	Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer
L Vernon	Senior Officer (Governance and Member Support)
J Bagnall	Senior Regeneration Officer

22 **MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. Phil Taylor.

23 **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN**

Joanna Bagnall – Senior Regeneration Officer – attended the meeting and gave a presentation via shared screen showing:-

- Background to the Delivery Plan;
- Methodology;
- Progress to date;
- Identifying Delivery Plan Projects;
- Timetable.

Members raised points as follows (*Responses in brackets where appropriate*):-

- Parish / Town Councils appeared to have been left out of consultations and needed to be on board with the process (*The presentation could be done at Parish Assembly*);
- Under the 'Active Travel' part, Sustrans' needed to be included. (*The Canals & River Trust should be involved as a key partner, as should the County Council. Sustrans would also be consulted*);

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- The focus of the Working Group was the reduction of carbon emissions, which was not mentioned in the presentation. (*Nature-based solutions were a way to help reduce carbon emissions*);
- There was a need to ensure that some measurement of reduction in carbon emissions takes place (*Assessing the impact in the reduction in carbon emissions formed a key part in planning the projects*).

24 ACTIVITY UPDATE

Councillor Joe Porter – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity – outlined the report which outlined 16 different actions for the Council to focus on relating to Climate Change.

Mark Forrester – Democratic and Community Services Manager – explained that the actions were relevant to 1 or more of the 6 Climate Change Sub-Groups which had been set up. Officers would provide all known data to the Sub-Groups to give members a chance to see where discussions would lead to.

Members were advised that each of the 16 items would be allocated to 1 or more of the Sub-Groups to give the opportunity for close scrutiny, rather than to try to cover all actions within 1 meeting.

The Chair confirmed that Town and Parish Councillors would be invited to attend the Sub-Group meetings and invitations would be sent to the Parish Clerks.

25 UPDATE FROM SUB-GROUPS

The Natural Environment Sub-Group had met on 23 September and, in the absence of the Sub-Group Chairman (Cllr. Phil Taylor) Cllr. Nigel Yates reported to the Working Group what was discussed.

Outcomes would fall into 1 of 3 categories:-

- A. Actions that SMDC could do;
- B. Actions that could be promoted to the community;
- C. Actions for SMDC to lobby Government for a change in policy etc.

2 actions had come forward from the meeting:-

1. SMDC to lead action calling for a review of all SMDC owned/controlled open spaces in conjunction and involvement with Town and Parish Councils, so that a best fit Climate Change/biodiversity plan can be agreed between both levels of local government. The idea being to involve and empower at grass routes level - and not to impose.

Each green space - open space, verges and river banks, playing fields and burial grounds in the decision context of five categories:

- Consciously leave as is;
- Opportunities for Tree Planting/Community orchards;
- Opportunities for re-wilding and bio-diversity boundaries;
- Opportunities for wetland creation and natural flood defences;
- Opportunities for amenity enhancements.

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An example project being the Pocket Park at Dorset Drive East open space, Biddulph. Where the scheme included a community orchard, seating area, and creation of a wetland habitat, whilst 60% of the area was maintained as open (mown) grassland.

2. A community education/information project to stop natural peat use in the Moorlands, this would be led by SMDC through schools, pamphlet, social media and promoted at any environment “roadshow” events that the Council undertook.

Mike Jones referred to item 2 above, advising that this was originally a ‘Moorlands Climate Action Group’ (MCA) idea and they hoped to work together on the matter.

Mark Trillo – Executive Director & Monitoring Officer – agreed that this would be taken back to the Internal Officer Group.

Clarification was given regarding the Council’s target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This applied District-wide, rather than just to the Council, to be known as ‘The Carbon Neutrality Charter’.

Following a report which was issued in June 2020, MCA had submitted an extensive response which had not been acknowledged by the Council. The Chair agreed to ask Cllr. Porter to contact MCA to acknowledge the apparent misunderstanding.

The Chair confirmed that at each meeting there would be a running tally of ideas, together with an ongoing Calendar of meetings for clarification. The date of the next meeting was Thursday 29 October 2020 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

_____Chairman _____Date