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CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP AGENDA

Date: Thursday, 1 October 2020

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

23 September 2020

PART 1

1. Minutes from previous meeting (**Pages 3 - 6**)
2. Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan
3. Activity Update (**Pages 7 - 12**)
4. Update from sub-groups (**Pages 13 - 14**)

MARK TRILLO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

Membership of Climate Change Working Group (SMDC)

Councillor J Aberley (Chair)

Councillor I Herdman

Councillor J T Jones

Councillor I Plant

Councillor D Shaw

Councillor R Ward

Mr M Jones

Mr G Worth

Councillor N Yates (Vice-Chair)

Councillor B A Hughes

Councillor L A Malyon

Councillor D Price

Councillor P Taylor

Mr G Cornell

Mr N Williams

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STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

THURSDAY, 16 JULY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor J Aberley (Chair)

Councillors J Davies, K Flunder, J Aberley, I Herdman, B A Hughes, Mr M Jones, J T Jones, L A Malyon, I Plant, D Price, D Shaw, P Taylor, R Ward, Mr N Williams, Mr G Worth and N Yates

IN ATTENDANCE:

14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Garry Cornell.

15 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

Some attendance details were incorrectly recorded. Mike Jones stated that SMDC agreement was given for £250 funding towards the 'Refill Scheme'. Cllr. Yates confirmed that the transfer of the Council's country parks was 'in the process of being transferred to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust' rather than 'had been transferred.....' as minuted.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2020 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(Proposed by Cllr. Jones and seconded by Cllr. Shaw).

16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest made.

17 **REMIT/TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE.**

The Chair stated that the break in meetings caused by COVID-19 gave an opportunity to reset how the Sub-Committee operated. The proposal was to break into smaller Working Groups, each one dealing with one of the topics as outlined previously. This would cover all the ground quicker, with each group then feeding into the main meeting. It was felt that the smaller numbers involved in discussions may well lead to better results.

Members felt that this would lead to better scrutiny and would achieve results quicker if set up on a 'Task & Finish' basis. It was important that members should be able to cross over between groups and that officers should assist where necessary. An elected member was to be the spokesperson for each group.

RESOLVED – That the proposals outlined above be **AGREED**.

18 **SMDC CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE.**

Cllr. Joe Porter – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity – outlined progress made in the 12 months since SMDC declared a Climate Change emergency. Points made included:-

- SMDC committed to carbon-neutrality by 2030;
- 10 year fleet replacement programme, looking at possible hydrogen powered vehicles;
- Procurement with an increased ‘green’ focus;
- Parks management contract under review, looking to use pollinator plants where possible and encouraging ‘re-wilding’ and wildflower meadows;
- Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan for release in September / October 2020 in partnership with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) and working with DEFRA;
- Training sessions provided by Keele University for members and staff;
- All council reports now included an assessment on Climate Change and Biodiversity;
- Management of all 12 Country Parks to be transferred to SWT;
- Meetings with the Midlands Energy Hub so that suitable locations for renewable energy projects could be identified, thus generating income;
- £10,000 per annum Climate Change Community Fund created, principally for school projects. Government grant aid was also available to schools;
- Some Parish / Town Councils visited, more when time / COVID-19 allows;
- Working with ‘Friends of’ groups;
- Engaged with ‘Staffs Climate Matters’ network;
- Visited Lafarge;
- Trying to encourage more cycling by creating more cycle-friendly routes;

The specific amount of carbon emissions saved so far was not available, as it was not possible to separate the inevitable ‘saving’ resulting from the COVID-19 effect.

Members expressed concerns that so little progress had been made since the declaration of a Climate Change emergency in 2019. Mike Jones confirmed that a Green Party response to the recent SMDC report would be issued in the near future.

19 **SMDC PROCUREMENT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT - DISCUSSION.**

Mark Trillo – Executive Director – advised that the Council’s Procurement Strategy (PS) was currently under review. The review was to be completed by the end of 2020 and the overall aim was to secure value for money for the taxpayer. He introduced Elaine Hallworth – Lead Procurement Officer – to detail the strategy.

Elaine confirmed that the review was to shape the PS for the next 3 years and gave the opportunity to build in key actions for sustainable sourcing. The draft PS was to be presented to members in the weeks to come and a discussion paper was available for comment.

It was necessary for the Council to adhere to transparency rules when compiling the PS. Mandatory requirements regarding emissions etc could be incorporated into tender documents. Procurement was now done electronically, drastically cutting

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down on printing, travel etc. The Council had new print rationalisation systems which also significantly reduced paper usage.

Energy contracts were determined as part of a national framework and options were being explored in that area. The Council was actively working with its partners AES and Parkwood to develop a fleet strategy focussing on a longer term vehicle replacement programme. This would ensure that minimum environmental requirements for basic specifications of new vehicles includes the required Euro standards on emissions are met and that opportunities to source alternative fuels should be appraised.

Members raised queries as follows(*Responses in brackets*):-

- Could we use the 'Preston' model in procurement? (*Elements to be built in where appropriate.*)
- Should we not be 'ISO 14001 accredited if we're asking tenderers to be? (*The accreditation requirement was proportionate to the value and nature of the contract. On lower value contracts the selection questionnaire would be tailored to suit and assistance would be given to help in compliance. SMDC were accredited until members decided not to continue with it on a cost basis.*)
- Environmental requirements in tendering were likely to increase the cost. Could we look for 'Value Engineering' as a mechanism to counterbalance the increased cost?
- The Sub-Committee was trying to achieve too much and, as a result, achieving very little. Of the 2 elements – Environment and Climate Change – the Sub-Committee should concentrate on carbon-based energy consumption, with a need to be proactive for substantial savings to be made.

20 CLIMATE ACTION GROUP UPDATE.

Mike Jones shared a document onscreen outlining progress made by 'Moorlands Climate Action' (MCA) since January 2020.

Activities listed were under 3 headings – Practical, Organisational and Community.

Cllr. Yates noted that a grant had been awarded to establish a 'Pocket Park' including a wetland area. MCA had agreed to give some voluntary hours to help out in the venture. Final agreement was awaited from SMDC as the landowner. Cllr. Porter agreed to follow this up with the SMDC Assets Team, stating that he was happy to meet up with MCA.

21 WORK PROGRAMME.

Given discussions on the earlier agenda item (Remit / Terms of Reference) the Work Programme was deferred for further discussions.

Cllr. Taylor advised that, as £250,000 expenditure had been earmarked for improvements at Brough Park Leisure Centre, such improvements should have regard to the green agenda. Could SMDC apply for 'Green Flag' status, which was a useful kitemark? A strategy would be needed for this.

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The next meeting would be held in August 2020 at a date to be decided.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Climate Change Working Group

1st October 2020

Update on the Council's work:

- 1. The 10 year fleet replacement programme - this is an opportunity to plan the purchase of more fuel efficient vehicles with an ambition to use Electric Vehicles or non CO2 producing vehicles towards the end of that period.**

Following an initial meeting with SMDC Officers the Energy Saving Trust has offered to review the Councils fleet, type and use of vehicles, travel distances and patterns, and advise on a transition. The data and information required is being compiled by AES and the Energy Saving Trust will start to analyse this in late September 2020.

- 2. Procurement strategy update – this is an opportunity to ensure products and services with zero or lowest greenhouse gas impacts are favoured in purchasing decisions.**

A consultation paper has been produced which outlines potential elements of a new procurement strategy including measures to reduce the councils greenhouse gas emissions (technically - scope 2 & 3 emissions). The paper was discussed at the last Climate Change Working Group. A draft strategy is now being prepared for consideration.

- 3. Asset management strategy – this is an opportunity to consider measures to save energy costs when replacing plant or machinery, energy efficiency measures and possible investment in photovoltaics.**

When the condition survey work is completed the Asset Management Plan will be reviewed – Targeted for 2021.

- 4. Energy: ESPO Framework – Total Gas and Power are our suppliers, at the end of the contract period there is an opportunity to consider switching to a green energy supplier.**

This is being considered as part of the procurement strategy. The current electricity supply source mix includes 47% renewable and 9% nuclear. While this contract is for four years there are opportunities within that to consider options for increasing the renewable source in the mix.

- 5. AES parks management contract – an opportunity to include appropriate action to encourage biodiversity and resilience (reduce mowing, encourage wild flowers and trees).**

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been engaged to provide advice and potentially to oversee a pilot programme in the management of council land in Staffordshire Moorlands with the aim of supporting nature recovery and biodiversity.

6. Treasury Management Strategy (TMSS) – an opportunity to consider investments in green energy and other projects.

The 2020/21 TMSS includes reference to Ethical Investing under Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations and that the Council would consider investment opportunities with ESG links provided that the Treasury Management Investment priorities are met – 1st Security, 2nd Liquidity, 3rd Yield (SLY).

- An opportunity to invest with Barclays in a Green deposit arose – Barclays as an institution meet the Security criterion, and the liquidity and yield of the product was the same as a standard investment with Barclays, therefore we opted to take the Green Deposits (£500,000).
- The deposits are linked to Barclays' Green Bond Purchasing Programme which covers 'a variety of thematic projects including energy efficiency, renewable energy, green transport, sustainable food, agriculture and forestry, waste management and greenhouse gas emission reduction'.

Work has begun to revise the Medium Term Financial Plan in the context of the Covid-19 impact.

7. A new Facilities Management Contract – an opportunity consider practices and products can reduce our CO2 footprint.

Discussions have commenced with Norse Group to look at the options to achieve this aim.

8. Local Plan, Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The evidence based assessment of the physical landscape is complete – this helps to identify the most appropriate sites for tree planting, peatland restoration, enhancing biodiversity, and green corridors to support resilience to climate impacts;

The work is now at project identification stage. (The opportunity to deliver schemes both large and small which join up over the years to maximise the benefits of this work.)

9. Transfer of the 12 SMDC countryside parks to the management of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, including a 5 year management plan (including tree planting, habitat enrichment) – taken with the Green Infrastructure Plan this provides an opportunity to build a delivery partnership with Staffordshire's leading conservation group.

Currently only waiting on legal agreement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council in relation to Wetley Moor Common which is currently a joint responsibility with SMDC.

10. Secure data on the Council's CO2 emissions – travel, buildings, operations and procurement – and use this to inform Council CO2 reduction targets and performance management.

We have data for staff travel, fleet vehicles and buildings. A meeting has been held with the Energy Saving Trust to enlist their help in developing our staff travel policy and a key strand of the Council's current Covid-19 recovery planning includes consideration of new ways of working which reduce CO2 emissions (Green Recovery).

2019 Data: Indication of CO2 emissions for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council - Initial assessment of CO2 emissions from fleet vehicles (waste, Street scene, parks), staff business mileage.

- Fleet: 636 metric tonnes of CO2
- Business Travel: 63.75 metric tonnes (shared with HPBC) = 31.875 metric tonnes
- Property: Gas and electricity (Leisure Centres not included) = 421 metric tonnes
- **Total 1,089 metric tonnes of CO2**

Note:

- Further work is required on the data (to check data is fully inclusive, take account of recording systems which have changed over time to make sure year on year comparisons are robust and to provide a detailed breakdown by area of operation)
- CO2 from business travel has been reducing year on year - from 110.34 metric tonnes (2013) to 63.75 metric tonnes (2019). Mileage has reduced in that period from 459,407 miles in 2013 to 284,985 miles in 2019.
- **Covid-19** Comparing business miles/CO2 for the 5 month period April to August 2020 with the same period in 2019 – 27 metric tonnes of CO2 (2019), 9.1 metric tonnes CO2 (2020)

11. Deliver staff training as required – priorities include training for key staff to be able to assess and report the greenhouse gas emissions associated with Council operations, policies and plans in order to inform decision making.

This has been on hold due to impact of Covid-19 on staff capacity but new contact has now been made with Keele University to provide training to get back on track.

12. Undertake investigative work and where possible feasibility testing of the most obvious large scale projects which a council might undertake:

- **Green energy – the potential for Council investment in solar energy projects and wind farms.**

Officers have secured national grid data on the location of the energy grid and in particular electricity sub stations – this is being mapped initially against the local Plan and Council owned land. An advisor from the Midlands Energy Hub is assisting the Council to make an initial assessment of potential locations for solar farms. (Proximity to a sub station is one of the key factors in determining the commercial viability of a solar farm - or wind farm).

- **EV charge points**

An initial meeting has been held with the Energy Saving Trust to secure their assistance to develop a strategy and consider the viability of installing EV charging points in the District.

- **Local offsetting of greenhouse gas emissions (none CO2)**

To be considered as part of the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan process.

13. Continue to develop partnerships with other councils – seek to use common frameworks, tools (including the Tyndall Centre Carbon Budget tool) and the opportunity to share costs/expertise.

We supported and now await the result of the Staffordshire Warmer Homes Partnership bid for funding from the Government's Local Authority Led - Green Homes Grant scheme. Officers are also working with Beat the Cold to support the Green Home Grants that are available directly to individual households – preparing scripts for our customers service staff, website information and publicity.

14. Council Heads of Service to encourage staff over the course of the year to identify and take practical actions to reduce CO2 emissions – encourage suggestions, investigate measures, share good practice across the organisation, flag good ideas which require authorisation.

Covid-19 has impact on this priority however there will have been a significant reduction in CO2 emissions from staff travel as a result of home working and virtual meetings. The lessons learned from this experience are being actively considered as part of the Council's Covid-19 recovery work. A staff survey will be undertaken in the near future.

15. Encourage local community initiatives to tackle climate change –

A small grant fund of £10,000 was established with the aim of mobilising community support. The grant called the Staffordshire Moorlands Community Climate Change Fund. The priority for the fund in 2020/21 is the establishment of Eco schools – this is now on hold.

16. Support the work of the Council's Climate Change sub-committee and produce a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan within the timescale to ensure agreed measures can be included within the budget for 2021/22.

The Working Group has been impacted by the need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and is now working virtually with a number of sub groups developing ideas around specific topic areas.

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Project/Action Record

Sub-Group name Climate Change : Natural Environment	
Chair: Phil Taylor	Date 23 September 2020
<p>Project or action proposed</p> <p>Provision of Maps identifying local areas of Green space and possible tree planting /re-wilding areas to be accessible for all parish councils and environmental groups</p>	<p>Production of educative material on the extraction of peat and its subsequent harmful effects on the environment</p>
<p>Expected outcome/justification</p> <p>This will enable enable all groups to better understand opportunities for environmental activity and the Climate Change working Group to obtain an overview of all community activities and avoid duplication of climate change work</p>	<p>To target schools ,allotments and other community groups on the vital effects of peat's role in carbon capture and environmental friendly alternatives</p>
<p>Resource required (Money/expertise) and source</p> <p>Costs of the reproduction of maps</p>	<p>Printing of pamphlet.</p> <p>Soil expert will write content</p> <p>Costs of printing</p>
<p>Responsible organisation</p> <p>SMDC</p>	<p>SMDC</p>
<p>Next steps required</p> <p>Time frame for implementation of action.</p> <p>Informing town/parish councils and green groups of the venues for accessing the maps</p>	<p>Writing of Pamphlet</p> <p>Time frame for implementing action</p> <p>Distribution of material</p> <p>Volunteers for distribution</p>

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