

## APPENDIX 1

### CLIMATE CHANGE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP

Tuesday, 29 October 2019

**PRESENT** – Councillors Lee (Chair), Curry, Howarth and Snedker

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Tait

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – David Hand (Head of Service for Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

#### 1 INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDANCE AT MEETING

Following the decision by the Council to declare a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 18 July 2019, a Climate Change Cross Party Working Group has been established to identify ways to reduce Carbon emissions and achieve a carbon neutral status Darlington Borough Council. The working group does not have decision making powers.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

#### 3 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE LEAD OFFICER - UPDATE

Members were advised that 21 applications had been received for the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer position and shortlisting identified six suitable applicants to be interviewed. The interviews will be held on 21<sup>st</sup> November and applicants will be required to give a presentation. It is hoped that the successful applicant will be in post by January 2020.

Members queried their involvement in the interview process and it was confirmed that due to the level of the position, Members could not be involved. However Members could be updated following the interviews.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That Members be provided with feedback from the interviews.

#### 4 DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

A discussion ensued in respect of the Terms of Reference for the working group. Members felt that in order to identify the target/aims for Darlington there was a requirement to establish the CO2 emission baseline for Darlington.

Reference was made to the data previously circulated to Members on Local Authority CO2 emissions estimates within the scope of influence of Local Authorities; Darlington had seen a 34% reduction from 2005 to 2017 however there were further reductions to be made. It was highlighted that the figures omitted sources of carbon such as including aviation and shipping.

It was confirmed that One Carbon World, a not for profit organisation, had established a carbon offset grant fund that aimed to help organisations to achieve carbon

neutrality, provided support to measure and define carbon output and would provide a balance to the identified carbon footprint using grant funding and carbon credits.

Members were advised of a North East Regional Energy meeting scheduled for next week, with representatives from the Tees Valley and Tyneside, APSE Energy, Schools, Universities and climate change champions.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the Terms of Reference be updated to reflect the agreed meeting frequency and timings of monthly and on Monday afternoons.

(b) That the Terms of Reference be brought to a future meeting to set the Outcomes with support of the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer.

(c) That details of the One Carbon World Carbon Offset Grant Fund be shared with the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer (once in post) to investigate further.

(d) Members be provided with feedback from the North East Regional Energy meeting.

## 5 NEXT STEPS

A discussion ensued in respect of the next steps to start to reduce carbon emissions. Members were advised that initial discussions have been held with Tees Valley in respect of housing standards and that further discussions were planned with Durham and North Yorkshire to ensure that collectively housing standards met the maximum specification requirements.

Members highlighted that local authorities had the ability to set additional requirements in terms of building regulations and it was proposed that a Planning Officer be invited to a future meeting to discuss the current specifications and to identify possible amendments to regulations to meet future requirements in respect of carbon emissions.

Reference was made to the Local Plan and scope to review the local variation of (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in the draft Local Plan prior to being received by Cabinet.

It was suggested that each Member of the working group takes responsibility for a department within the council and makes contact with an appropriate Officer to hold initial discussions to try and identify ways to reduce carbon emissions, and that each Member provides feedback to the working group.

A proposal to introduce a carbon budget for Cabinet Portfolios was also suggested.

A discussion ensued in respect of traffic congestion and the need to address this; the need for improved cycle ways and cycling to be encouraged in the borough; the proposal to identify school champions, including a teacher and student from each school; and Members were advised that 10,000 trees were to be planted within Darlington.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That a Planning Officer be invited to the next meeting to discuss planning requirements in respect of housing specifications.

(b) That Members be provided with details of Council Departments and key Officers.

## **6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Details were provided on the district heat network funding study; the next step was to bid to the Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU); that this would be part funded by the Government, Tees Valley and Darlington Borough Council; and that Tees Valley would be submitting the bid. The bidding closes on 3rd January.

It was confirmed that a site had been identified and was located to the side of the DfE building which would enable water from the River Skerne to be used. The HNDU could potentially be used heat the buildings of the Council, DfE, Dolphin Centre, Feethams and possibly wider.

Members were shown an instruction video for Scatter, a free carbon footprint tool. Members felt it would be beneficial to review data for Darlington at the next meeting of this group.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) Darlington data from Scatter to be provided at the next meeting for discussion.

(b) Darlington Heat Mapping and Energy Master planning document to be shared with Members for information.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

Monday, 25 November 2019

**PRESENT** – Councillors Lee (Chair), Curry and Snedker and Harker

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Howarth and Tait

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor Allen

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – David Hand (Head of Service for Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment), Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer) and James Langler (Planning Officer) and Dave Curry (Principal Building Control Officer)

### **7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.

### **9 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE LEAD OFFICER - UPDATE**

Members were advised that interviews for the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer position were held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November; the successful candidate had accepted the job offer; previous experience included 9 years as a Senior Sustainability Advisor; project management of a climate change advisory group; and the expected start date was February 2020.

### **10 HOUSING SPECIFICATIONS**

In light of the proposal in the draft Darlington Local Plan to build 10,000 homes by 2036, Members requested further information on housing specifications, to ensure that new houses were being built to meet low carbon emission requirements.

James Langler, Planning Officer, gave a presentation to Members detailing the national legislation and policy and guidance in place to address climate change; the national planning policy framework outlined the local requirements that should form part of the local plan; and Members noted that energy performance standards within the local plan could only be set up to an equivalent of Level 4 of the code for sustainable homes.

It was reported that a consultation was underway on the Future Homes Standards and two options were being consulted on; the Government's preference was Option 2, (Fabric Plus Technology) - 31% reduction in carbon emissions delivered through the installation of carbon-saving technology (e.g. solar panels) and better building fabric standards; and that the Council was exploring the cost implications for the two options.

Details were provided of the policies within the Local Plan in place to address climate change. A discussion ensued in respect of wind farms; the local plan allowed for small scale wind farms without the requirement for land allocation; large scale wind farms would require a full survey of the borough; and that the policy was criteria based rather than allocation based.

Members were provided with details of alterations that were required to existing and new build homes to meet low carbon emission requirements; costs associated with achieving higher standards; and details of funding schemes available.

A discussion ensued in respect of council housing; it was confirmed that an estimated 100 houses would be built per year over the next 10 years; that cost implications of building to a higher standard may result in fewer houses being built; and an exercise would need to be undertaken to identify the cost of building housing to a higher standard.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That Members be provided with the outcome of the costing exercise being undertaken by the Council.

(b) That Officers undertake an exercise to identify build costs for council housing at Level 4 and Level 6 standards.

(c) That Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director, Housing, be invited to a future meeting.

## **11 DARLINGTON EMISSIONS - SCATTER DATA**

Members reviewed the Darlington emissions data, noting that residential buildings had the largest carbon output; questioned how figures were measured and monitored; and felt that a baseline was needed to be able to monitor emissions on an annual basis.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That Scatter Data be circulated to Members for information.

(b) That a Combined Authority representative be invited to the next meeting to explain the Scatter Data.

## **12 DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL DEPARTMENTS**

Members reviewed the list of Darlington Borough Council department contacts and agreed that a Climate Change champions system would be valuable.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That Councillor Lee liaises with the Managing Director to implement a Climate Change Champion system.

## **13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A presentation '20's Plenty for Darlington' was given to Members, outlining the case for a 20mph speed limit to be implemented across the Borough.

The presentation outlined the road death statistics for pedestrians and cyclists; that more than four fifths of Darlington residents saw cycling as a high risk choice when deciding how to travel; and the benefits of a 20mph speed limit scheme.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the local authority cycling officer and representatives from cycling clubs be invited to a future meeting of this group.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

Monday, 16 December 2019

**PRESENT** – Councillors Lee (Chair), Curry, Snedker and Tait

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Howarth

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – David Hand (Head of Service for Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment), Pauline Mitchell (Assistant Director Housing and Building Services) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

### **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.

### **16 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING - BUILD COSTS**

The Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services provided an update to Members in respect of local authority housing.

Members were advised that new build was financed from a combination of Homes England (HE) grant funding and the Council's Housing Revenue Account, which was a ring fenced, self- financing budget. Rental income from each new build property is used to offset the cost of Prudential Borrowing so if the cost of provision is too high the overall scheme does not stack up financially. Members were further advised that priority was currently being given to building properties with increased space standards and lifetime homes standards for larger families, as well as, for adults and children with disabilities and this increased the overall cost. Some energy efficiency products are not always popular with our tenants and work would be required in order to get their buy-in and identify products that were easy for them to use and maintain.

Following a question by Members it was confirmed that some local authority housing was built to Sustainable Homes Code Level 4 at a time when this was a requirement of HE grant funding; but properties currently being built were to Code 3 and were well insulated with good thermal efficiency and double glazing.

It was reported that, in order to support the target of net zero carbon by 2050, the Government had pledged to invest £6.3bn to improve the efficiency of 2.2 million social homes; the local authority would need to engage with tenants in respect of any retrofitting; and that the Northern Housing Consortium, a membership organisation made up of local authorities, ALMOs and associations that provide social housing for tenants, met on a regular basis to discuss a range of topics.

Discussion ensued in respect of planning policy; Members were advised that a change to planning policy to incorporate higher build requirements would require a

supplementary planning policy; agreement from other authorities in the region would be necessary to enable uniform build requirements across the region and to ensure Darlington was not standalone; and initial discussions had begun with Tees Valley Planning Managers.

Members agreed that further discussions were required with Members from other local authorities to determine the actions in place to address climate change and to seek their views on the proposed introduction of uniform build requirements.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That Members of this Working Group receive an update following the next meeting of the Northern Housing Consortium.

(b) That the Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment liaises with other local authorities in the region to determine the actions in place to address climate change and to seek their views on the proposed introduction of uniform build requirements.

## **17 DARLINGTON EMISSIONS SCATTER DATA**

The Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment gave a presentation to Members on the SCATTER (Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reduction) Tool.

The presentation outlined the objectives and functionality of SCATTER; that SCATTER could provide emissions data and emissions scenario modelling; and would help to identify high emissions areas for prioritisation of efforts.

It was noted that SCATTER could be used to provide a baseline for Darlington however due to limitations of SCATTER, additional work would need to be commissioned to provide a more in-depth baseline for Darlington Council buildings; this would have a cost implication; and that the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer would undertake a costing exercise once in post.

**IT WAS AGREED** – That the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer undertakes a costing exercise in respect additional work to identify a baseline for Darlington Council buildings.

## **18 UPDATE ON MEETING WITH MANAGING DIRECTOR**

The Chair met with the Managing Director to discuss the proposal of a Climate Change Champion system. Members were advised that the Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment would be providing an update report from this Working Group to Chief Officer Board/ Chief Officer Executive (COB/COE); and that this would include the work to date and the proposal for a Climate Change Champion.

Discussion ensued on the benefit of a Climate Change Champion; the Champions would link in with Members to provide updates to the Working Group; and key messages could be circulated via the weekly briefing and notice boards.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That Members note the update.

(b) That an update from COB/COE be provided to Members at a future meeting of this Working Group.

## **19 TREE COVERAGE**

Discussion ensued in respect of tree coverage; an audit of trees in the Borough was being undertaken and Members requested that the Local Authority Arborist be invited to update Members.

**IT WAS AGREED –** (a) That the Local Authority Arborist be invited to the meeting of the Working Group scheduled for 20 January 2020.

## **20 CYCLING**

Discussion ensued in respect of cycling and 20mph speed limits. Members were advised of the cycling allowance and cycle to work scheme, both of which would encourage Officers to cycle to work.

It was noted that further evidence was required as to the environmental benefits of reducing the speed limit to 20mph; and that an action plan, once developed would help to focus the work of the group and identify next steps in respect of cycling and 20mph speed limits.

**IT WAS AGREED –** That cycling and introduction of 20mph speed limits be considered at a future meeting of this Working Group.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

Monday, 20 January 2020

**PRESENT** – Councillors Lee (Chair), Curry, Howarth, Snedker and Tait

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – David Hand (Head of Service for Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment), Phil Haynes (Senior Arboricultural Officer) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

### **21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

With regard to Minute 20 it was noted that discussions held in respect of environmental benefits were relating to reducing the speed limit to 20mph, rather than cycling.

**RESOLVED** – That, with the addition of ‘20mph speed limits’ to Minute 20, the minutes be noted.

### **23 TREE COVERAGE**

The Senior Arboricultural Officer provide an update to Members in respect of tree coverage in the Borough of Darlington.

It was reported that 10,000 trees were to be planted over a 5 year period; areas were identified with estates and planning and included Wylam Avenue, Hummersknott Avenue, Cummins, North Park and Bensham Park; that 2000 trees had been planted at Ingenium Parc; and the Council’s Tree strategy outlined the plans for all streets leading into the town to be tree lined.

Members were provided with details of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund; and noted that Darlington had successfully bid for funding to plant 160 trees along the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor.

It was reported that Tree planting packs were free; the Council regularly liaise with Friends Groups who provide support to plant whips. Members noted the different types of trees planted in the borough; that smaller deciduous trees such as Gingko, Tulip and Dawn Redwoods were planted in residential streets and larger trees, including Beech and Oak were consigned to parkland.

Discussion ensued in respect of the cost of planting older trees which would have an immediate impact on carbon levels when compared to whips; and queried which tree species were the most efficient at carbon capture and storage.

Further discussion ensued in respect of a whip selling and planting scheme, whereby residents could dedicate a tree to loved ones, with a book of remembrance to record

the dedication and the location of the tree. This scheme could contribute towards the number of trees planted and provide funding to buy established trees.

Members noted that Darlington Forests, a charitable organisation, had engaged with the Council and had plans to plant 400 whips at Maidendale nature reserve; felt that there was a desire of residents to plant their own trees; and agreed that further discussions be held with Darlington Forests.

Members highlighted the lack of trees in car parks in the borough and proposed a letter be sent to private car park owners to encourage tree planting. Members felt that developers tended not to include green infrastructure as the responsibility for maintenance would remain with them rather than the local authority; and noted that private housing developments commonly included a provision in the deed of transfer for a service charge, placing a duty on homeowners to contribute to the maintenance of communal open spaces that had not been adopted by the Council.

Discussion ensued in respect of Council owned land in rural areas; that this land could be used to locate a nursery for the Council to grow its own whips; and noted that funding was available to support this.

**RESOLVED –** (a) That the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer obtains costings for planting older trees and identifies optimal tree species for carbon capture and storage.

(b) That a letter be drafted by the Chair to private car park owners in the borough to encourage tree planting.

(c) That Members receive progress updates on tree planting in the borough as and when available.

## **24 UPDATE ON MEETINGS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS**

Members were advised that Planning Managers from across the Tees Valley had met to discuss the proposal for uniform build requirements; all authorities were keen to work together as a region.

It was reported that currently not all Councils in the Tees Valley region had declared a climate emergency and for those that had, not all had resources in place to progress.

The Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy and Environment met with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and it was reported that the RSLs were in a position to go forward with efficiency measures over and above requirements, including retrofitting. It was reported that Thirteen Group were installing air source heat pumps in their properties and Members were welcome to undertake a site visit.

Following a question, it was confirmed that the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer would be able to provide details of government funding available for landlords to retrofit their properties.

**RESOLVED** – That Members be provided with details of Government funding available to landlords.

## **25 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING - BUILD COSTS**

It was suggested that Members undertake a site visit to a passive house to determine how beneficial these would be to tenants and the Council.

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Snedker identifies a passive house site for Members to undertake a site visit.

## **26 UPDATE ON MEETING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE CHAMPION, DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Chair met with Councillor John Clare, Climate Change Champion for Durham County Council (DCC).

It was reported that DCC had a Climate Change policy in place; had appointed twenty officers to deliver their carbon reduction commitment, with ten officers focussing on Low Carbon and ten officers to focussing on energy efficiency; DCC were in agreement that a regional climate change group be formed; and Members were advised that Darlington Partnership were keen to be involved.

Members were advised that DCC had climate change champions in place for each department; and that the champions were responsible for developing a department-specific climate change policy that would feed into a central group.

Members raised concern in respect of Teesside International Airport; that projected emissions would take up 50 per cent of the carbon budget by 2050; and questioned if Tees Valley Combined Authority could provide support to help mitigate the impact of emissions resulting from air travel to and from Teesside International Airport.

Discussion ensued in respect of switching the Councils energy supplier to a green supplier. It was reported that 12 Councils in the North East had negotiated a recent deal with an electricity supplier, however this could be scoped in the future by the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer.

It was confirmed that work was ongoing to identify climate change champions within Darlington Borough Council; a list of nominations was being compiled; and that a meeting would be held with nominees to discuss expectations of the role.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the Chair drafts a letter to the Mayor of the Tees Valley to seek support to mitigate the impact of emissions resulting from air travel to and from Teesside International Airport.

(b) That the Sustainability, Carbon and Climate Change Team Leader at Durham County Council be invited to update the group on the work of Durham County Council.

## **27 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members made reference to the Futures Fund outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan and suggested the introduction of a Futures Fund theme that would enable the Council to be climate change ready.

Discussion ensued in respect of questions posed at Committees in relation to climate change; and Members felt that where relevant, these should be addressed by the Committee.