

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 29 APRIL 2021**

Held virtually at 7.00 pm and livestreamed on the
Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors J Wheeler (Chairman), B Bansal (Vice-Chairman), G Dickman,
L Healy, R Jones, R Mallender, D Simms, R Walker and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks

Executive Manager -
Neighbourhoods

E Georgiou

Team Manager - Environment

H Tambini

Democratic Services Manager

L Webb

Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

35 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

36 Minutes of the meeting 28 January 2021

Councillor Jones referred to Minute 31 'Edwalton Golf Course Strategic Review' and referred to the sentence "... other leisure options had been considered but were not considered affordable" and suggested that the word 'consultants' should be added to that sentence to better reflect the issue that was raised, given that some members of the Group had challenged if that was a wide enough range of leisure activities.

Members of the Group were happy to support the suggested amendment to the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021, were approved as a true record of the meeting, subject to the following amendment: to Minute 31:

"..... other leisure options had been considered by the consultants but were not considered affordable."

37 Carbon Management Plan

The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods introduced a report, which summarised the work previously undertaken to bring the Carbon Management Plan forward, including the annual scrutiny of the Plan by this Group.

The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods advised the Group that the report provided an update on the various workstreams, which had continued to be brought forward, in spite of the Covid pandemic. Reference was made to the development of a Carbon Clever Progress Dashboard, which provided a snapshot of progress in respect of the Council's carbon reduction commitments and moving towards its goal of becoming net zero by 2030. The Group was advised that going forward, the Dashboard would be updated and shared regularly with all Councillors, other interest groups and the public, to ensure transparency.

The Team Manager Environment delivered a presentation on the Carbon Management Plan Progress Update, which provided details on the following issues, and members of the Group were invited to make comments and observations on the presentation and report:

- Understanding different greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on the climate.
- Explaining what the different Carbon 'scopes' mean.
- How the Council was performing.
- Emerging opportunities
- Priorities for 2021/22.

Members of the Group thanked the Team Manager Environment for the comprehensive and informative presentation, which was extremely positive and in particular, welcomed the introduction of the Carbon Clever Progress Dashboard.

In answer to a question regarding the availability of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 2 Funding, the Team Manager Environment advised that the allocation was available throughout the Midlands, and all the Nottinghamshire districts had accepted that allocation. The funding was to promote 'green' recovery, and to improve energy measures in owner occupied properties that had an E, F or G rating. Currently an area in East Leake was being considered, as it was easier to deliver a project in a more concentrated area of similar type housing.

In respect of the three Carbon Emission Scopes, the Group was advised that the Council had already made a commitment in relation to Scopes 1 and 2. In relation to Scope 3, which were indirect emissions and not under the Council's control, there was already some understanding of that; however, as the Council gained a better understanding, initially the amount of emissions would increase, as currently no data had been captured for the supply chain, and that would be the largest contributor.

In answer to a question regarding the importance of ensuring that residents continued to be made aware of the important role that everyone needed to play to reduce carbon emissions, the Team Manager Environment advised that a comprehensive Communications Plan was in place, which would highlight both the Council's carbon neutral activities and the progress being made, together with an emphasis on promoting behavioural change and ensuring that residents understood the important role that they must also take.

In respect of the 2019/20 data for the Dashboard, the Group was advised that although there had been some delay in collecting data due to Covid, it was hoped that it would be available over the next couple of months, and that would be added to the Dashboard and shared.

In answer to a question regarding the availability of data related to electric vehicle charging point usage, the Team Manager Environment confirmed that there was information available and that would be shared with the Group.

A member of the Group raised a concern and questioned the viability of the use of air source heat pumps and suggested that it was essential that the Council took a balanced approach, looked at all the available options and undertook a cost benefit analysis before committing to any scheme. The Team Manager Environment confirmed that Rushcliffe Country Park was the Council's exemplar site, where all the Council's testing and evaluations would take place and the Group was advised that a complete business case would be undertaken to identify the best options going forward for buildings across the Council's estate.

The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods reiterated the previous comments and confirmed that the Council would continue to carry out a full business appraisal in respect of any new technology that it might wish to adopt. In respect of promoting schemes to residents, the Group was advised that the Council would be adopting a neutral stance, it would provide advice and support to the public and help them to make choices, given that the technology was continually changing. Looking ahead, it would be important to consider what infrastructure would be required at a strategic level to use and operate some of the new technologies, including hydrogen. The Group noted that the Council was involved in various groups across the county, via the Environmental Strategy Group and the Midlands Energy Hub, to ensure that it was at the centre of the development of those new technologies and infrastructures required to support them.

In answer to a question regarding the use of a solar canopy, officers stated that the canopy was made up of PV panels that could be used to charge a car and the drawings would be shared with the Group. The Group was informed that this was part of an innovative project with Nottingham City Council and a key partner, BP Chargemaster, and following a study, Gamston Community Hall car park had been identified as an excellent place to locate the canopy. It would therefore be part of the Council's infrastructure and an asset. The Group noted that currently work could not take place to set up the canopy, given that the Community Hall was being used as a vaccination centre. Once established, the Council would be encouraging other businesses including supermarkets to become involved and it was noted that local supermarkets were already expressing an interest in using electric car charging points.

Regarding the distribution of wildflower seeds to parish and town councils, the Team Manager Environment confirmed that seeds had been given to the West Bridgford Local Area Forum.

In answer to a question related to the reasons for the reduction in emissions since 2008, highlighted in the presentation, officers advised that before the

original Carbon Management Plan had been adopted, some significant changes had already occurred, including the move from the Civic Centre, and following on from that, the old Depot, both of which were old buildings, using old technology and were difficult to heat efficiently. The Council was constantly looking at ways to reduce its use of gas and electricity and reducing emissions across the Council's estate and vehicle fleet.

A member of the Group raised a number of issues related to Scope 3, including the control of externally managed leisure centres, and matters related to the granting of planning applications and asked what the Council could control. The Team Manager Environment advised that actions had been captured on the Carbon Management Plan, and officers would continue to review contracts, monitor KPIs and Supplementary Planning Documents, and work with all listed providers to improve energy efficiencies. The Group noted that the Council could influence but not directly control Scope 3 emissions, and therefore the Council's carbon neutral commitment focused on Scopes 1 and 2. Section B of the Plan related to how the Council could work with businesses and residents to influence others, and it was acknowledged that any changes to planning would require a change in national policy.

In answer to a further question regarding Scope 3 and how messages could be filtered through to town and parish councils, the rural sector and other organisations including Metropolitan Housing, the Team Manager Environment confirmed that officers were continually working with parish and town councils and other interested groups to help them reduce their carbon footprints and hopefully align to the Council's carbon neutral target and that work would continue, including the roll out of carbon literacy training. In respect of Streetwise, the Group was advised that officers were looking at its Environment Policy, and ways in which it could also align to the Council's carbon neutral target. The Team Manager Environment advised that Metropolitan Housing was referred to in the Carbon Management Plan, the organisation had been contacted regarding the LAD2 funding, and officers would work with them to ensure that properties were as energy efficient as possible. In conclusion, the Group was advised that issues related to farming had been captured in the Carbon Management Plan.

A member of the Group referred to the importance of ensuring that new homes were fit for purpose and as energy efficient as possible and suggested that the Council should encourage the Government to make the long awaited changes to building regulations to facilitate that. It would also be helpful if the Council could produce a document to assist potential homeowners, when choosing a property, to allow them to question developers regarding the environmental and ecological measures they used.

The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods advised that the Council continually worked through various Government channels and representatives to monitor the speed of change in respect of national policy and legislation, and all local authorities were hoping to see this change in legislation brought through, to ensure that properties were fit for purpose going forward, and those regular discussions would continue. The Group was advised that officers would consider ways to assist new homeowners to ask the right questions, perhaps under the Carbon Clever marketing brand.

In conclusion, the Chairman referred to the importance of educating and encouraging people regarding the changes that they could make, and that small steps should be encouraged, as some people could initially be put off by the thought of having to make big changes, which would be more difficult. It was hoped that through a gradual change of mindset, improvements would continue to be made.

It was **RESOLVED** that the progress to date of the adopted Carbon Management Action Plan be noted and endorsed.

38 **Work Programme**

The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services, which detailed the proposed Communities Scrutiny Group Work Programme for 2021/22. The Group was advised that currently there were a number of topics on the Scrutiny Matrix, which would further populate the Work Programme in due course.

The Chairman updated the Group on the continued progress of the Rushcliffe Equalities Scheme, following its consideration by the Group in August 2020 and January 2021. The feedback provided by the Group had been taken on board and the report would be considered by Cabinet on 11 May 2021. Members were thanked for their hard work and the importance of the scrutiny process was reiterated.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work Programme detailed below be approved by the Communities Scrutiny Group:

July 2021

Safeguarding Adults and Children Strategy
Work Programme

October 2021

Police Performance and Resources for Rushcliffe
Work programme

January 2022

Housing Delivery Plan
Work programme

April 2022

Carbon Management Plan
Waste Strategy
Work Programme

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN