

Overview & Scrutiny Task Group

Meeting Notes



Review topic	Date of Meeting
Climate Emergency	01 February 2023

Attendance	Venue
<p>Members: S. Norman (Chair) D. Robertson A. Little J. Powell H. Warburton</p> <p>Apologies M. Wilcox Kristie Charlesworth Mike Kinghan - Whittington</p> <p>Officers: Will Stevenson</p> <p>Witnesses: A. Lax Simon Fletcher Robin Taylor – Transition Lichfield</p>	Committee Room

Areas Discussed
<p>Welcome and introductions The Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Steven Norman welcomed everyone to the meeting</p> <p>Notes of the last meeting were discussed, and the task group queried the wording: “that economics should not get in the way”. The Chief Executive assured the task group that the net-zero carbon emissions target of 2035 would cost money but there is a new effort to be more ambitious and open with that.</p> <p>Questions to the Cabinet Member and officers on progress made on the Climate Change Action Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is it completed? <p>Members were told that large structural design changes within the authority had been undertaken to place greater focus on climate change, unlike previously where the role was an add-on to existing jobs. There is now a single policy strategy and service that sits with Kristie</p>

Charlesworth (Ecology & Climate Change Manager). An action plan is in place, having been designed before Christmas, to focus on the emissions produced by Lichfield District Council – not Lichfield district. The '2050 Strategy', due to be launched following the 2023 Local Elections, will produce a district wide plan. So far 7500 responses have been received from residents, with most highlighting the environment as the main area of importance.

It was confirmed that the action plan would be shared with the task group.

2. Has the training on writing the "Environmental Impact" element in reports to members been completed?

Members were informed this would be investigated further now that the organisational structure has been implemented.

3. What are the revenue resources available to progress the Action Plan?

It was confirmed that the next fleet procurement budget includes the capacity for officer time on this.

4. Have Housing Associations been added to the list of Third-Party involvement?

This required further follow up with the Ecology & Climate Change Manager.

5. What is the current situation with regard to the district's Communications Plan contributing to the "Target 50 Plan"?

The first round of engagement took place in September 2022. 7500 responses were received, with most relating to the environment. It was noted that under -18s were massively underrepresented amongst responses. The council is now actively developing priorities based on this engagement and will subsequently take these priorities back out to consultation. Members were assured that this would be an ambitious plan, as a 4-year strategy is not enough to tackle climate change.

6. What has been done so far to encourage community engagement on The District Council's website and in the community?

It was confirmed that all provisions are now in place for the action plan to be set out clearly on the council website. This will include information relating to the climate change emergency and links to EV charging/waste recycling/soft plastics as a resource for residents. The task group were told that this had taken longer than anticipated due to the IT infrastructure and inflexibility of the website. Effective and efficient infrastructure is required to meet the priorities set by councillors. The inclusion of small graphics, linking to different topics, was suggested.

The Ecology & Climate Change Manager was noted as having been very active and engaged with Transition Lichfield and neighbouring authorities.

7. What action was taken on officer and member training that was due to be ready in June last year?

Details of this question were discussed during question 2.

8. Have we contacted Staffordshire University with a request for help with our Action Plan?

It was confirmed that the Chief Executive has met Staffordshire University representatives a few times as well as discussing the campus at wider Staffordshire Chief Executives meetings. In both instances the university do not seem very willing to engage. Keele University was highlighted as having done similar work throughout the county.

9. What progress has there been on the "Action Plan beyond LDC" that was due to begin last Autumn?

Details of this question were discussed during question 1.

AOB:

Transition Lichfield asked whether the planning authority could instruct developers to include future proofing/high insulation/heat pumps, into new development plans. It was noted that the age of housing stock in the country make it hard to retrofit.

Members were assured that the district are looking at installing EV charging points. The idea of slow charge EV points to draw footfall into the city centre was highlighted as something worth considering.

The task group were also informed that the council is considering comms and marketing campaigns on recycling and the work currently undertaken to tackle climate change. These campaigns would be brought for review at the next meeting of the task group.

Meeting concluded at 18:20

Outcomes

That the information received be noted and collated in readiness for the launch of the '2050 Strategy' and next task group meeting.

Further Work Required/Next Steps:

To review the district council action plan and wider '2050 Strategy' action plan.

To examine the report provided by Transition Lichfield relating to retrofitting and heat pumps.

To view the comms and marketing campaigns on recycling.