

**Minutes of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Meeting held on 9 January 2023**

Present: Tina Clements (Chair)

Attendance

Philippa Haden
Philip Hudson
Graham Hutton

Peter Kruskonjic (Vice-Chair
(Overview))
Bernard Williams

Also in attendance: Darryl Eyers, Jonathan Lindop and David Williams

Apologies: Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf and David Smith

PART ONE

40. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

41. Minutes of meeting held on 10 November 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

42. Staffordshire Sustainability Board Communication Plan 2023

The Committee considered a report of the Cabinet Member for Environment Infrastructure and Climate Change regarding the development of a Staffordshire Sustainability Board Communication Plan by Partner Authorities represented on the Staffordshire Sustainability Board (schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

The Board was established in January 2022 with the aim of encouraging and supporting partnership working between Staffordshire District/Borough and County Council's in their efforts to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions towards a net zero target. In March 2022 the Board adopted a vision together with ten commitments for action during 2022/23 ie:-

"The Staffordshire Sustainability Board (SSB) is to facilitate the collaborative forum, to work together, as the democratically elected bodies in Staffordshire, to influence change and to encourage

organisations and individuals to ensure that Staffordshire is net carbon zero by at least 2050 or before.

The board will also work as a collective to address climate change adaptation measures that are within individual organisations leverage, to influence and facilitate change with adaptation to climatic changes that are already locked in Sustainability and habitat biodiversity will be reviewed throughout 2022 and shall be considered in a revised vision in January 2023.

- *"1. **Baseline and Reporting** – All Councils will prepare and publish an annual baseline analysis of their organisation's carbon footprint. All Councils will assess and publish progress in reducing their carbon footprint in October each year.*
- *2. **Carbon Literacy Training & Awareness** – All Councillors and Senior Management Teams will undertake carbon literacy training to build corporate awareness of the issue and the Council's role in securing carbon reduction. All Councils will conduct a community impact assessment for key projects and proposals and include an assessment of Climate Change Implications in all key decision reports.*
- *3. **Ambassadors** - All Councils will encourage members to act as climate change ambassadors, to encourage reduction in organisational carbon footprints and champion this in their own division/ward areas.*
- *4. **Green Travel Planning** – All Councils will support and facilitate green travel by members, employees, and their communities through promotion of green travel planning. Policy implementation on green transport and ways of working.*
- *5. **Communications** – All Councils will contribute to a countywide communications group who will plan to deliver and manage a countywide Communications Plan, working together to drive our collective net zero visions forward, throughout the County.*
- *6. **Green Energy** – All the Councils will commit to procure 100% green energy supplies for their electricity as soon as existing contract commitments allow.*
- *7. **Energy Reduction** – By January 2023, all Councils will have established plans to reduce energy consumption across their estates.*

- **8. Low carbon fuelled fleet vehicles** – *Moving towards an aspirational zero emission operational vehicle fleet, the Councils will by 2025, establish a plan to move to low carbon fuels within their internal fleets by 2030.*
- **9. Waste & Recycling** – *By 2025 there will be a countywide waste strategy that all authorities will adhere to. This strategy will cover all aspects of the countywide waste operation, to reduce residual waste creation, increase recycling rates, promote composting of food waste at home and establish food waste collections throughout the County.*
- **10. Innovation and Technology** – *Working collaboratively with research institutions, businesses and partners the Councils will encourage both innovation and technology development, that will assist the delivery of our combined net zero visions”.*

On 10 October 2022 the Board provisionally agreed a Joint Climate Change Communication Plan for 2023. Whilst Partner Authorities were responsible for communicating their climate change responsibilities and actions, it was recognised that by working together, they could have a greater reach and impact. Therefore, the Plan set out a co-ordinated calendar of unified and consistent communications activity to be delivered throughout the year to raise awareness, deepen understanding and inspire action on climate change.

Each Partner Authority had been asked to make arrangements to formally adopt the Plan and accordingly Staffordshire County Council’s Cabinet were to give it consideration at their meeting on 18 January 2023.

In the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued, Members gave detailed scrutiny to the Plan asking questions, seeking clarification and raising areas of concern as necessary including:- (i) specific measures aimed at reducing emissions of potent ‘green house’ gases such as Methane and; (ii) the public engagement initiatives being promoted enabling residents to give their views on the work of Partners generally and programme of activities contained in the Plan.

In conclusion, they welcomed the joined-up approach which was being adopted by the Board together with the various initiatives listed in the Plan which they hoped would assist Staffordshire in meeting its ‘green house’ gas reduction targets so that the worst effects of climate change could be avoided. They noted that the first campaign identified in the Plan was intended to be run on 14 February 2023 ie Valentine’s Day and also welcomed the pace of the schedule of work.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Staffordshire Sustainability Board Communications Plan be supported in terms of the Partnership approach to be adopted, its content and pace of activities which had been identified.

43. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy

The Committee considered a joint report of the Cabinet Members for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Change and Highways and Transportation regarding a draft Staffordshire public Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Strategy (schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

The draft Strategy set out the Authority's priorities for the installation of EV charging points across the County through an analysis of policy, funding and technology. The Strategy referenced both current and forecast demand for facilities in each Staffordshire District/Borough together with the County as a whole, in order to inform strategic decision making by key stakeholders. It went on to recommend general locations across the County that should be considered for charging infrastructure and the optimal solutions appropriate to match demand.

Recognising that, whilst the Council could coordinate the installation of EV charging points in on-street locations, the Strategy outlined how support was required from Parish, District and Borough Councils, residents, workplaces, retail and leisure destinations in order to provide points where need was greatest. In addition, the Strategy set out how the Council intended to engage with residents and ensure that they had access to informative material about EVs and EV charging infrastructure and were encouraged to transition to the use of EVs.

The adoption of the strategy also helped the Council monitor progress and manage expectations from residents and stakeholders with regard to EV infrastructure, support other strategies to deliver their vision, aims and objectives including the emerging Local Transport Plan.

During their presentation, the Cabinet Members highlighted: - (i) The Role of a Local Authority in the Delivery of EV Charging; (ii) Strategy Development since 2019; (iii) the contents of The Strategy document; (iv) Why the Need for a Strategy; (v) the Current Picture; (vi) current Staffordshire Public Chargepoints; (vii) Where do We (the County Council) Want to get to and How and; (viii) Conclusions.

In the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued, Members gave detailed scrutiny to the draft Strategy, asking questions, seeking clarification and raising areas of concern as necessary, including: - (i) the joint working with Local Planning Authorities necessary to ensure new development eg carparks etc incorporated facilities for EV charging, where

appropriate; (ii) the various challenges faced by Local Authorities in helping to co-ordinate the provision of appropriate on and off street EV charging points; (iii) the extent to which the Cabinet Members had collaborated with Partners such as National Grid in developing the Strategy; (iv) the importance of joint working with mobility organisations to ensure that the needs of residents with disabilities were adequately provided for and; (v) how the County Council's car lease scheme could be adapted to promote the use of electric vehicles.

In conclusion, Members expressed their support for the draft Strategy whilst acknowledging the County Council's role was not to provide EV charging points themselves. They looked forward to the Authority providing assistance to other key stakeholders in ensuring appropriate EV charging point coverage throughout the County having regard to the contribution it would make towards sustaining prosperity in the future.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Cabinet Members be urged to have regard to the above-mentioned comments in their work to finalise the draft Staffordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy.

44. Highways Transformation - Quarter 3 Progress Update

The Committee considered an oral report and PowerPoint presentation (slides attached at Appendix 1 to the signed minutes) of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport updating them on the progress made with regard to the Highways Transformation Programme.

During his presentation and report the Cabinet Member highlighted:- (i) the Future Highways Delivery Model (including an overview of the Hybrid Mixed Economy; a Contract Extension Update; a Review of Organisational Structure and; Functional Management Aligned to Local Patch); (ii) Transforming the Current Offer; (iii) Additional Investment Update (including Capital Investment; Structural Maintenance; Minor Capital Maintenance and Work Stack Reduction; Repairing Places Pilot; Customer Services Improvements and; Revenue Investment) and; (iv) Priorities for Quarter Four 2022/23.

In the full and wide-ranging discussion which ensued Members gave detailed scrutiny to the progress made in the Programme to date, asking questions, seeking clarification and raising areas of concern as necessary, including:- (i) the importance of communication with local residents and customer satisfaction; (ii) management of highway works by statutory undertakers and quality controls and; (iii) the need for a County-wide traffic and transport management strategy to reduce 'rat-runs' and divert heavy goods vehicles from minor roads.

In reply, the Cabinet Member acknowledged the concerns of Members stating that perceptions of the existing delivery arrangements were often poor. However, he reassured them that future arrangements would prioritise quality in order to arrest the decline in the condition of the highway network which had occurred in recent years. He went on to urge Members to use the various channels provided to report highways defects and confirmed that the new emphasis on quality had been communicated to the Authority's existing Highways Strategic Partner. However, the Council's ability to control operations by statutory undertakers was limited.

With regard to 'pot-holes', the Cabinet Member confirmed that new technology had been trialled with a view to improving the speed and effectiveness of repairs and outlined the new approach to communications and 'Local' Member involvement.

In conclusion, the Committee agreed that satisfactory progress had been made in the Highways Transformation Programme to date but urged the Cabinet Member to have regard to their comments, particularly in respect of the need to build confidence and improve quality, in his work to implement the future delivery model for the service.

RESOLVED – (i) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted.

(ii) That satisfactory progress had been made in the Highways Transformation Programme to date.

(iii) That the Cabinet Member be urged to have regard to the above-mentioned comments in his work to implement the new future delivery model for Staffordshire Highways.

45. Request for Scrutiny Review - Civil Parking Enforcement in Staffordshire

The Committee considered an oral report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport regarding his previous request for them to give scrutiny to the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) arrangements in the County, together with a joint presentation by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services and Director for Environment Infrastructure and Skills giving background information on:- (i) the strategic role of parking; (ii) CPE legislation; (iii) current arrangements for CPE and; (iv) relevant considerations for scrutiny.

RESOLVED – (a) That the oral report and presentation be received and noted.

(b) That the Committee hold an Inquiry Day on a date and at a time and venue to be arranged to take evidence from key stakeholders and inform the scope of a Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee Civil Parking Enforcement Working Group to be convened in response to the above-mentioned request.

46. Work Programme

That the updated Work Programme (schedule 4 to the signed minutes) be approved.

47. Date of Next Meeting - Friday 3 February 2023 at 10.00 am, County Buildings, Stafford

Chairman