

## SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### Meeting of the Climate Change Committee Held in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall At 2.30pm on Thursday 21 July 2022

#### PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Chair), J Dean, K Halliday, P Moseley and E Roberts

Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Kevin Oubridge (Shropshire Climate Action Partnership), Dan Wrench (Shropshire Council), Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust) Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth)

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk)

#### 01/22 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillor Dartnall and Councillor Mosley.

Apologies were also received from Tom Endacott (Gfleet Services) and Michael Dineen (Shrewsbury Civic Society).

#### 02/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
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#### 03/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 31 March 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

#### RESOLVED:

**That the minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 31 March 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

Councillor Vasmer informed the Committee that the meeting held on 31 March involved a presentation from Mark Fermor from Shropshire Cycle Hub (Min 44/21). He had been in contact with Mr Fermor and a business proposal would be put forward for the next Finance & General Purposes Committee being held on 26 September 2022.

#### 04/22 MATTERS ARISING

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that all matters arising were on the agenda.

## 05/22 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

The Deputy Town Clerk explained to the Committee that at the last meeting there had been a discussion about what the Town Council needed to do to ensure that the Action Plan gets them to their target of carbon neutrality by 2030, as well as achieving their role in influencing others.

The Deputy Town Clerk had been speaking to an organisation called Carbon Footprint about undertaking an audit of all of the Town Council activity to ascertain where they were now and what they needed to do to address the target in accordance with actions 8 and 10 on the action plan. She reported that Carbon Footprint were an experienced and reputable organisation who had carried out a similar audit for Salisbury City Council, which gave the council some invaluable information about areas they needed to address. They had also carried these out for a number of other councils and across a wide range of other sectors.

In terms of the audit itself, the following steps were required:

- (i) A data pack had been provided to complete in relation to the following areas:
  - Electricity and fuel use
  - Details of staff business use
  - Logistics (Cars/Vans/other vehicles)
  - Streetlights
  - Waste
  - Toilets
  - Recreation grounds
- (ii) Carbon Footprint would then check the data and then calculate emissions and carbon footprint through industry best practice methods.
- (iii) They would then provide a comprehensive report and recommendations

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested that the Committee had a focussed session in the future to ensure that the current action plan was fit for purpose and to consider what further actions may need to be taken.

Kevin Oubridge asked what the Town Council's approach was to Biodiversity and requested that a report be brought forward to the next meeting.

Councillor Dean raised a concern regarding employing offsetting as a way to manage the Town Council's approach to reducing carbon but agreed that the audit would be useful.

Dan Wrench commented that he was working on a project to look at Authority-based inseting for Shropshire Council in conjunction with Anthesis. He hoped that this work would be completed before the end of the year and would be happy to report back.

### **RESOLVED:**

- That a report on biodiversity and offsetting within the Town Council be presented to the next Climate Change Committee.
- That the Committee were in support of the audit being carried out.

## **06/22 COMMONPLACE**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that since they last met in January 2022, the Town Council had begun working with Commonplace to develop a Climate Emergency web-based project to enable them to capture data and to promote their activity. The work would take place over the summer and the Deputy Town Clerk would be happy to share any design ideas with the Committee as the plans progress. She added that the website would include a number of questions for the public to engage with in relation to climate change activities in the town. She agreed to circulate the questions to the Committee for their input. It was suggested that following the previous Mayor's climate change survey last year a question be added asking what the Mayor of Shrewsbury can do to address climate change.

Kevin Oubridge suggested that the Deputy Town Clerk contact Julie Howe from Zero Carbon Shropshire to avoid any duplication in Commonplace sites.

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

## **07/22 CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported to the Committee that since the last meeting a job description for an apprentice with specific responsibility for climate change had been drawn up and was currently being advertised. The closing date for applications was 5 August and the Town Council would interview later in the month. As suggested by Kevin Oubridge, this had also been promoted to Gen Zero, the young person's branch of Zero Carbon Shropshire.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the apprenticeship would be in Business Administration and that it was a fulltime position, based within the current administration Team of Shrewsbury Town Council. The apprentice role would also support the Communications Officer.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**To look into possibility of the new apprentice working alongside Shropshire Council at the Pumphouse on some occasions.**

## **08/22 CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY**

The Chair explained to Committee that the Town Council was currently developing a Climate Change policy. He asked them for any comments and suggestions. Once agreed the policy would be taken forward to Full Council in September.

Councillor Dean made the following suggestions:

- That there should be something more specific about the opportunities the Town Council had with their new Head Quarters.
- Some small amendments to the section on Waste Hierarchy and Energy and Water Management. That targets for Energy and Water Management be included in the Climate Change Action Plan.

- That the Town Council consider adopting a social value framework.

Councillor Roberts commented on the recent play area that had been installed in her ward which had been produced from recycled materials and suggested that this method should be used for all play areas going forward.

Dan Wrench asked if the policy should include offsetting and onsetting as there was no mention of this in the draft. He also queried the possibility of using green walls to reduce air quality and if it would be possible to look at costings for this.

Kevin Oubridge suggested working with water and energy companies to see what they were doing and why they were doing it. He also asked if it was necessary for the Councils to cut all the hedges and grass as often as they do and suggested that Commonplace be used as a tool to ask the public questions regarding hedgerow and grass cutting. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that discussions are currently ongoing with Shropshire Council regarding the Service Level Agreement.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) **That amendments as suggested be made to the draft policy;**
- ii) **That a further copy of the amended draft policy will be circulated to all Committee members for further comment before it went before Full Council in September**

## **09/22 CLIMATE CHANGE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Chair explained to the Committee that he had asked for the good practice guide from the National Audit Office regarding Risk Assessments, to be circulated to the Committee. He stated that there were some useful questions the Committee should be asking themselves when they are looking at the action plan in the future.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Risk Assessment be looked at further at the next meeting in relation to the Action Plan.**

## **10/22 CLIMATE CHANGE BUDGET**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the budget. It was agreed that the Committee would like to consider some big projects to undertake such as a recent Marches Energy Agency one regarding fuel poverty and climate change.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Deputy Town Clerk would work alongside Councillor Dean following a meeting with the Marches Energy Agency to draw up a proposal and take forward to the next Finance & General Purposes Committee in September.**

## **11/22 OTHER QUESTIONS/PROJECTS**

Kevin Oubridge asked if the Town Council would consider solar panels on their new business premises which would make large carbon savings and reduce electric usage. The Deputy Town Clerk would discuss this further with Kevin, to see how it could work on the new premises, and also explore the possibility of using this at the Town Council Depot.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Town Council would soon be carrying out a Visioning Exercise and that members of the Committee would be invited to participate in this.

Alex Grant from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust stated the Trust had a position statement and he would share this at the next meeting.

## **12/22 NEXT MEETING**

The next Committee meeting would take place on Thursday 6 October 2022.