

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Climate Change Committee Held via Microsoft Teams At 3.30pm on Thursday 7 October 2021

PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Chair), B Bentick, R Dartnall, J Dean (Mayor), K Halliday, C Lemon and A Mosley

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Kevin Oubridge (Shropshire Climate Action Partnership), David Sharpe (AECB), Dan Wrench (Shropshire Council), Tom Endacott (Gfleet Services), Sarah Lunnon (CEE Bill Alliance) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk).

17/21 APOLOGIES

That apologies from Councillor A Wagner, Sharuff Morsa (Extinction Rebellion) Michael Dinneen (Shrewsbury Civic Society) be accepted.

18/21 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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19/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 15 July 2021 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 15 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

20/21 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Vasmer confirmed that most of the Matters Arising from the minutes were covered in the Agenda and other Matters arising were still in progress. No further matters arising were raised for consideration.

21/21 CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES BY SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised to Councillors and external Members of the Committee the Mini Holland Bid which had been submitted for consideration following considerable

input from Shrewsbury Town Council officers. The bid needed to be submitted by Shropshire Council as the principal authority. The bid made recommendations to support active travel in particular parts of the town and received significant support from a wide variety of interested parties across Shrewsbury and the outcome of the bid was anticipated by the end of the year. Councillor Vasmer wished to record thanks to all officers involved for the hard work that had been put into this bid and noted that it could not have gone ahead without the work and effort put in.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Town Clerk keep the Committee updated on the progress of the Mini Holland Bid.

22/21 ACTIVE TRAVEL WORKING GROUP

Councillor Vasmer informed the Committee that this item was added to the Agenda for information purposes only. The minutes had already gone to Finance and General Purposes Committee but as there were items that are relevant to this Committee, he felt it was useful for the Committee to see a copy.

The Deputy Town Clerk commented that the first meeting of the Active Travel Working Group had been a useful and positive meeting, and lots of ideas had been put forward. The Committee were asked if they wished to add any items to the next agenda.

The Town Clerk stated that the Active Travel Manager at Shropshire was keen to engage with this Working Group and attend future meetings. Shropshire Council had recently awarded a contract for consultancy work in relation to local cycling and walking infrastructure plans and the selected organisation was also keen to meet with the group.

Councillor Dean also informed the Committee that there was also an Active Travel consultation currently going on in the Cophthorne/Porthill areas of Shrewsbury. This was a proposal for a liveable neighbourhood covering these areas which would like to cut out 'rat running' and enable more walking and cycling through the proposed route. The consultation was now up and running but he asked committee members to let him know if they would like to be involved.

23/21 CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

The Climate Change Action Change plan had been approved in 2020 but, following discussions at the previous meeting, had been redesigned into three categories as follows:

- STC Operational Actions
- STC Strategic Actions
- Partnership and Influencing

At the previous meeting, committee members had also come up with a long list of other potential actions and the Deputy Town Clerk asked them to decide which ones should be added to the action plan, and in which order of priority, in order to address the climate emergency and help the Town Council achieve its objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, as committed to in the climate emergency declaration.

Tom Endacott asked if there were further details on the creation of an energy map for the town as he did not want to see the Town Council duplicating efforts being made elsewhere. The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the Town Council was involved in the existing town-wide plans that John Ogle had presented on at the last meeting and so there would be no duplication.

Regarding Ash die back, Dan Wrench reported that Shropshire Council were visiting a new test unit in Birmingham on 19 October. He also confirmed that there was a Shropshire Goes Electric event planned for 7 November 2021 which Town Council officers and members were welcome to attend.

Councillor Halliday asked for confirmation that Town Council bins have mixed use (recyclable/non-recyclable items) and has also asked this question to Shropshire Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that all Town Council bins go to a contractor and are sorted to be recycled. The contractor provides a poster to demonstrate what they do, and she would arrange for this to be publicised.

Helen Ball, Councillor Mosley and Councillor Lemon left the meeting.

Mayor Dean suggested that he could visit the contractor in his role as Mayor and asked if officers could set this visit up for him. With regards to strengthening procurement processes around carbon efficiency, he stated that this could be a significantly time-consuming task for the Town Council. The Deputy Town Clerk replied that she is currently investigating tools to support this activity.

The Deputy Town Clerk asked the Committee which strategic actions they would like to prioritise given there was only a finite budget to achieve this. She confirmed that in April 2020, Shrewsbury Town Council established a budget of £250,000 specifically designed to address actions to be taken in relation to the climate emergency. To date, £78,785 has been utilised leaving a balance of £171, 215 which the Town Council has committed to put towards climate emergency actions by April 2023.

Mayor Dean replied that public communication is crucial, and that significant effort should be put into developing messaging both on the website and social media pages as well as via other forms of communication.

David Sharpe joined the meeting.

It had been suggested previously that it might be helpful to engage a specific member of staff to deliver on the actions required and this would need further investigation. Kevin Oubridge commented that engaging the community was key to success for any zero-carbon plan. He suggested using the Dingle to showcase Town Council activities. On engaging businesses, he commented that he had recently run an event to talk about zero carbon and more needed to be done to encourage businesses to engage.

Councillor Vasmer agreed that communications were a priority for the Town and the Deputy Town Clerk added that there was a need to develop a communication plan to engage with all community. Councillor Vasmer also commented that the Town Council should offer a temporary employment opportunity, whether part time or full time, to carry out this work. Councillor Halliday agreed that this should be an external appointment for someone with specific communications experience.

Councillor Dartnall added that there are good people who work freelance in the area who may be worth contacting for any assistance to bring a plan together.

Councillor Dean commented that an engagement project may be the correct direction to take and suggested putting out a call for people to come forward to submit ideas and a tender for climate change communications activities.

Councillor Bentick commented that it might be worth including communications regarding takeaway waste within this remit.

David Sharpe asked the Committee to bear in mind that the built environment contributes 40% of UK carbon output and half of that is from heating. Of the building stock which will be available in 2050, 80% is what we have, and so focussing on new builds would only be part of the solution.

RESOLVED:

- That the additional actions should be added to the Action Plan.
- That work should be undertaken to develop a communications officer role. The Deputy Town Clerk reminded the Committee that, once finalised, this would need to be taken to Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval.

24/21 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY BILL

Sarah Lunnon from the CEE Bill Alliance joined the meeting to present the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill to the Committee. She said that her organisation recognised that Parish and Town Councils are incredibly influential with local authorities and elected politicians, and as 'local' organisations they are on the front line when it comes to protecting the places and communities we love and cherish. She explained that they were asking the Town Council to join many others across the UK to support and add their voice to those organisations calling for join-up action that responds to the emergency of our natural world, our parks, villages and towns, our landscapes and wildlife.

She commented on the influence a Town Council can have and the issues they face by not having a central roadmap from Government.

She explained that the aim of the bill is to:

- Set a framework for town councils to follow, to set targets within a carbon budget;
- To establish that there is also an ecological emergency and both this and the climate emergency needed to be addressed together;
- To encourage the mobilisation needed in order to have a significant democratic input;
- To establish a Climate and Nature Assembly to aid and support Parliament in these issues.

Sarah explained to the Committee that the bill needed support on the ground and that was why she was talking to them today. So far, the bill had support from 117 MPs but more support from Conservative members was needed.

The Committee agreed that they supported the bill. Mayor Dean said that he had already put forward a motion to Shropshire Council to offer their support to the bill, but this had been rejected. He would, however, be happy to put forward the same motion to the Town Council.

RESOLVED

That Mayor Dean submit a motion to Full Council that the Town Council formally support the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill.

Sarah Lunnon left the meeting.

25/21 CLIMATE EMERGENCY BUDGET

This item was discussed under 23/21.

26/21 IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S GROUNDS MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY

The Deputy Town Clerk commented that this report had already gone to the Recreation and Leisure Committee held on 22 September 2021 and that it was being brought to the Committee for noting and comment.

Tom Endacott asked how much the increase was in relation to the maintenance and fuel used in certain vehicles. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to find out more specific details on this and will report back at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the report be noted.

27/21 MAYORS CLIMATE EMERGENCY GUIDE

Mayor Dean introduced this item explaining that he had created a guide to be sent out to organisations interested in booking him to attend events. The purpose of the guide was to encourage local organisations to think about their practices in relation to the climate emergency and that it provided the opportunity for them to reply and for feedback to be collated.

He explained that the guide was still in a draft form but asked if there were any comments from Committee regarding the content and if they felt any changes could be made. The aim was to get the guide finalised and circulated as soon as possible.

Councillor Vasmer was in full support of this great initiative.

David Sharpe agreed that it was a great initiative but questioned, in light of current energy prices increases, could the section on 'powering up' maybe include improving insulation in homes? Councillor Dean was happy to adapt the form to incorporate this.

Councillor Bentick left the meeting.

Kevin Oubridge also agreed that this was a great initiative. He asked for confirmation on who the guide would go out to and Councillor Dean replied that it would go out to anybody who requests a visit from the Mayor. He also hoped that subsequent Mayors will continue this guide. It could go on to the website/social media to become more widely available but initially it will go out to Mayoral event requests.

RESOLVED:

That the guide be adopted.

28/21 NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Climate Change Standing Committee would be held on Thursday 13 January 2022.