

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE
22 NOVEMBER 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Change Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote meeting on Tuesday 22 November 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson (Chairman)

Councillors: Gillian Brockley, Steve Copple, Mared Eastwood, Chrissy Gee, Ian Hodge, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Carolyn Preece, Dan Rose, Jason Shallcross and Sam Swash

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy,
Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy), Programme Manager - Climate Change and Carbon Reduction,
Democratic Services Manager, Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman welcomed all Members of the Committee and officers to the meeting and made the following statement: -

With climate change so far up the political agenda now to warrant a Committee being formed was testament to the efforts of everyone who had battled to get this issue on the future of humanity taken seriously. From school children, scientists, global campaign groups and individual climate activists whose commitment and sacrifices had got us to the point where we had a fighting chance to beat the greatest threat we faced. Around the world the impacts of climate change were being felt from wildfires in California to flooding in Pakistan, as islands in the pacific drown and forests in the arctic circle burn, while droughts cripple entire nations and extreme weather destroys homes. We will never know which person was the first climate change death in Flintshire, but we can say with certainty that that sad milestone had already been passed.

The work of this committee was twofold, firstly prevention, with Flintshire having a large carbon footprint with steps not being taken fast enough to reduce it, for various reasons which undoubtedly came down to funding. Laudable Welsh Government (WG) goals for public sector decarbonisation by 2030 must come with a financial package which enabled the necessary steps to be undertaken. However, we must not shy away from looking long and hard at the Council's own failures. Secondly if the world's carbon emissions were to stop tomorrow the impacts of climate change would continue to be felt for at least a generation. More extreme weather, more flooding, more serious fires and sadly more loss of life, in our county even in the best-case scenario. With science prevention this committee must maintain an interest in adapting in whatever way we could towards the causes of climate change, protecting residents as much as possible but in the full knowledge that no steps we take would come close to mitigating the full effects.

The Chair then asked for a minute silence in memory of those Flintshire victims of climate change. He asked for quiet reflection of all those in Flintshire, Wales, the UK and around the world who had acted at any level to defend our planet and who too often faced violence, imprisonment or murder while doing so. Their bravery and selflessness inspired us.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

The Chair sought nominations from Members of the committee for the role of Vice Chair. Councillor Mared Eastwood nominated Councillor Allan Marshall, and this was seconded by Councillor Ian Hodge. Upon putting to the vote this was carried.

Councillor Allan Marshall thanked Members for the nomination and the appointment, and said he hoped to combine the Chair's youth and enthusiasm with his enthusiasm and experience to make a good team.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Allan Marshall be appointed as Vice Chair for the Committee.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

In response to a question from the Chair on agenda item 6, the Chief Officer (Governance) advised that this related to the setting up of terms of reference for the de-investment from carbon industries by the Pension Fund. He said the focus was on the Inquiry rather than the issues, but Members may feel that they wanted to declare a personal interest, if they felt it necessary.

Councillor Steve Cople declared a personal interest as a previous employee of Shell who he continued to receive a pension contribution from.

Councillor Dan Rose declared a personal interest as a member of several environmental charities as noted on his register of interests.

Councillor Ian Hodge declared a personal interest as a previous employee of BP who he continued to receive a pension contribution from.

Councillors Mared Eastwood, Dave Healey, Alan Marshall and Carolyn Preece declared a personal interest as members of the Clwyd Pension Fund.

Councillor Roz Mansell declared a personal interest as she received a pension through the NHS.

RESOLVED:

That the declarations of interest be noted

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair introduced the Terms of Reference for the Committee which had been circulated to Members and had been previously approved by Council.

Councillor Steve Cople referred to the production of emission models and asked how this would be approached. In response, the Programme Manager - Climate Change and Carbon Reduction confirmed that the models had been developed by Officers and would be overseen by the Committee.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the terms of reference of the Committee were intentionally broad to enable the Committee to address all areas within the Council where a carbon footprint was generated because of the Council's activities. This would enable steps to be taken within the carbon reduction plan with the role of Officers to advise and provide Members with a policy steer. There was a very small team supporting this with wide ranging work within their time and resources. The Committee's principal role was advisory, and he explained how this would work to ensure issues were properly addressed.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) commented that the production of emission models was a good example of ongoing work which could be brought to the earlier meetings of the Committee. This would highlight what had been achieved so far, what the footprint looked like and where the greatest values and impacts came from in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. He confirmed that literacy training would be provided to enable a better understanding of what had been achieved so far and the impacts on the Council's carbon footprint. The commitment that the Council had made was for the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy said how pleased he had been to see the development of this Committee to consider such important issues. The Council was on track to build the first carbon neutral care home and school and was phasing in EV charging points in public car parks. There was concern regarding the 62 % emissions from the supply chain and work was ongoing with the social care sector regarding decarbonisation. The cost implications for decarbonisation were being considered together with the financial implications.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference be noted.

4. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair confirmed that the Forward Work Programme was not set in stone and enabled items and suggestions to be considered for inclusion which would help formulate the programme moving forward.

The following items were suggested by Members of the Committee: -

Councillor Dan Rose

- Solar Panels on Council Owned Car Parks - and review of SV types
- Review of alternative energy generation opportunities. There is a vast array of wind options coming up which could be used on public buildings and within areas where full wind turbines would not be appropriate (e.g. AONB)
- Planning Changes to include requirements for All Passive house standards (inc. elect charging points)
- Review of land use, new mapping system for FCC, can we protect 30% of land by 2030?
- School Recycling program review to look for improvements and extensions
- Possibility of Bioreactors being installed into schools or public buildings for FCC to utilise for grass cutting arisings of our meadows.
- Building's efficiencies - motion lights, pcs left on and overall heated space
- Print free council?
- Zero Email standards (carbon cost of storing emails) can we review the worst offenders
- Review of data storage, cloud facilities and digital providers efficiencies
- review of carbon of home working?
- Review of catering facilities - plant based treaty

Councillor Roz Mansell

- School food recycling in hospitals and Hotels. This could be investigated to help regenerate more electricity.
- More trees to be planted.
- All new homes to have solar panelling as this will prevent much needed land being covered with solar panelling which also need maintaining.
- Potholes can also be refilled using recyclable tarmac saving money and our climate, car tyres and preventing accidents. I will send all the information on this asap.

Councillor Steve Copple

- Progress within the programme so far. This would provide a solid basis for the Committee when prioritising items for the Forward Work Programme.

Councillor Carolyn Preece

- Procurement – the use of local trades and local products for carbon footprint
- Looking at making it mandatory that plan-based products are used at least one day a week where that is the only choice in schools

Councillor Dave Healey

- Reaching out to the wider Flintshire community with regard to Climate Change
- Exploring how Welsh Government can further assist Councils in achieving Net Zero.

Councillor Alastair Ibbotson – Chair

- Flood resilience – coastal erosion / sea level rises.
- Installation of electric charging points

Councillor Mared Eastwood

- The possibility of tidal energy and whether it was possible to get Grant Funding for it.
- Hydrogen utilisation
- The use of Hydrogen when considering the use/installation of electric charging points

Councillor Sam Swash

- Bereavement services – environmentally friendly options

Councillor Allan Marshall suggested that a working group be set up to discuss items on the Forward Work Programme and consider different ideas.

The Chair suggested that a review of the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy be included on the Agenda for the March 2023 meeting. Preparation could be undertaken for this at the January meeting.

It was suggested that the Programme Manager - Climate Change & Carbon Reduction liaised with the Chair and Vice-Chair following the meeting to discuss identifying dates for items suggested for inclusion on the Forward Work Programme. It was also agreed that a copy of the action sheet, to show all items suggested by Members of the Committee be circulated following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the items suggested by Members of the Committee be noted; and
- (b) That the Programme Manager - Climate Change & Carbon Reduction liaise with the Chair and Vice-Chair following the meeting to discuss the Forward Work Programme.

5. MOTION FOR PENSION FUND INQUIRY

The Chair introduced the item and advised that he had met with the Chief Officer (Governance) prior to the meeting to discuss the proposed Motion. He said that following the advice of the Chief Officer, he was proposing to withdraw the Motion at this time to allow for the advice he received to be circulated to all Members of the Committee. Councillor Dan Rose, who had seconded the Motion supported the Chairman's suggested to its withdrawal.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the discussion with the Chairman has been around the role of Members and Officers which was for Officers to prepare reports to advise Members and it was not possible to delegate this function to Members. He explained the Programme Manager - Climate Change and Carbon Reduction and Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) would draft reports on the views that Members had put forward. If Members wanted to put forward views and actions on carbon neutrality either within the Council or Clwyd Pension Fund, then the Officers would draft a form of words for the Committee upon which comments could be made.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he would take questions around points of order on this item.

Councillor Ian Hodge asked, as the Clwyd Pension Fund was across a number of Council's in North Wales, were they aware of the fact that Flintshire were going to investigate or discuss the pension fund on their behalf. The Chair responded that this committee did not have decision making powers but could provide advice on procedural issues.

The Chief Officer (Governance) clarified that the Committee's role was to advise other Committees of the Council but that it could not dictate to other Councils or organisation in North-East Wales. This committee could set the council's stance and communicate this to its Members and ask them to communicate it at the Clwyd Pension Fund meetings.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy asked what the next steps would be in moving forward.

The Chair commented that the Chief Officer (Governance) has agreed to circulate his views and advice on this to Members which could be discussed at the next meeting.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

In response to a question on the frequency of meetings, the Democratic Services Manager agreed to review the schedule of meetings based on the number of items planned for the Forward Work Programme. The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) suggested that once the proposed items had been included in the Forward Work Programme, the Committee would then be able to request further details and consider setting up a task and finish group to consider specific items in greater detail.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the future meeting dates.

Future meeting dates of the Climate Change Committee had been scheduled to take place at 2.00 pm on:

Wednesday 25 January 2023
Tuesday 28 March 2023
Tuesday 23 May 2023
Tuesday 18 July 2023

7. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no Members of the press or public in attendance.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 15.02 pm

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Chairman