

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE
23 MAY 2023

Minutes of the Climate Change Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote meeting on Tuesday, 23 May 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson (Chairman)

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

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Bernie Attridge (for Roz Mansell) and Rob Davies (for Jason Shallcross)

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy and Programme Manager for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Mared Eastwood nominated Councillor Allan Marshall as Vice-Chair of the Committee and was seconded by Councillor Rob Davies.

As there were no further nominations, the proposal was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Allan Marshall be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Mared Eastwood and Allan Marshall.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4. REACHING OUT TO WIDER COMMUNITY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Councillor David Healey introduced the draft Communication & Engagement Plan for the Climate Change Programme to agree the approach for

engaging with the public and in particular, young people. He welcomed the recent appointment of Ben Turpin as project officer in the Climate Change team.

The Programme Manager for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction shared a presentation on the draft Plan which detailed its purpose, guiding principles and compliance with Equality, Inclusion and Welsh Language standards. Different stakeholder groups and engagement levels were identified and activities would be monitored by the Climate Change team with accompanying evolving action plans to underpin the success of the programme.

The Committee was invited to suggest further activities under the following headings, in addition to those outlined in the presentation.

Advocacy and Engagement

Councillor Chrissy Gee referred to a previous door-to-door exercise which had proved successful in encouraging more residents to recycle.

Councillor David Healey said that target areas should be identified where it would be desirable for residents to change behaviour. Whilst information was available on the website, he felt that the message could be delivered in a more accessible way through cartoon-style graphics that could have a wider appeal. He also commented on the previous practice of distributing key messages within Council Tax correspondence.

The importance of public engagement was acknowledged by Councillor Bernie Attridge who suggested that the Communications team could be involved in supporting community events, visiting schools etc, to reach residents who did not access the Council's website.

Councillor Mared Eastwood suggested pre-written articles and sound-bites that Members could upload to their webpages/newsletters to spread a consistent message. She also suggested a celebration board to promote achievements in carbon reduction.

It was suggested by Councillor Steve Copple that Town and Community Councils could assist in spreading key messages and that nominated Climate Change 'champions' at local level could help with publicity at schools and events.

After speaking about steps he had taken to measure his own recycling rate, Councillor Allan Marshall asked whether it was feasible to publish real-time data on the website to show areas of good and poor performance.

Councillor Ian Hodge said that a forthcoming litter-picking exercise in his area would help to engage with younger people and raise awareness of environmental issues. He supported the use of posters to highlight environmental initiatives, provided they were kept up-to-date to maintain interest, and suggested the creation of a cartoon-style Flintshire recycling mascot.

Councillor Dan Rose stressed the importance of quoting statistics to reinforce key messages, as demonstrated in the open space management presentation shared at the workshop in January. He said that publishing area recycling data could be problematic due to the varying demographics and suggested that the Council could engage with current partners such as Bionet on local events.

Councillor Carolyn Preece agreed with the need for consistent and concise messages spanning all climate control issues. In respect of events, she suggested engagement with social media groups such as Mold Plastic Reduction and Eco representatives of primary and secondary schools.

When asked by the Programme Manager, around half of the Committee indicated that they would feel comfortable speaking to the public about climate change without undertaking further training.

Key Messages

The Chairman felt it was important to clarify that actions within the plan would not achieve net zero but would seek to reduce emissions with the involvement of a wider effort beyond the Climate Change team and senior officers. He said that there needed to be acceptance at all levels in order to instigate change.

Councillor Copple agreed that change would only be brought about by everyone playing their part.

Councillor Rose said that individuals could be asked not just to consider changes in their own lives but also identify opportunities across their businesses and organisations which could have a bigger impact.

Objectives

Councillor Healey said that specific key behaviour changes should be identified - in addition to recycling - noting that some may have financial implications. He also suggested that a catchphrase may help to promote changes.

Councillor Eastwood said that publicising a series of 'did you know?' quick-win messages would help to raise awareness of everyday actions to mitigate climate change. She also commented that some residents were interested to hear what the Council was doing to tackle climate change.

Councillor Sam Swash said that a quiz would help to identify knowledge gaps.

The Chairman stated that the approach to engagement must recognise that consumer behaviour changes alone would not solve the crisis, without the necessary infrastructure and policies in place.

Councillor Copple said that consumers should be encouraged to voice their concerns to influence the actions of suppliers, organisations etc.

The Programme Manager encouraged all Members to sign up to Climate Change e-newsletter (which includes an information section and summary of projects/events) and promote it to residents. She agreed to share a link following the meeting.

In concluding the item, Councillor Healey thanked Members for their contributions to the discussion.

5. THERMAL ENERGY UTILISING FORMER COAL MINES

Councillor Allan Marshall presented his report on thermal energy, following discussion at the previous meeting on the potential use of the Milwr Tunnel water run-off for a hydro-electric scheme.

The report made reference to renewable energy strategies, the cost implications of heat pumps and energy saved by reducing boiler flow temperatures. The report also outlined potential access to geothermal energy sources across Flintshire and was supported by hyperlinks to published materials. Information was also shared on gravity energy storage systems which could be suitable for disused quarries.

In summary, Councillor Marshall proposed that the Committee recommended that Cabinet and the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee take note of the report and widen their scope on what represented renewable energy capture systems in Flintshire.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Steve Copple who supported the suggestion for the Council to explore the energy crisis further.

Councillor Carolyn Preece referred to a recent meeting which had promoted good practice examples of energy initiatives implemented by other councils.

In welcoming the report, Councillor David Healey welcomed further consideration of geothermal energy sources and tidal lagoons.

Councillor Marshall thanked the Committee for its comments. On being put to the vote, the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Climate Change Committee resolves to recommend to Cabinet and the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee to take note of the above report and widen their scope on what represents renewable energy capture systems in Flintshire.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE INQUIRIES PROGRESS

The Programme Manager for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction provided an update on progress with the inquiries which had been impacted by resource issues.

The scoping had previously been approved by the Committee, including the desire to seek responses from the public. Due to this, the launch was to be adapted to meet inclusivity standards, ensuring there were opportunities for all to contribute. The scoping information and request for information would be promoted on the website internally and externally. In addition to circulating to elected Members, details would be publicised with professional networks and included on the Climate Change e-bulletin and social media in conjunction with a press release.

7. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The current forward work programme was received for consideration.

The Programme Manager requested that Members who had submitted topics for future consideration also provide the purposes for those items.

8. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.05pm)

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Chairman