

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held via
Microsoft Teams on Friday, 11 March 2022
at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S. Aitchison (Chairman), H. Anderson, G. Edgar, J. Greenwell,
H. Laing, J. Linehan and S. Scott

Apologies:- Councillors K. Chapman and D. Paterson

In Attendance:- Director Infrastructure and Environment (J. Curry), Network Manager (B.
Young), Greenspace Manager (C. Cooke), Team Leader Traffic and Road
Safety (P. Gilhooly), Team Leader Street Lighting (A. Young), Chief Planning
& Housing Officer (I. Aikman), Environmental Strategy Officer (L. Cox), Senior
Policy Advisor (D. Scott), Energy Efficiency Strategy and Policy Officer (N.
Robertson), Education Rep (D. Matthewson), Waste Manager (R. Sharp-
Dent), Lead Officer Heritage and Design (D. McLean), Project Management
Team Leader (E. Doyle), Youth Engagement Officer (P. Rigby), Democratic
Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen)

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 17 September 2021.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

2. **CLIMATE CHANGE ROUTE MAP PRIORITY ACTION PLAN**

2.1 There had been circulated copies of the Climate Change Route Map Priority Action Plan (CCRM) that presented a strategic direction for the Council and its partners and communities to move to a net zero emissions Scottish Borders economy by 2045, in line with the national target set by the Scottish Government. The Director Infrastructure and Environment explained that the Senior Policy Advisor, Mr Cook, introduced the CCRM at a meeting of Scottish Borders Council on 10 March 2022 which gave its endorsement. The five key themes of the CCRM were approved at a meeting of Council on 17 June and the action plan was subsequently approved. The CCRM was structured around 5 Themes, each consisting of five milestones. These Themes were:

- Building Resilience,
- Decarbonising our Transport Use,
- Nature-based Solutions to Climate Change,
- Lowering our Energy Consumption; and,
- Decarbonising our Waste Management.

2.2 The report proposed that progress and delivery of the Priority Action Plan be overseen and scrutinised by the Sustainable Development Committee, with a consolidated report presented annually to Council. The priority actions laid out in Appendix 1 responded to the milestones identified within the themes of CCRM. As it would not be possible to deliver everything at the same pace or time, an assessment was undertaken to determine which actions should be prioritised over the next two years. The action table in Appendix

1 set out a description of the proposed activity, details of the tasks required, where possible the anticipated savings in carbon emissions and climate adaptation benefits, projects costs and timescales.

- 2.3 Environmental Strategy Coordinator, Ms Cox, presented the draft priority actions 2022-24 for the theme Building Resilience and highlighted the target for 50% of SBC staff to have taken intermediate level accredited carbon literacy training by March 2023, Learning for Sustainability embedded into learning for all primary and high schools, the South East Scotland Regional Climate Risk Assessment and the target to deliver Initial Coastal Defence Asset Management Plan within two years. In response to questions from Members, the Environmental Strategy Coordinator explained that Keep Scotland Beautiful had run two pilot training cohorts where 20 staff undertook accredited carbon literacy training modules. The Director Infrastructure and Environment advised that one of the first groups to be targeted for training would be Members and it would be part of the induction for the new Council. Discussions had taken place with South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) and Dumfries and Galloway Council about aligning carbon literacy training as closely as possible.
- 2.4 The Director Environment and Infrastructure introduced Project Manager Team Leader, Mr Doyle, and Fleet Manager, Mr Naylor, to present on the Decarbonising our Transport theme highlighting how transport was an enabler for a Just Transition. Targets in the theme included Behaviour Change utilising a proactive communications strategy and education approach to support all of the ambitions in the CCRM, an annual review to identify additional measures to support 20mph limits in settlements, investigating new technologies for street lighting, a rural e-car study to look at being able to connect every part of the Borders with public transport including investigating an e-car club, a review of the bus networked to be delivered in early 2022, a feasibility study into decarbonising the Council fleet, and the commencement of a pilot study in early 2022-23 in demand-responsive transport. The Project Manager Team Leader advised that there was an aim for a core network of active travel similar to the road network with key linkages for rural places. The Project Manager Team Leader further advised that conducting a feasibility into electric vehicles infrastructure and engaging registered social landlords and communities was a key part of the strategy of the theme.
- 2.5 In response to questions from Members, Mr Doyle advised that there would be concessions for Demand Responsive Transport and that a 12-month pilot was in place, based on available funding and that this would be used to assess its continuation. The Director Infrastructure and Environment explained that he wanted to continue Demand Responsive Transport for as long as possible and to expand beyond Berwickshire, if viability was proven. The Waste Manager advised that some bus stops were in poor condition and it was on the agenda to assess bus stop condition and suggested that some bus stops could be funded through advertisements.
- 2.6 The Director Infrastructure and Environment introduced Greenspace Manager, Ms Cooke, to summarise the Nature-based Solutions to Climate Change theme. The theme included targets for the undertaking of a Greenspace management review which aimed to increase biodiversity within the Greenspace estate to mitigate against biodiversity loss; developing an urban tree policy for approval by Council in June 2022 which addressed trees at risk and needed replacing; the Borderlands Natural Capital Innovation Zone; Pollinators along the Tweed; Natural Flood Management; the South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership which had been chosen by the Scottish Government as one of five pilot Regional Land Use Partnership; and Food Growing Strategy. Members suggested that it may be beneficial for Members to receive training on grounds management. Resistance had sometimes been encountered on changing the ways in which grass was cut, and examples could be taken from golf courses in the way they had changed the length of times grass was allowed to grow. The Director Infrastructure and Environment advised that reference may be made to Nature-based Solutions to Climate Change.

- 2.7 The Energy Efficiency Strategy and Policy Officer, Mr Robertson, summarised key targets for the theme Lowering Our Energy Consumption advising that Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) was planned to be a core strategy for all local authorities to reduce energy demand and would become a statutory requirement to have in place in 2022. The LHEES was to be reviewed in a five-year cycle. In 2021, the Scottish Government provided information and a methodology for an eight-stage model to develop an LHEES which SBC were in the early stages of working through according to Scottish Government timescales. In response to questions from Members, Mr Robertson explained that SBC could work with developers on decarbonising schools.
- 2.8 Waste Manager, Mr Sharp-Dent, summarised the theme Decarbonising our Waste Management which aimed to reduce carbon emissions in the management of waste. Elements of the theme included the introduction of a 'Schools Resource Pack' covering recycling, sustainability and eco-friendly practices; the development of service standards for recycling within two years; the undertaking of a Stakeholder Engagement and Waste Compositional Analysis within two years; the introduction of in-cab technology for Refuse Collection Vehicles; a review of kerbside collection which was likely to be completed during 2022-23 and supporting the re-use and repair sector as an ongoing, long-term project.
- 2.9 In response to questions from Members on the expansion of the food waste collection service, the Waste Manager explained that there was food waste collection in six Borders towns as that met legal obligations and where funding had been received, and that there would be further cost to rolling out the service across the Borders. With regards to education on recyclable waste, use of platforms such as TikTok was suggested. Teachers had advised that pupils may be able to help with the development of visual messages, and feedback from pupils suggested that shorter video messages were more likely to have a higher impact.
- 2.10 In response to a question from the Chair, the Environmental Strategy Coordinator advised that engagement would take place with Area Partnerships and Place Making in place of pursuing citizens' assemblies.
- 2.11 The Director Infrastructure and Environment thanked Members for their scrutiny of the CCRM.

DECISION

NOTED the update.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members thanked Councillor Aitchison for his chairing of the Sustainable Development Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.45 pm.