

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

AIR QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Tuesday, 18 June 2019

MEMBERS: Councillor Kilby-Shaw (Chair); Councillors Ashraf, Davenport, Joyce, Hallam, Nunn, Smith and Stone

OFFICERS: Marion Goodman (Head of Customers and Communities), Vicki Rockall (Community Safety and Engagement Manager), Paul Everard (Planning Policy Manager), Ruth Austen (Environmental Health and Licensing Manager), Gavin Smith (Senior Environmental Health Officer), Richard Holley (Public Health Officer – Northamptonshire County Council)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Steve Miller, Brian Hoare, Martin Sawyer, Ayo Popoolo, David Garlick, James Averill

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Kilby-Shaw welcomed Members, Officers and members of the public to the meeting. He stated that all future meetings will be paperless and that documents will be published on the Council's website.

The Chair asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Nunn to provide the Working Group with an update on the challenges facing the Council in its efforts to be Carbon Neutral by 2030. Councillor Nunn stated that he hopes that this Working Group works to challenge the work of the Council and feed ideas into the work of Scrutiny. He further explained that the community around Northampton care passionately about this issue and that the Council are resolved to working together to challenge this.

Councillor Kilby-Shaw explained the remit of the Working Group and that the Borough Council is working to be carbon neutral. He further explained that the Government is working towards making the United Kingdom carbon neutral and that the Borough Council will need to make a financial commitment to ensure this work is done.

2. PURPOSE, AIMS AND DRAFTING TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Partnerships & Communities Manager explained to the Working Group that there are a standard terms of reference and code of conduct that are utilised at meetings of Forums. The Chair, Councillor Kilby-Shaw asked all present to abide by the code of conduct as set out. He further stated that the terms of reference and objectives of the Group will be agreed to at the next meeting of the Working Group.

In response to a question, the Chair stated that the main objective of the Working Group is to form objectives on helping the Council to meet its objectives to be carbon neutral by 2030.

1. NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL - ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

The Chair asked the Environmental Health Manager to present the plans for the Working Group for future meetings. The Environmental Health Manager outlined the areas of remit that fall under Northampton Borough Council and explained where the Council will be able to influence public policy. She further stated the relevant policies around sustainable construction such as the Northampton Low Emissions Strategy and steps that have been

taken so far.

The Environmental Health Manager further explained to the Working Group that an annual status report on Air Quality will be submitted to DEFRA and published on the Borough Council website in due course.

Councillor Stone stated to the Working Group that global warming and climate change will have the biggest impact on the most disadvantaged areas. She further explained that the most disadvantaged communities will fare worse from poor air quality.

Councillor Smith explained that when considering the procurement of electric vehicles, the Borough Council should weigh environmental factors over price and asked Officers whether it is possible to put environmental factors as a higher weighted option during the procurement process. She stated that the Council should seek to work beyond legislation.

1. WHAT WE WANT TO DO BY WHEN

The Chair, Councillor Kilby-Shaw explained that Northamptonshire County Council are due to vote on whether to declare a climate emergency. He explained that he wants the Borough Council to be carbon neutral by 2025 and the Borough of Northampton to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Councillor Ashraf stated to the Working Group that there is a lot of work needed to make Northampton Borough Council carbon neutral and meet its objectives. She further stated that Northampton is a very diverse community and stated that it will be very important to get the involvement of all Northampton's communities.

1. AIR QUALITY RESULTS

The Chair, Councillor Kilby-Shaw asked the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager to present the results of the air quality data.

The Environmental Health & Licensing Manager explained that the raw data will be published on the Council website each month. She further stated that caution will be needed in making comparisons year-on-year and that results may be affected by various factors such as the weather and traffic patterns. An Annual Status Report will be submitted to DEFRA by end of June and will be published once approved and that technical work is currently being carried out to progress the declaration of the town centre's Air Quality Management Area status.

1. FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The Chair asked the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager to present the opportunities, constraints and risks that face the Council.

In response, the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager raised the following points to the Working Group:

Opportunities:

- That Borough Council policies and reports should consider climate change implications
- Installation of electric vehicle charging points
- Promote the use of car sharing
- Use more electric vehicles in the Council's fleet of vehicles
- The creation of air quality stakeholder group to develop air quality action plan
- Promote the planting of trees

- Influencing partner agencies to cut carbon emissions in their production and supply chains
- Report of baseline position
- Promote the use of renewable energy

Constraints:

- Budget and resources to be committed to making the Borough Council carbon neutral
- Influencing supply chains of the Council – and recognition that we can only progress by working together

1. CLOSING ROUND TABLE - OPINIONS AND INSIGHT

The Chair asked those present at the Working Group for their final opinions as to what suggestions they have going forwards to the next meeting to be scheduled in September 2019. The Chair explained that he believes the Council should target 2025 for being carbon neutral and 2030 for the wider borough of Northampton.

The following points were recorded on the:

- The importance of establishing a baseline position. A motion to be agreed by Council including a commitment to come back with a baseline report by January 2020.
- The importance of updating the Council website and making air quality data more readily accessible.
- The importance of a joined up communications strategy to fully engage with community groups in Northampton
- Climate change is very important and requires cross party working to tackle it effectively
- It is important to acknowledge successes and be realistic and honest about what still needs to be achieved
- That the Labour Group identify a Climate Change Champion
- Education is vital and the need to work in partnership with schools
- It was felt that a good start has been made – important that we stick together with this and there will be some difficult choices to be made and some actions may not be popular
- Suggested that a town wide leaflet or publicity material could be circulated with Council Tax correspondence
- That the frequency of meetings and the suggestion that specific work streams are identified and sub groups established to process these
- Suggested that short term cabinet reduction targets can be used to judge progress
- Acknowledge that there are relevant policies in the Draft Local Plan Part II – although that these are not specific enough and possibly a missed opportunity in relation to energy efficiency in operational buildings.
- Potential for planting trees on small plots of land which are not suitable for development.
- Extinction Rebellion have been invited to this meeting

The next meeting of the Working Group will be arranged for September 2019. At the time of the next meeting, an officer group will have been formed and will be able to assist in taking actions forward working in partnership with the community.

The meeting concluded at 18:25