

Present: Councillor R Boam (Chairman)

Councillors E G C Allman, D Bigby, A J Bridgen, G Houlst, V Richichi (Substitute for Councillor B Harrison-Rushton), S Sheahan and N Smith

Portfolio Holders: Councillors A C Woodman

Officers: Mr A Barton, Mr C Colvin, Ms E Kenyon, Mr J Knight, Mr C Lambert, J Marshall, Mr M Murphy, Mr P Sanders, Mrs B Smith, Mrs R Wallace, Miss E Warhurst and Mr P Wheatley

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors B Harrison-Rushton, A C Saffell and M B Wyatt.

7. ZERO CARBON UPDATE

The Head of Community Services and the Climate Change Programme Manager gave a presentation to Members highlighting the progress made so far on the Council's zero carbon aims. The Portfolio Holder also spoke in support.

A Member referred to another Local Authority in the north of the country who were utilising unused mines to generate power and asked if this was something that could be done in the District. The Head of Community Services reported that although this was deemed unsuitable in the past, it was something that was currently being investigated and early conversations were being held with the Coal Authority.

A Member expressed opinions on biodiversity and the loss of natural habitats, officers were asked if this was being considered due to the proximity of the National Forest. The Climate Change Programme Manager reported that there was a wider environmental group across the region, led by Leicestershire County Council, which would look at these matters. She agreed to discuss the matter further with the Member outside of the meeting.

At the request of a Member, clarification was given on the position of the food waste collection trial and the process involved in recycling the waste. The Head of Community Services reminded Members that NWLDC was the only council in Leicestershire collecting food waste and it should be celebrated. The emerging plan was to roll the programme out to the whole District in the future.

A Member expressed concerns that there was not enough reduction of carbon footprint in the first two years to achieve the future targets. It was felt that the report did not contain enough context as comparison figures of the current position and current target position were not included, therefore it was difficult to see what was required. Other comments were also raised on the major work required to reduce the carbon footprint of council homes. The Head of Community Services explained that the plan was currently in its early stages with more data measurement was required. Members would receive more information going forward with a clear map to present the challenges ahead in meeting the Council's carbon reduction aims.

In response to a comment from a Member in relation to the change to a renewable energy supplier and the affordability for tenants, the Head of Housing explained that tenants had their own choice of energy supplier and it was not something the Council could enforce. The aim was to engage with tenants to inform, educate and encourage them to consider renewable energy. It was also confirmed that void properties were not currently changed to the Council's preferred energy supplier, but it was being considered.

Chairman's signature

A Member commented on the influence that could be made through the Local Plan and urged Local Plan Committee Members to seriously consider what could be done to impose good targets for the Carbon Footprint on new houses built in the District.

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions and confirmed that comments made would be presented to Cabinet when it considers the report.

Chairman's signature