

Staffordshire Moorlands Green Party (SMGP)

Response to Consultation on the 2024 SMDC Draft Climate Action plan:

Introduction:

Thank you for initiating a public consultation on how SMDC can best meet the challenges raised by human induced global warming and resulting climate changes. Many thanks also for everything that is underway and has been achieved, as set out in your [annual report](#). Thank you also for the background information sheet in the consultation with links to international, national and local information. We particularly endorse the [SMDC Supplementary Action Plan April 2022 \(Anthesis report\)](#) listed as the High Peaks Action Plan.

Appraisal:

We welcome the consultation, yet we are concerned that it focuses on only two questions. The first being the 2030 targets and the second, the ranking of actions taken to achieving targets. For that reason we are sending this longer form of submission in order to make a more meaningful response.

With reference to the first question:

It is encouraging to read that SMDC expects that it will reach its target of net zero on its own operations by 2030, though if it could move faster, that would be better. We feel it is a mistake to lower the aspiration for the District as a whole, even though at present it may feel unachievable. Global warming is occurring at a much faster rate than anticipated, and is following what was considered the 'worst case scenario.' As a result, the predicted climatic effects of increased polar and glacial melt, storm strength, flooding, droughts, extreme wildfires and biodiversity loss are also occurring more strongly and frequently than expected. It should be noted that [Copernicus.eu](#) has now confirmed that 2024 was the first year that temperatures were consistently 1.6 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Other international organisations have reported similar findings.

With reference to the second question

Although it is clear that every action to cut emissions and increase carbon sequestration will help to slow further rise, SMGP considers that every pathway to achieving that should be given equal priority. As well as 'Aiming low' to reduce fossil fuel use and emissions, we need to 'Aim High' to achieve maximum sustainable energy use, and maximum biosphere regeneration. If that is too much for the Council to do by itself, then we support the formation of citizen's assemblies and involving existing organisations such as Moorlands Climate Action. With this in mind, one of the options in the list of possible priorities is to 'support community organisations'. We believe that it will be more effective and inclusive to consult with community organisations and allow them to assist SMDC with their expertise and with their actions (such as the repair cafe, ManifoldCAN, White Peak Farmers, Moorlands Climate Action etc). Working closely with other community organisations, like MCA and the repair café will help to achieve the wider District targets

much more rapidly as well as potentially easing some of the stress on budgets.

Additionally, we are concerned there is no mention of nature in the consultation questions. We respectfully remind SMDC that the Climate and Nature Crisis are inextricably interlinked and fuel one another. We are also concerned that there is no mention of community education strategies regarding climate change

Requested Actions

Therefore, in response to the Climate Change consultation, Staffordshire Moorlands Green Party ask SMDC to consider the following actions:

- 1) Strive to achieve the 2030 targets across the whole range of priorities you have listed and others we have suggested. Aim to achieve significant progress in all areas, each year from now on.
- 2) Actively seek and collaborate with local community groups to help achieve its identified targets and actions more rapidly.
- 3) Incorporate an educational strategy into the Climate Action Plan. Initiate and maintain the spread of reliable scientific information concerning the reality of global warming and its consequences, in schools and in the community at large. Proactively encourage citizen science projects that foster local engagement and learning. We feel it is of the utmost importance that communities are informed regarding the current scientific consensus. Most of the information sheets included in the consultation need to be significantly updated.
- 4) Liaise with and support farmers in the Staffordshire Moorlands to discuss and implement the best sustainable farming and biodiversity practices and in lobbying for adequate central government funding to achieve the goals needed. We depend on farmers for the food we eat, and for the care of the countryside; they must be supported.
- 5) Collaborate proactively with Staffordshire Moorlands Parish Councils, providing a greater impetus for them to initiate and engage with local sustainability and nature solutions to climate change.
- 6) The Staffordshire Moorlands Green party is committed to establishing energy and food security for this area. Please engage with us to help achieve these outcomes.
- 7) Prepare for food shortages, further flooding, extended freezing conditions, heatwaves, power cuts, etc, which are likely to increase in the absence of immediate emissions reductions at a global and national level. It is important to make our area as self-sufficient as possible for all critical needs.

Concluding Thoughts

You include information on what other Councils are doing but although it may be interesting to be aware of this, we consider that it is not the main point – the main

point is that we ourselves need to aim to achieve the very best we can regardless of others. Those countries internationally which are achieving the most are doing so despite others falling behind in their commitments. There are so many countries that have fallen behind in their commitments according to the Paris agreement, that there is also a need, even with emissions reductions, to increase our preparedness for the consequences of our changing climate, locally, nationally and internationally. We are so far behind in what is needed that there is no time to waste, and every action we take now will help to secure a better future.

With thanks for all your work,
and with optimism for the future,

yours sincerely

(On behalf of the Staffordshire Moorlands Green Party)