

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **MINUTES OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

Thursday, 9th November, 2023

Present:- **Councillors** Andy Wait, Michael Auton, Anna Box, Jess David, John Leach, Alex Beaumont, June Player and Saskia Heijltjes

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Grant Johnson

#### **23 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **24 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

#### **26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **27 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

#### **28 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

Adam Reynolds made a statement to the Panel. A copy of the statement is attached to these minutes.

Nicolette Boater submitted a question to the Panel, an answer was circulated. A copy of the question and answer is attached to these minutes.

#### **29 MINUTES**

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

*Note: The Cabinet Project Lead, Councillor Oli Henman agreed to arrange a meeting with Councillor Wait to update on Keynsham Community Energy Group.*

## 30 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Highways, gave an update on matters within her portfolio. A report and presentation slides are attached. The presentation covered the following:

- City Centre Security
- Residents Parking Zones (RPZs)
- Cleveland Bridge
- Emission Based Parking Charges
- Transport Improvement Programme

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Box asked about Park and Ride parking charge changes, she also stated that parish members had commented on the times of services (especially in the evenings). The Cabinet Member agreed on the comment on rural bus services. She further explained that Park and Ride Services were brought back in house last year which had been an expensive project. She explained that we want to overachieve – all ringfenced funds will be invested back in the service. She asked that parish representatives write in with ideas.

Councillor Leach asked about the numbers of overweight lorries travelling over Cleveland Bridge. The Cabinet Member reported that it was 0.09%, on a monthly basis this is approximately 482 vehicles who have all had warning notices sent.

Councillor Heijltjes asked about the effects of the vacancies in parking services. The Cabinet Member explained that the Civil Enforcement Officer Service is running with 4 vacancies out of a staff of around 30. The main aim of the service is to educate people around the restrictions.

Councillor Beaumont asked to meet with the Cabinet Member regarding 20mph zones in Keynsham (school routes). The Cabinet Member stated that she would be delighted to meet and had plans to bunch together all of the areas that are requesting 20mph zones.

Councillor Heijltjes stated that she would like the free parking permits for Bath Councillors reviewed as a way of showcasing leadership. The Cabinet Member explained that everything is reviewed in the budgeting process, the budget will be considered by Council in February 2024.

Councillor David stated that there was an overspill issue in Oldfield with regard to RPZs and thanked officers for helping with this issue. She asked what monitoring was happening outside of the zones. The Cabinet Member confirmed that monitoring is being done and mitigations will be considered where necessary. She added that it was difficult to get to the cause of the issues and data can be affected by people parking a second car outside of the zone or HMOs.

Councillor Player asked about the state of roads and how, when potholes are repaired, they soon return to a bad state. She asked if cheaper materials are being

used to patch up the roads. The Cabinet Member stated that it was not that cheaper materials are used. She explained that there has been ongoing underfunding but that there had been investment in a machine that fills the roads differently which means pot hole repairs will last longer. She stated that the weather in the past year had been a large factor with regard to pot holes (almost double the damage last year).

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Rigby stated that she would like to thank the team who do an outstanding job.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member.

## 31 JOURNEY TO NET ZERO UPDATE

Councillor Sarah Warren - Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel – introduced a presentation which covered the following:

- Journey to Net Zero
- Vision
- Objectives
- Project Highlights
- Bath Clean Air Zone
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement
- Car Clubs: Launch Spring 24
- Working in Partnerships: Anchor Institutions

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Heijltjes asked for an update on pavement parking with regard to Tier vehicles (E scooters and bikes). The Cabinet Member explained that she was looking into creating a process for on-street parking and asked for ideas to be put forward. With regard to connecting on-street parking with cycle hangers, the officer stated that work was being done on this and she would be happy to be sent any suggested locations.

Councillor Auton asked about car clubs and stated that he would be happy to look at locations in Midsomer Norton. He asked about the railway line. The Cabinet Member explained that the bid for funding had been unsuccessful regarding that site. She stated that she would check the details and agreed to a meeting.

Councillor David asked the following questions. *The Cabinet Member response is shown in italics:*

- Are there any public engagement plans. *The Cabinet Member explained that she recognised the importance of public engagement and the first job of the new communications officer is a communication strategy regarding each of the strands.*

- What is the Council's ambition regarding school streets. *The Cabinet Member explained that 'school streets' refers to a timed temporary closure of a road at pick up and drop off times. She further explained that work has started on this with schools who have expressed an interest. The criteria will include the enthusiasm of the school and the type of road etc.*

Councillor Player asked if there were any plans to expand the CAZ (Clean Air Zone). The Cabinet Member stated that a physical expansion would be an expensive option so this has not been considered in great detail. Regarding air quality data, the Cabinet Member explained that there is monitoring information/graphs on the website.

Councillor Player asked if there would be more cars available to car clubs as one person's use can dominate. The Cabinet Member stated that work is being done on the type of formula but welcomed the thoughts of residents on this.

Councillor Leach asked about the plan for development work at the Rec in terms of the potential increase in car journeys. The Cabinet Member stated that officers will work with developers on this.

In response to a question from Councillor Heijltjes regarding how progress is measured, the Cabinet Member that she will consider a formal target regarding active travel. She stated that there is a paper on the Cabinet agenda on performance management but that some areas are easier than others regarding collecting and presenting data.

Councillor Box asked about the location of car clubs – will they be in city and rural areas. The Cabinet Member stated that she was keen to include rural areas.

Councillor Box stated that school transport in rural areas is costly and are we looking at electric vehicles. The Cabinet Member stated that school transport is not her area but she would pass this on to her colleague.

Councillor Wait asked about cargo bikes. The Cabinet Member explained that Tier would introduce a couple in the coming weeks/months but currently these can be rented via the Council website.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member.

## **32 INITIAL RESPONSE TO CLIMATE ACTION SCORECARD**

Councillor Sarah Warren - Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel – introduced the item. She referenced the Climate Emergency UK website and explained the mapping of where Climate Emergency has been declared. In the 2022 scorecard, this authority scored well – 57% when the average is 32%.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Leach asked about the previous scorecard where the authority did not do so well – he asked if the assumptions had changed. The Cabinet Member stated that the scoring methods have evolved, there are more details and this Council has engaged more. She added that we had not scored so high in terms of Transport and Waste but thought this was due to some work not being picked up in the scoring.

Councillor David stated that it is good news that this Council came 7<sup>th</sup>. She asked if waste and food issues could be picked up and helped by the Task and Finish Group. The Cabinet Member stated that this would be a great help. The officer added that the food issue is been considered.

Councillor Heijltjes referenced the low score for transport and asked if this was due to the range of great plans not having been implemented yet. The Cabinet Member agreed that the scoring had not been entirely fair on transport for example the score was 1/6 for transport schemes yet we have got the Tier partnership. Scoring is also not reflective in terms of the Clean Air Zone. There is always more to be done, our response can be shared with Panel members.

Councillor Wait congratulated the team on coming 7<sup>th</sup>. He asked about 84% yellow star on buildings and heating and the penalty points for transport. The Cabinet Member stated that the penalty point was for air pollution, she will double check this. Regarding the 84%, this reflected many innovations such as that in the Roman Baths.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers.

### **33 RESPONSE TO THE ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY**

Councillor Oli Henman - Cabinet Project Lead for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel – gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Nature Recovery – a new era for BANES
- Ecological Emergency Action Plan
- Vision and Priorities
- The ‘How’: Action Themes
- Priority Actions: updates
- Progress on other actions: highlights
- Priority actions to progress in coming year
- What is the LNRS?
- How will the LNRS be used?
- Stages for preparing and LNRS
- LNRS in the West of England
- LNRS Governance
- Milestones
- How we are developing priorities
- LNRS Stakeholder engagement
- Key next steps
- New extended Biodiversity Duty for Public Authorities
- GOV.UK guidance for LPAs

- First consideration

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Anna Box asked the following questions, *officer and Cabinet Project Lead responses shown in italics:*

- There is some confusion on 'call for nature' sites – what is the aim of this. *The officer explained that the website is currently being updated – any landowners can submit sites regarding biodiversity net gain. We will try to link them with funding sources.*
- Is there a plan for light pollution guidance for new builds regarding compliance for bats. *The Cabinet Project Lead stated that he would check these powers.*

Councillor Leach asked about waterways and if there was any mapping of plastic pollution. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that the waterways comes up a lot as a theme and this could be looked at as a stand alone issue. The officer added that there are water space partnerships, volunteers do regular litter picks.

Councillor David asked about support for local level community initiatives as there is a lot going on especially regarding parks. The Cabinet Project Lead agreed that volunteers must be supported. The officer added that the aim is to have specific guidance for communities and help link them with funding streams

Councillor Heijltjes explained that performance monitoring has been postponed by the Corporate Audit Committee until 2024/25 – she asked that in the interim, will this Panel conduct the role. The officer stated that she would get information on this and pass on to the Panel.

Councillor Auton asked if the Cabinet Project Lead would meet with him and a local member who runs a forest school on Duchy of Cornwall land that has launched a new community growing space and has plans for a rewilding area. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that this sounds like a brilliant example to be explored and would like the meeting.

Councillor David asked what can be done regarding water pollution near sewage outflows. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that a national change is needed, there is a lack of funding for the Environmental Agency. He hoped for a different approach from National Government. The officer added that information can be given to the government department.

Councillor Heijltjes asked if there are resource constraints in the Nature Recovery Team. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that the emergency is real and action is needed, he stated that overall budgets are constantly being squeezed. It is harder to have core funding, the model is that funding is on a project basis. We will continue to pursue this.

Councillor David referenced a bat friendly lighting project and many opportunities for improvement. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that there is an ambition to connect across Council teams.

Councillor Wait stated that there is better scrutiny of Wessex Water than there is of landowners. He stated that when measuring pollution, it is difficult to see the source – can we identify particular positions for monitoring. The officer stated that the River Trust is looking at this, working with Wessex Water with priority catchments and more locations. He explained that there is a roll out of a real time test monitoring programme. He stated that the data will be available and interactive.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Project Lead and officers.

### **34 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel noted the future workplan, including items for the next meetings:

January 2024:

Liveable Neighbourhoods and RPZs Update  
Budget discussion

March 2024:

Local Plan Update  
Housing Policy

The meeting ended at 11.57 am

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**