

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 16th March, 2020

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Tom Davies, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Joel Hirst, Lisa O'Brien, Grant Johnson and Dr Kumar

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Sue Craig

42 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

43 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Sue Craig gave apologies for the meeting.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

46 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

47 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

The Panel noted that a member of the public, Nicolette Boater, submitted a question regarding Climate Emergency (relating to item 8 on the agenda). The question and answer was circulated and is set out below:

Question:

In the absence of any reference of the B&NES Climate Emergency, Environment & Place Partnership (promised in Council's 10.10.19 Climate Emergency Progress report) in either the 16.3.20 Climate Emergency Update report or associated Appendix 1, please can you advise what progress has been made to setting this up?

Answer:

We have set up the Climate Emergency Public Services Group and further work is underway on the wider B&NES partnership, of which this group is a key part.

48 MINUTES - 20TH JANUARY 2020

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting (20th January 2020) as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

49 CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Sarah Warren introduced the item. The Corporate and Community Sustainability Manager, Jane Wildblood, gave a presentation to the Panel which covered the following:

- Action Plan Update
- Corporate Strategy
- Report – key actions update
- Citizens engagement programme
- Strategy and plan reviews
- Recommendations

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

Councillor Born raised the following points. *Officer and Cabinet Member responses are shown in italics.*

- Could retrofitting could be brought forward and maybe progressed from the draft guidance stage. *The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development explained that consultation on the development plan starts in November which is ten months away and quick in planning terms. The process must be followed.*
- The Parish Council tool kit is excellent, could it be adapted for Bath residents' associations. *The officer agreed that the tool kit could be adapted as suggested.*
- Could we produce some guidance for householders setting out practical steps. *The officer explained that this is in hand and the guide will be similar to the '50 things you can do' guide which has been publicised in the press.*

Councillor Hirst raised the following points. *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Are there any quick wins as it can be useful to be able to point to practical steps we are taking. *The officer explained that some things have been done already such as LED street lighting and the Civic Centre in Keynsham. Also, we are supporting Bath and West Community Energy. We have a small team compared to other local authorities so we will do our best with the resources we have.*
- Regarding the list of policies, can we create a timeline and do the policies come through this Panel for review or go to separate places. *The officer explained that the Panel could look at the policies.*

- There is a deficit regarding the Bath Area Forum, we have to fill that void. We must keep working to engage the whole of BANES.
- Supportive of a citizen's jury regarding retrofitting.

Councillor Johnson raised the following points. *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- A task and finish group would be better than a single day event. Members could get more involved.
- Could the Parish Council tool kits be adapted for businesses too. Sometimes businesses need a nudge.
- The tool kit is available online but a lot of people still struggle to find things online, a lot of people will not prioritise this unless something is put in front of them. *Councillor Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency explained that she working with the Communications department to review how information can be accessed so they could consider paper copies.*

Councillor O'Brien raised the following points:

- Retrofitting should be the priority as that is where most carbon emissions come from. There is a company that provides low ratio loans for people to carry out the work needed, the Council could look into this too.
- Solar panels can be problematic because of home ownership, the authority could 'rent' roofs to put solar panels on and the residents could receive a reduced energy rate. People respond where they can see a benefit or save money. Councillor Walker supported the idea of giving people a cash incentive and agreed that renting roofs was a great idea.
- Windfarms are controversial so maybe we should concentrate on using what we have already which is roofs (including schools).

The officer responded that she loved the ideas and will be looking at the best financing options. She stressed the need for a community response rather than individual, piecemeal response.

Councillor Davies thanked the officers and the Cabinet Member. He stated that it would be good if residents could see the action plan, a lot has been done and people do not always join the dots. Things such as the Clean Air Zone and recycling are all related to the climate emergency. The action plan is full – it would be good to come up with a brand such as 'tackling the climate emergency' which we can use to show which projects are helping towards this. Maybe stickers with a logo or phrase – people can then see the things that are being done towards the goal. *The officer responded that this is on the agenda and work is being done with Communications and Marketing on a design.*

Councillor Bromley stated that it is good to have incentives for people who are time poor and busy.

Councillor Dr Kumar stated that the Council should improve facilities for online meetings. He stated that dissemination of online information on climate change is vital.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, the officer explained that she is working with the housing team to help people in fuel poverty as any retrofitting scheme must take people on low income into account.

Councillor Walker asked if the officer could speak to the local authority for Cornwall to ask how they dealt with objections regarding wind turbines. The officer explained that she is sharing information on this, she explained that where there is community ownership regarding wind turbines – they are accepted. Also, a national survey has shown the 85% of the population are ok with wind turbines so there may not be as much resistance as anticipated.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Panel play a role in the alignment of all the Council's strategies and plans where possible;
2. Support the setting up of a task and finish group to investigate housing and retrofitting.

50 WASTE STRATEGY 2020-2030

Pam Jones - Interim Project Manager, Environmental Services introduced the report. She explained that this is an early report on emerging themes and wanted to hear the Panel's comments on compulsory recycling. She added that she had been working closely with the Corporate and Community Sustainability Manager.

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

Councillor Hirst raised the following points:

- He has concerns around the closure of the Midland Road Site. It would not be appropriate to move it to Oddown due to the busy road.
- Anxious about compulsory recycling as we are managing recycling well so would making it compulsory make enough of a difference?
- Worried about vulnerable people – a draconian approach may cause stress. The nudge approach is better.
- Excited about growing the reuse and repair group. They could drop in on ward meetings.

The officer explained that we have a 58% success rate regarding recycling, but we have run out of things to do to improve this. Around 20% of residents do not recycle. Making it compulsory might mean we can jump from 58% to 61%. This move would not be based around just fines, it would be mainly about education.

Councillor Bromley stated the current system for recycling in BANES is complex, maybe you could make the benefits of this system clearer and incentivise rather than punish.

Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services explained that some counter education is needed, some people believe the Council puts all the collected recycling into landfill. The officer explained that the Government 2023 Strategy will

set out how Council's should get rid of waste, we aligned with this already. We need to work on putting out the message that recycling is helping with the Climate Emergency agenda – the environmental benefits are the equivalent of taking cars off the road.

Councillor Johnson made the following points:

- Recycling should be made compulsory and BANES should push to be the best authority on this.
- Charges for garden waste may disincentivise people.
- To what extent will the Council's actions be superseded by the Government Waste and Recycling Strategy?
- Can the Council act over people having fires in their garden?

The officer responded that the Council's plans are aligned with the Government's Strategy. There is a need to help support people to compost more waste. There is a proposal in the Strategy that garden waste should be made free. Councillor Crossley, Cabinet Member Community Services explained that he disagreed with this in that some people do not have gardens. He stated that he thought the community initiatives in the report such as street champions and volunteers was a good idea as local people might get a better response than Council advice. Councillor Crossley added that the Government should give Council's the responsibility to pick up business recycling and litter and it should be made illegal to pack things with polystyrene.

Councillor O'Brien stated (regarding the Waste Strategy) that there are a number of homes such as flats and apartments where there are inadequate recycling facilities so she cannot support compulsory recycling as it would not be fair. She added that there is still more education that can be done about what people can recycle (eg. Some tips take polystyrene). She added that she agreed with the point on the repair cafe as the one regularly held in Keynsham is well-supported and was crowded at the last event. It helps people use skills and is also a community project. Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services commented that there is a drive to bring more flats on board regarding recycling rates. Lisa Gordon (Waste officer) added that there are storage issues for some flat owners and officers are working on this.

Councillor Born made the following points:

- A plea for more communal recycling – maybe underground bins, particularly in the city centre.
- It is important to note that some city centre flats are not Curo properties so this may not be solely Curo's responsibility.
- Do not agree with compulsory recycling until there is more equality.
- We could publish how much we pay for waste that we put into landfill.
- Regarding the recycling centre – in agreement that it should be moved outside the city centre, but some smaller city centre provision also needed.

The officer agreed on the importance of publishing information such as how much it costs to put a dustcart full of waste into landfill versus the cost of a recycling truck.

The officer added that it can be hard to engage with flat owners in the city centre. The officers are looking at on street food waste bins.

Councillor Davies made the following points:

- There should be some caution on compulsory recycling until we have done everything else we can to address the issue.
- We could put stickers on bins etc. to show statistics about recycling.
- Do we understand what the barriers are for the 20% of people that do not recycle?

The officer responded that uptake regarding food waste was sporadic. This is being monitored and can be reported back. The officer stated that she did not know the reason why 20% of people do not recycle but from Autumn this year there will be technology which will identify which households are not recycling which can then be targeted with better information. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services added that this technology will be a game changer.

There was some discussion around the use of biodegradable bags in food waste bins. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods explained that people can use newspaper or plastic bags – they will be removed at the plant.

Councillor Dr Kumar made the following points:

- In favour of the street champion idea.
- Agree that garden collections should not be free.
- In some religions there would be no food waste, these families should not be punished.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services agreed that there may be good reasons why people do not have food waste so we cannot to be heavy handed.

Councillor Walker made the following points:

- Happy to support free garden waste as it might alleviate fly tipping.
- Support the deposit and refund scheme.
- Regarding the CCTV dash cam technology – crews must also be careful not to drop waste.
- If people compost, they will have no food waste.

Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services stated that the discussion had been useful and noted that most of the Panel are cautious about compulsory recycling.

51 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the future workplan.

The Panel noted that any items suggested within the meeting would be considered at the Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings and also at the agenda planning meeting with the Chair of the Panel.

The meeting ended at 6.05 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services