

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 16th November, 2020

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

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Grant Johnson

72 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

75 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

David Redgewell, Transport South West, made a statement to the panel regarding transport issues and the effects of Covid.

Councillor Karen Walker stated that the WECA Travel Plan will be discussed at the next agenda briefing meeting.

77 MINUTES

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

78 AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR FARRINGTON GURNEY AND TEMPLE CLOUD

Phil Mansfield, Head of Building Control and Public Protection introduced the report to the Panel. The following officers were present – Cathryn Brown Team Manager (Licensing and Environmental Protection); Aled Williams, Environmental Protection Manager; Rob Spalding, Senior Environmental Monitoring Officer and Tiago Roque,

Public Protection Technical Officer. The officers gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Update
- Monitoring data – Temple Cloud
- Monitoring data – Farrington Gurney
- Public Consultation
- How much the public supports the following measures regarding Air Quality in Temple Cloud
- How much the public supports the following measures regarding Air Quality in Farrington Gurney
- Criteria and Attribute Weighting
- Temple Cloud overall preference against maximum possible score
- Farrington Gurney overall preference against maximum possible score
- Measures Proposed from the Consultation
- Progress so far (Molly Close Footpath, Width Restriction in Temple Cloud)
- Progress so far (Innovative Technologies)
- Progress so far (Tree cutting and Speed restrictions)
- Next Steps

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions. Officer responses are shown in italics.

Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods thanked the officers for the report and presentation. *An officer explained that as environmental monitoring officers, they are consultees on planning developments over a certain size, this means we can comment and ensure developments are as sustainable as possible.*

Councillor Walker asked about the shuttle scheme in Temple Cloud. *The officer explained that north bound vehicles come into the village at speed and so work would need to be done to see what it would look like.*

Councillor Craig raised the following points. *Officer responses shown in italics:*

- Regarding both locations – monitoring in August went in the opposite direction. *A number of things can affect this such as temperature and wind conditions. There are also changes and renewal of vehicles over time. The solid line is a 3-year trend and can be a better indicator than short term data.*
- 210 responses – how many homes are currently in the two areas? *Temple Cloud – 550 houses. Farrington Gurney – 450 houses.*
- Both locations – there was a high response asking for influence over planning decisions. Unless there is planning policy around this, the Committee cannot give comments much weight. *We work closely with planning officers and have the same Director now. Regarding an Air Quality Action plan – we are looking into an enhanced pool of planning conditions.*

Councillor Born raised the following points. *Officer response shown in italics:*

- The new Molly Lane footpath is a quick win and would allow people to walk away from the main road.
- Regarding the innovative technology – what size area would a device cover? *Innovative technology is not widely used and mainly used inside. The market is not flooded with options at the moment. The efficiency is 2/2.5 metres. This is for one type of technology only. We would need a certain amount of surface area for each unit – there are space and maintenance considerations.*
- Cutting the tree canopy – how do you balance with the positive effect trees have on pollution? *We were asked to cut back trees on safety grounds. It is a difficult balance to cut back the tree canopy which allows better mixing of air dispersion but also keeping enough of a barrier.*
- Annual average monitoring must disguise daily peaks and troughs? *There are peaks and troughs during the day which monthly monitoring does not pick up but when we are exceeding the annual average, the hourly average may also be exceeded. Our focus is on the annual average.*

Councillor Wood (Cabinet Member) commented that the A37 is a narrow road with a school at one end and Doctor surgery at the other end. The innovative technology is short reach, but the issue is a localised one. We will try to get people to use the foot bypass as much as possible.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, the officer explained that the innovative technology costs £14,000 per unit with additional maintenance and running costs (although this is only one supplier's cost).

Councillor O'Brien commented that she was horrified by the levels in Temple Cloud and Farrington Gurney. She commented that the diverted footway and innovative technology – although good initiatives, are not really addressing the overall issue. The A37 runs through other villages (eg. Pensford) and it is a main artery road between the south and the M5 – it is not fit for purpose. Councillor Wood (Cabinet Member) stated that there is a level of frustration that a more dramatic approach cannot be taken. He stated that the WECA mayor had blocked the width restriction.

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

- If all these measures succeed, what is the bottom line, what will the impact be on Air Quality? *We want to see a reduction in NO2.*
- What is the level of confidence in deliverability? *There is a nonlinear relationship in percentage reduction in emissions and air quality eg. NO2 levels are lower in the summer. We are doing vehicle counts to monitor the effects Covid has had on travel to understand the changing patterns.*
- Regarding the innovative technology – there is no independent evidence around this. We do not want an expensive white elephant. We may need to think in a more radical way – maybe about charging for high emission vehicles. *We will be asking questions of the supplier/s.*

Councillor Walker stated that, regarding the shuttle north bound, signalling could be used so lights change when a heavy vehicle is coming through. *The officer explained that Temple Cloud has high concentrations due to heavy vehicles not being able to pass each other causing a stop flow.*

Councillor Born stated that there is an increasing body of knowledge which suggests that building new roads does not help overall.

Councillor Dr Kumar stated that the consultation was done Feb-May 2020 – there was less traffic in this period due to the lockdown. *The officer explained that some drop in events were held before lockdown and we still had online and paper responses after lockdown had started. Residents have lived in the area for a long time and were able to give us their examples and experiences which were not just about the Feb-May period. They still had their views.*

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the progress and made comments which were noted by officers.

79 RENEWAL PROGRAMME WORKSTREAMS

Jane Wildblood, Corporate & Community Sustainability Manager (Renewal Vision Workstream Lead Partnerships & Corporate Services) introduced the report to the Panel and gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Renewal Vision Update
- Corporate Strategy and vision
- Renewal Vision purpose
- Workstream includes
- Vision – Phase 1: evidence & context
- Questions and themes
- The four emerging ‘stories’ or themes
- ‘Green recovery’ study
- Vision – Phase 2: widening engagement and developing the vision

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions. Officer responses are shown in italics.

Councillor Sarah Warren (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency) thanked the officers in the team for their work. She commented that there have been dramatic changes due to Covid which reduced carbon footprint and that this has provided the opportunity to rebuild in a way that is kinder to the environment.

Councillor Bromley stated that the 20 minute neighbourhood sounds like a good idea that would certainly be helpful to some small businesses in Weston ward. She asked how we will make the scheme successful. *The officer explained that this could mean developing local hubs (for working) in villages that will be like landing stations for employees that may not want to work from home every day. This means there would be more local footfall.*

Councillor O’Brien raised the following points. *Officer responses are shown in italics:*

- There is the issue of development retail and tourism to be net zero. Coaches are still parking in the city centre – should we insist on them using the

Oddown Coach Park (Councillor Walker agrees). We should utilize the space at Oddown. We want tourists to stay longer in the city.

- Working from home has been of great benefit regarding carbon emissions but it has not benefitted the high street – only online suppliers which means there are a lot more delivery trucks on the road.
- 20 minute neighbourhood – development of an insularity against the outside world. We do have to be realistic about how much local businesses can support this.
- We have had housing developments forced on us in North East Somerset, there must be a review of how the city of Bath is laid out and used. Maybe more living accommodation rather than retail.

The officer responded that 20-minute neighbourhoods applies to the whole authority not just Bath. The officer stated that these comments were useful for the next stage and would be fed back.

Councillor Warren (Cabinet Member) added that the hubs could be used as shared space for workers but also for part time retail/hairdressers etc. Reducing mileage per year is crucial.

Councillor Davies asked about economic recovery in terms of existing businesses and asked about having appropriate training in place including secondary schools. *The officer explained that representatives from universities sit on the economic recovery and renewal board. There is a recognition of the need to re skill people. We need people with skills in areas such as retro fitting and EV charge point installation. We need immediate short-term support for businesses and a future plan regarding training.*

Councillor Craig commented that there should be policy alignment with planning as opportunities to influence planning policies are few and far between. We need to take quick action on this. *The officer explained that she works closely with planning colleagues and that the Local Plan Partial Review should help this.*

Councillor Born commented that it was great that work started on this straight away although there will be difficulties as this is the biggest challenge the Council has had to face. She also asked if the Council should be putting in more resources to support this work (given the scale of the task).

Councillor Dr Kumar commented that some residents believe that the 20mph limits will increase pollution. He also commented that a lot of his Bath University colleagues are willing to work with the Council to share their expertise. *The officer responded that, as far as he knows, 20mph limits do not increase pollution. Regarding Bath University, conversations are happening.*

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the purpose and scope of the Renewal Board's Renewal Vision workstream and the timetable for the work underway to develop a new, shared vision for Bath and North East Somerset.

80 TRANSPORT AND COVID RESPONSE

Paul Garrod, Traffic Management and Network Manager introduced the report and gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Public Transport
- Traffic Volumes
- Parking
- Emergency Active Travel Fund
 - Tranche 1 – schemes implemented
 - Other measures
 - Tranche 2 bid
- E-Scooter trial

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions. Officer responses are shown in italics.

Councillor Davies raised the following points. *Officer response shown in italics.*

- Have you been able to learn anything with regard to data on cycling. *We will be analysing a couple sites shortly and are hoping to put in more cycle counters but at present, we do not have a lot of information on this. We hope to get some before and after data around the permanent schemes.*
- Regarding Liveable Neighbourhoods – when are ward Councillors likely to be asked to submit local schemes. *The strategy will be considered by Cabinet before the end of the year so, if it is adopted, ward members will be contacted in the new year.*

Councillor Joanna Wright (Cabinet Member Transport) thanked the officers for their work. She explained that WECA has some cycling data based on Bristol. She agreed that we could do more regarding cycling information. Regarding Liveable Neighbourhoods, she explained that this is due to be considered by the Cabinet on 10th December 2020. If adopted there will be proformas for ward members and we will work, along with others such as the police, emergency services, waste services etc, to find solutions.

Councillor Craig stated that, while she supported the e-scooter scheme, there was an issue with people who are less able bodied, people with blue badges, having access to the city centre. She stated that Shop Mobility is closed at present and that this service is missed. David Trethewey, Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services stated that accessibility is an important issue and that the team have been working on equality impacts. He reported that Shop Mobility has not been allowed to open due to lockdown restrictions and logistic issues. Councillor Craig stated that, now more streets are pedestrianised, demand may rise again. Councillor Joanna Wright (Cabinet Member Transport) explained that the e-scooter scheme was a trial at this stage and would be carefully monitored. She added that there are a variety of models, including a sit-down model.

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

- I am concerned to see that the Park and Ride usage has reduced. Are we considering cycle and scooter hire at Park and Ride sites? *There has been a*

drop in usage, during this second lockdown, we have not stopped parking charges. Regarding cycle and scooter hire in Park and Ride sites, we would need good infrastructure and facilities for this. The Riverside Path from Newbridge Park and Ride is accessible but not ideal for social distancing.

- Also concerns about the reduction in bus use. The Government is subsidising bus services at present, but I have concerns about what will happen if this is not sustained, especially with regard to rural services. Councillor Neil Butters (Cabinet Member Transport) stated that no bus operator in the country can make a profit – the Department for Transport (DfT) are supporting bus and rail. It is thought that bus use will settle at around 80% of normal use. When the support grants stop, there will be a co-ordinated effort by the DfT to get people back on buses.
- Is there any early feedback regarding the e-scooters – how about potholes? Councillor Joanna Wright (Cabinet Member Transport) stated that she would follow this up.

Councillor Hirst thanked the officers for their work in such challenging times. He stated that he supports growing the cycle journey information. He added that there needs to be a leap in investment regarding the cycle infrastructure. He noted the delay in response from the Government regarding bids.

Councillor Joanna Wright (Cabinet Member Transport) stated that the LTN20 documents are a game changer at the top of government. David Trethewey, Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services added that responsibility for delivery always lies with local government and this is coming together.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the update.

81 PANEL WORKPLAN

Councillor Walker explained that there will be a report on Homelessness and Rough Sleepers to be considered at the January meeting of the Panel.

Panel members noted the future workplan

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services