

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 22nd November, 2021

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Joel Hirst, Shelley Bromley, Paul Crossley, Dr Kumar, Ruth Malloy, Lisa O'Brien, Ryan Wills and Robin Moss (in place of Grant Johnson)

24 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

25 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Grant Johnson gave apologies and was substituted by Councillor Robin Moss.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

28 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

The Chair drew the Panel's attention to the Question and Answer document that had been circulated. *A copy of the document is attached to these minutes.*

30 MINUTES

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

31 FINAL STRATEGY FOR PLANTING TREES IN BANES

Mark Cassidy, Tree and Woodland Officer, Neighbourhood and Environmental Services, and Keith Rowe, Team Manager – Parks and Green Spaces, introduced the item and gave a presentation to the Panel which covered the following points:

- Background
- Key objectives
- Baseline Tree Data
- Appraisal of Publicly Accessible Land Council owned and third party land audited
- Private Tree Planting Issues and Opportunities – results of Ethos Consultation
- We commissioned Woodland Opportunity Mapping
- How do we get to 100,000 trees?
- Delivery Plan Actions
- Monitoring

Councillor Jess David (Cabinet Assistant) explained that the Tree and Woodland delivery plan was ambitious and was also a living document.

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

Councillor Moss asked about ‘1 tree per child’ and if this meant that children had their own tree. He asked if ownership could help prevent vandalism. He also asked how trees will be monitored in terms of whether they are thriving. The officer explained that children (and adults) who are involved in planting trees in their local area do seem to have more neighbourhood pride. He explained that ‘1 tree per child’ was mainly focused in schools or their vicinity. In terms of monitoring, the officer explained that the Council do monitor their own trees and invest in watering and mulching but do not monitor trees planted privately.

Councillor Moss asked if people could report progress online. The officer stated that people will be able to upload information on the virtual forest map.

Councillor Crossley asked if the virtual forest map goes down to garden level and are existing trees recorded in terms of diseases. He also asked if hedges count. The officer explained that yes, the system could be used regarding recording of diseased trees in an area. He also stated that the planting of a hedge does count towards the tree planting targets. In terms of existing trees being recorded, the officer explained that they will not be logged, only newly planted trees that contribute to the target set. He explained that ariel photography is how we tell how much canopy there is.

Councillor O'Brien asked if there were any planting restrictions regarding local or national planning policy. She also stated that Curo plant trees around social housing and have an officer responsible for this – do other social housing providers do the same? The officer explained that in ‘Woodland Opportunity Mapping’ which shows how certain areas benefit from certain views – landscape character is protected in planning which stops excessive tree planting in areas that are not appropriate. Regarding social housing providers, the officer stated that he was not in contact with any other than Curo. He stated that he can follow this up. Councillor Walker stated

that some social housing providers are very small so may not have an officer responsible for this.

Councillor Dr Kumar asked about the percentage of tree coverage in the area. He also asked what the average cost of planting a tree is and asked that the officer to explain carbon capture and monitoring. The officer explained that 16.5% is the average cover across BANES and that this is 22% across Bath. In terms of the cost per tree, the officer explained that this varies greatly from £1.50 for a cheap plant to £500 for a semi mature plant. He stated that the average cost for a standard tree (around 4 metres) is £450-£500 when dug into a pavement. The officer explained, regarding carbon capture, that aerial photography is consulted and this is quantified. He stated that this is the most necessary piece of work in terms of monitoring progress.

The officer explained that 1-Tree is a complex system worked up in America which gives an average of all trees of all sizes in terms of functioning canopy cover. We would not know the full picture of coverage without this.

Councillor Bromley asked the meaning of 'nature based solutions' – the officer explained that this referred to other forms of nature based mitigation of carbon.

Councillor Hirst stated that it looks like we are on track to achieve the target at this stage and asked what the stretch target is for the next 5 years and also what the barriers are. The officer explained that the delivery plan reflects the corporate targets. He stated that we will be able to refine targets, for example making a difference in terms of air quality – tree planting could be prioritized in certain areas to improve air quality. He further explained that the delivery plan is part of the Forest of Avon regional strategy. The West of England partnership have ambitions of doubling the rural and urban canopy cover by 2050/60. Canopy cover is how we should quantify, rather than numbers of trees.

Councillor Malloy asked how many trees out of the 100k would be likely not to survive approximately. The officer explained that ordinarily there would be a 80/90% success rate with tree planting. He further explained that when doing mass planting, 2 metre spacing allows for natural wastage and also allows for tree competition which means they establish faster.

Councillor Walker asked how Parish and Town Councils could get advice on getting the right trees in the right areas. The officer stated that he could give advice on this (including putting them in contact with grant funders). He explained he had attended two Parish Liaison meetings with the Forest of Avon. He explained the need to get the timing right regarding the grant funding and planting season.

The Chair thanked the officer.

32 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel raised the following points and noted the future workplan:

Councillor O'Brien stated that she was disappointed that the Climate Emergency Update had not come earlier as the Panel will not have time to input before the February Council meeting. She stated that she was disappointed in the information brought to the Panel in the area of Climate Emergency and concerned that there would only be more generalisations in January.

Councillor Walker explained that she had raised this with the Director and took on board Councillor O'Brien's concerns.

The meeting ended at 5.08 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services