

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 14th March, 2022

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

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Grant Johnson and Lisa O'Brien

51 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

52 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Lisa O'Brien sent her apologies and was substituted by Councillor Karen Warrington.

Councillor Grant Johnson sent his apologies.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

55 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

Panel members noted that David Redgewell had registered to make a statement but was unable to attend. The statement has been circulated to Panel members.

57 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record..

58 NEIGHBOURHOOD CLEANSING

Councillor Dave Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, and Carol Maclellan, Assistant Director Environmental Services, introduced the report.

Councillor Wood explained that all Council's had seen a squeeze on front line services and his aim had been to get investment in these areas and had been working with officers to target the areas that need most intervention. Carol Maclellan outlined the 11 priority areas of investment.

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

Councillor Joel Hirst welcomed the report and investment. He asked the following questions – *officer/Cabinet Member response shown in italics.*

- What are the logistics around the 'clean and green days'? *Councillor Wood explained that a post had been created to organise these days to get the community (Residents Associations, Parish and Town Councillors and Ward Councillors) and Council teams together and focus on an area.*
- How will we raise awareness of the opportunities for support? *The officer explained that there was definitely a communications aspect and once everything is in place, there would be a public launch.*

Councillor Shelley Bromley welcomed the investment in the mechanical weed remover as she has had comments from her residents about the weeds looking untidy. She asked how best to tackle graffiti on utility boxes. *Councillor Wood explained that if you let the company know, they will usually remove the graffiti. The officer added that Council vans will remove small bits of graffiti from these boxes.* Councillor Karen Walker asked for a list of contact details for utility companies be provided for ward Councillors.

Councillor Ruth Malloy stated that if graffiti on telecoms cabinets is reported to 'Fix my Street' it will be forwarded to the correct place.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked about road and pavement repairs and what the process is if utility companies do not clear up properly after works. *Councillor Wood explained that companies do have a legal obligation to return the area to a certain standard. He stated that he was not sure the legal level is high enough, but the Council can check up.*

Councillor Karen Warrington asked how gully emptying and dog fouling enforcement was prioritised. *Councillor Wood stated that there is usually a small amount of dog owners that are responsible, it is about the community coming together with intelligence that will inform the enforcement officer. In terms of gully emptying there are different issues such as verges not being cleared. This investment should see a 50% increase in gully's cleared.*

Councillor Ryan Wills asked the following questions, *officer/Cabinet Member responses are in italics:*

- How will road repairs be prioritized? *Councillor Wood stated that the highways budget has shrunk and this investment is needed to bring the road network back to a 'steady state' which is where the network is maintained gradually and no area is left to deteriorate which is what happens when there is under*

investment. The ranking of the priorities is done by the Highways Department – they do take into account the future cost and level of community interest.

- Are these investments one offs? *Councillor Wood explained that this is a one-off trial but the knowledge gained will be used to best direct resources to meet public need during the next budget setting.*

Councillor Walker asked the following questions, *officer/Cabinet Member responses are in italics:*

- Regarding the additional resources on dog fouling, fly tipping & litter offences - would it not be more beneficial for town and Parish councils to take on more responsibility, so this would reduce the cost and continue to deliver this service once the funding has finished. *Councillor Wood explained that the Council has statutory powers of enforcement.*
- Regarding the increased routine street cleaning in wards, and our highways network - would it be more beneficial for wards that are parishes to have more input from the parish council for street cleaning, especially those streets the road sweepers do not clean? *Councillor Wood explained that Parish and Town Councils could be consulted on priorities.* Councillor Warrington agreed that Parish and ward Councillors should be consulted as some have a formal set up with organised volunteers and to have BANES crews would be a great benefit.

The Panel **RESOLVED** that their comments on the 11 priority activities and communication and engagement with communities be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and relevant officers.

59 CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel and Sophie Broadfield, Director of Sustainable Communities, introduced the report and gave a presentation which covered the following:

- CRSTS Programme (1) – Transport Corridors
- CRSTS Programme (2) – Walking and Cycling
- Liveable Neighbourhoods
- Residents Parking Zones

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

Councillor Warrington asked about the money for rural areas which includes the Somer Valley and Midsomer Norton but not Chew Valley. Councillor Warren stated that there is money for specific initiatives in rural communities and confirmed that a pilot study is being considered for Chew Valley.

Councillor Crossley asked if the timescale was realistic regarding Liveable Neighbourhoods. The Director explained that almost all ward Councillors had now been approached.

Councillor Hirst stated that it was great – regarding Liveable Neighbourhoods – that responses were fairly positive. He asked when the time was to go beyond the 15 areas. Councillor Warren explained that co-design with the 15 communities begins imminently, it will become clear where public consensus emerges. Our hands are fairly full with the 15 areas at present. The Director added that it is hoped that a 5 year programme can be developed.

Councillor Walker asked how trade and service vehicles will access these areas. Councillor Warren stated that the areas will not necessarily be car free, it is about having only the vehicles that need to be there such as residents and tradespeople rather than through traffic. The Director confirmed that a road can be accessed and then the vehicle can drive back the way they came rather than drive through which will stop rat running.

Councillor Dr Kumar asked what would happen if an LTN did not succeed. Councillor Warren stressed that co-design was the approach and that if agreement cannot be reached, then that LTN may not be able to go forward. There will need to be a reasonable level of consensus. There will also be monitoring of unintended consequences.

Councillor Dr Kumar asked about the timescales. The Director explained that the next stage was co-design ward by ward. The aim was to have designs around September.

The Panel **RESOLVED:**

- To note the elements of the West of England CRSTS that relate to activity in Bath and North East Somerset for inclusion in the submission to DfT and
- Note the progress with the Liveable Neighbourhoods/RPZ proposals

60 JOURNEY TO NET ZERO: REDUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TRANSPORT IN BATH

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel and Sophie Broadfield, Director of Sustainable Communities, introduced the report and gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Introduction
- Vision
- Objectives
- How we have consulted so far
- Consultation findings
- Better public transport options
- Providing for Travel by bike or on foot
- Creating improved places to live and work

- Cleaner, greener school travel
- Supporting future mobility
- Connecting Bath to rural communities and market towns
- Next steps
- Have your say
- The Plan identifies: current projects/Developing projects/Future projects

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

Councillor Karen Warrington stated that the programme is centred around Bath. Rural communities have had public transport cuts recently – residents welcome transport improvements into the City. Also, will you be working with Bristol City Council regarding transport into Bristol. Councillor Warren explained that the document evolved from previous documents about Bath. Bath and access to it is central to the document. CRST rural fund and innovation fund will help. Chew Valley has been suggested for a pilot regarding decarbonisation. Regarding Bristol routes, there will be focus on the A37.

Councillor Hirst stated that it was an exciting document, but the challenge is how we deliver. He asked the following questions, *officer/Cabinet Member responses are shown in italics.*

- The table shows that twice the amount of people use public transport in Oxford – how can we learn from them? *Councillor Warren stated that she had spoken to her counterpart in Oxford Council. The Director stated that visiting other cities will help with improvements. Councillor Walker stated that while the population is similar in the two cities, Bath has a lot more hills.*
- Can we take the issues such as air pollution and transport out of the political sphere? There could be a cross party advisory board which would mean there would be no stall due to a change in administration. *Councillor Warren stated that she would think about this suggestion.*

Councillor Dr Kumar stated that this was a grandiose wish list. He asked how cleaner, greener schools would be achieved and what the plan is to encourage independent and healthy travel. He asked if schools would be funded to help them improve their environment. Councillor Warren gave the example of Amsterdam in the 1970's which was choked with cars. She explained that this situation was addressed by someone first having a vision. She explained that step one is the vision from which the business case can be put together which is how local government funding works. She further explained that the basis of the plan is putting in safe and segregated cycle routes so that parents would feel safe allowing children to cycle to school. We want to show more residents the potential of e-bikes. She explained that the document contains a bold vision but has been broken down in current/futures plans.

Councillor Dr Kumar stated that cycle lanes are 1.5metres and roads in Bath are too narrow and a lot of the secondary school are on hills. Councillor Warren agreed that this outlines one of the problems faced but not only flat cities are cycling cities. Access to e-bikes will help.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked the following questions, *officer/Cabinet Member responses are shown in italics*:

- The Council has 4 e-bikes for hire to businesses – is there a similar system for individuals? *The Director stated that this was a good suggestion that she would take away.*
- Bath is a World Heritage City, we could look at the 10 other Spa towns of Europe. *The Director stated that the City of Bath was built to walk around. She stated that investments are being made such as in Bathampton.*

Councillor Shelley Bromley stated that a car club could be an attractive idea, especially for younger people. She stated that bus fares are very expensive and we need to try to drive them down. Councillor Warren explained that this Council does not control the bus companies, but WECA has a direct relationship and we do talk to them. First Bus are the largest provider in the area and they are mindful of the impact of cancelled services and are keen to work with WECA. Bath is a difficult place to run buses as it is bus lanes that make bus journeys more attractive to drivers.

Regarding the Council's control over Park and Ride sites, Councillor Walker stated that these sites need to be made safer for people to use with confidence.

Councillor Ryan Wills asked the following questions, *officer/Cabinet Member responses are shown in italics*:

- Do we work with WECA on recruiting bus drivers? *Councillor Warren explained that First Bus have been taking innovative approaches on this.*
- What are the plans for the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure? *Councillor Warren stated that there are many challenges on this and WECA are putting in a bid for additional funding. We would like to progress faster. It was also pointed out the technology is moving fast in this area.*

Councillor Karen Walker stated that blue badge holders and non blue badge holders are being put off coming into the City – how will this be addressed? Councillor Warren explained that a group was being set up including blue badge holders, please tell us about other groups (such as people who may be registered as disabled but do not have a blue badge) so that we can make sure they are represented. We are thinking of a Transport Forum with independent chairing.

Councillor Warrington added that groups such as NHS care workers and district nurses should be represented and also the temporarily disabled. The Director stated that the Council is not anti-car but the problems caused by congestion impact on all groups. Councillor Bromley stated that she had spoken to some Blue Badge holders who found that Westgate Street was easier to access now.

The Panel **RESOLVED** that their comments on the plan be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel and relevant officers prior to the plan being taken to Cabinet for full approval in May 2022.

61 PANEL WORKPLAN

Panel members noted the future workplan.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services