

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 27th June, 2022

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Ruth Malloy, Dr Kumar, Paul May (in place of Lisa O'Brien), Duncan Hounsell (in place of Shelley Bromley), Rob Appleyard (in place of Joel Hirst), Hal MacFie (in place of Ryan Wills) and Sarah Moore (in place of Paul Crossley)

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies from Councillor Lisa O'Brien who was substituted by Councillor Paul May.

Apologies from Councillor Shelley Bromley who was substituted by Councillor Duncan Hounsell

Apologies from Councillor Paul Crossley who was substituted by Councillor Sarah Moore

Apologies from Councillor Ryan Wills who was substituted by Councillor Hal MacFie

Apologies from Councillor Joel Hirst who was substituted by Councillor Rob Appleyard

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

Sylvia Sinclair made a statement on High Common/Approach Golf Course Procurement Process. *A copy of the statement is attached to the minutes.*

The Panel agreed to refer the statement to the relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Sarah Warren.

Councillor Joanna Wright made a statement regarding Cleveland Bridge. *A copy of the statement is attached to the minutes.*

Note: this statement was referred from the Corporate Panel meeting on 9th May 2022.

The Panel agreed to refer the statement to the relevant Cabinet Member – Councillor Manda Rigby.

Note: Statements are now included on an action list to follow up with the relevant cabinet member.

7 MINUTES

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

8 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainability sent an update to the Panel on her portfolio areas. *The update is attached to these minutes.*

9 CITY CENTRE SECURITY PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Lynda Deane – Head of Service, City & Town Centre Management introduced the report.

Councillor Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Transport, thanked Lynda and her team for the huge amount of work done including that for the public enquiry. She noted that the authority was praised for its proportionate response and it's consultation.

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

Councillor Appleyard asked the following questions. *Officer response shown in italics:*

- Do we co-operate with other utilities for 'planned' work? *Yes we work with the utilities to programme work as best we can.*
- Is there a note on the type of access that was needed for Blue Badge holders during the manned entry period? *I can let you know the number. There have been no complaints and a couple of emails of thanks from Blue Badge holders.*

Councillor May asked about the times of operation and safety implications after 6pm. The officer explained that times of operation are planned (in consultation with the police) when the streets are most crowded. Safety has to be balanced with access. This is part of the layered approach to prevent terrorism.

Councillor May asked if TRO's allow flexibility. The officer responded that if the threat level increases, the TRO allows us to respond accordingly, and this would be based on police advice. The terror level has only reached critical twice (for a short time) in the last few years.

Councillor Walker asked if the video entry management system allowed cars out of the area after 10am. The officer explained that if a car is parked in the area at that time, CCTV or marshals will contact parking services and eventually the police. Yes, you can get out.

Councillor Rigby (Cabinet Member for Transport) added that, now other traffic is banned, parking for Blue Badge holders is easier.

Councillor Johnson asked if Blue Badge holders' access would be stopped if the threat level was raised to critical. The officer explained that a decision would be made at the time, in line with police advice.

Councillor Johnson asked if the barriers are left open outside of hours. The officer explained that at the moment this is manually operated, and emergency vehicles get through automatically.

Councillor Dr Kumar asked if there would be any changes if the threat level changed as the report is six years old. The officer explained that the report referred to was that by the National Association Counter Terrorism Office (2016) and that the threat level remains the same as when the report was written. She added that the police would not be actively working with us on this if they felt there was no need for protection.

The officer introduced the second part of the report and explained Protect Duty and Martin's Law. She explained the proposal to set up a BANES Protect and Prepare Board.

Councillor May agreed that we should prepare and asked if this covered all areas of BANES. The officer explained that the whole of BANES is covered.

Councillor Johnson asked if the cuts to CCTV in recent years have impacted on the service. The officer explained that there would be a review of CCTV and this will hopefully meet the budget cycle for next year. She explained that there would be a Cabinet report on this in the Autumn. She added that there may be joint funding bids with the police.

In response to a question by Councillor MacFie, the officer explained that all CCTV cameras are working in Keynsham High Street. Councillor Rigby added that there are plans for a mobile CCTV units which could be moved to hotspots and events.

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

10 RECYCLING HUB PLANS - UPDATE

Kate Hobson, Project Development and Delivery Manager, introduced the report

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

Councillor Appleyard asked about the plans for the volume of vehicles likely at the recycling hub. The officer explained that a sustainable staff travel plan was a condition of the planning permission.

In response to a question from Councillor Appleyard, the officer explained that there would be solar panels on as much of the roof space as possible.

Councillor Appleyard asked about the potential for a mini hub on the East side of Bath. The officer explained that much work has gone into finding sites in Bath and the Oddown area is the most deliverable site.

Councillor May asked if the black bags taken to Avonmouth would be reduced. The officer explained that if there is increased recycling – this would usually come from black bags but there will still be unrecyclable materials. She explained that there will not be a treatment plant at Pixash Lane. The officer confirmed that Midland Road Recycling Centre would not be shutting.

Councillor May asked about the possibility of electric dustcarts. The officer explained that the technology is developing.

Councillor Johnson stated that it was a fantastic project. He asked about reduction to landfill and if this has led to a higher level of waste being recovered ie incinerated. He asked if there should be targets to increase recycling as the next step to reduce waste going to recovery and stated that this project should support that move. The officer explained that a Waste Strategy report will be published soon which will contain targets.

Councillor Johnson asked about the look of recycling banks in the Heritage setting. The officer explained that the visual impact is part of the consideration. The officer stated that she would get back to Councillor Johnson about HHO systems. She explained that Pixash Lane was being future proofed with appropriate ducting and charging points.

Councillor Malloy stated that she was pleased to see that recycling for plastic wrappers and film was being investigated. She asked if community engagement with schools was carried out. The officer explained that this was organised by the Waste Strategy team. She added that when a new service, such as films and wrapper recycling, was introduced, there would be a public campaign.

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

11 CLEAN AIR ZONE UPDATE

Cathryn Brown, Team Manager Clean Air Zone, introduced the item and gave a presentation which covered the following:

- What was the CAZ designed to achieve?
- Our achievements in the first year
- Monitoring of potential traffic displacement
- How revenue from the zone is spent
- Government's view of performance in 2021
- Next Steps...

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

Councillor Johnson asked about delivery hubs/e-cargo deliveries. The officer explained that it is hoped that the pilot will develop into a sustainable system.

Councillor Appleyard stated that this was a challenging project and he recognised the work done on it. He asked about next steps and about people being educated in terms of gradually replacing cars. The officer agreed that it would be great to evolve the scheme but not yet sure how it would look. She added that every opportunity is taken to talk to people about the use of cars and whether journeys are necessary. The team is supporting the Liveable Neighbourhoods Projects and beginning to spread our knowledge and learning in terms of behaviour change.

Councillor Appleyard asked about surpluses – he stated that the pain has been felt in the local area so hoped any surpluses would be spent in the local area. The officer explained that surpluses must be reinvested in transport schemes, some of which will be local. She confirmed that the surplus will benefit local schemes.

In response to a question from Councillor May, the officer explained that the figures show the average NO2 levels, it is hoped that the figures continue to come down and the team are focussing on particular areas.

Councillor May asked about targets for 2030/35. The officer stated that there are discussions about local targets to demonstrate the Council's commitment to go further.

Councillor Appleyard asked about areas of concern and also about areas outside of Bath such as Keynsham High Street. The officer explained areas of concern are Wells Road, Walcot Parade and Dorchester Street. She added that areas across the whole of BANES are included in monitoring, Keynsham is part of an Air Quality Management area as well as Temple Cloud and Farrington Gurney. Councillor Walker stated that Ward Councillors can request to have their area monitored.

Councillor Hounsell stated that the presentation was excellent, thorough, and clear.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the presentation and report.

12 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the future work plan.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

Statement to Climate Emergency & Sustainability Policy, Development & Scrutiny Panel

regarding the B&NES Council's plans to commercialise the High Common

In July 2020, this Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

In a few weeks' time, the Council will commence a process to commercialise the High Common which will potentially breach this declaration and undermine the Council's commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

Since golf ceased two years ago, this **iconic** green space in the heart of Bath has been free of **toxic** chemicals and mains water irrigation, and the park's **wildlife** and **habitats** have flourished in their natural state.

At a Cabinet meeting in early 2021, the Council listed **six** toxic chemicals used on the High Common to maintain it for golf. Any plans to reintroduce chemicals would be deeply concerning to residents who live nearby and to those who use this park daily for all manner of activities.

Furthermore, for the past 2 years it has not been necessary to irrigate the land with **mains water** which is treated at **significant cost** to make it safe for drinking. In the current climate and nature emergency, it is wasteful and unacceptable to use this scarce and precious natural resource for the sole purpose of a game of golf.

Golf courses use fertilisers, pesticides, and water to keep them in a playable condition, weed freed and looking unnaturally green. **But** just because they are green does not make them environmentally friendly. Golf courses have been described by scientists as a “biodiversity desert”, taking up a huge amount of land and resources for the benefit of a small number of people, a luxury our planet can no longer afford.

We have therefore asked the Council for a clear and unambiguous commitment that no chemicals, including mains water, be used on the High Common under any circumstances. We now ask this Panel to support this request.

But more than that, the decision to commercialise the High Common with golf is a backwards step, reversing the biodiversity gains, and a poor use of this valuable asset. It is being justified on what has happened in the past, rather than considering the current policies, priorities and circumstances.

It ignores how this green space has now been re-discovered by residents and visitors who use it regularly for all purposes, without fear of being hit by a golf ball or harm from chemicals.

Furthermore, there has never been any consultation on the High Common and the decision is due to be made by a single Cabinet member, a process lacking in transparency and governance, and is inconsistent with this Council’s commitment to listen to and act for local residents.

For **all** these reasons, we ask this Panel to **urgently** call in and **scrutinize** these proposals and **declare** them **inconsistent** with the Council's climate declarations and its policy to promote the interests of local residents.

And **finally** I would like to read you a tweet that BANES has sent just today...

"Creating habitats for bees, butterflies and other wildlife not only helps us tackle the ecological emergency, it makes our neighbourhoods more varied and colourful. Lets get buzzing".

I ask this panel, how does that tweet, and this proposal to reinstate golf on the High Common align? In the climate and nature emergency that we face, this **entire** proposal is wrong. BANES Council needs to **live up** to its climate declarations and start **practicing** what it preaches.

Thank you

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Statement to Corporate Panel – 9th May 2022 – Councillor Joanna Wright

Referred to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel – 27th June 2022

Fixing Cleveland Bridge

As Ward Councillor for Lambridge, many residents on the east of Bath are repeatedly asking why are the renovation works on Cleveland Bridge taking so long?

The disruption of these works is significant to all sections of society. From local residents impacted by long lines of unmoving traffic causing pollution, the impact to traders on deliveries and connections, the hospitality and tourist industry, cyclists forced to deal with signs littered across the cycling space. - in short the closure of this bridge has caused an increase to journey times and distances and further added to Bath's congestion issues and is having a detrimental impact on Bath.

On the 28th April 2022 B&NES Council released a press statement in which Cllr Manda Rigby stated that:

"In January contractors unearthed a complex engineering and safety critical issue which reports show does not have a straight forward solution. Engineers need to be 100 per cent certain any solution will not cause a structural failure on other sections of the bridge. This will take time to model and for this reason we are extending the temporary traffic regulation order for another six months. We had aimed to open the bridge to two-way car traffic during this period, but we have been informed by technical experts that this cannot be done safely."

As the previous Joint Cabinet Member for Transport who was central to these works commencing I would like to ask the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to investigate the reason why Cleveland Bridge is still in the process of renovation and why did it take so long for the works to begin?

In one of my first conversations with Officers on becoming a Cabinet member I was informed of the absolute necessity to fix Cleveland Bridge.

I was clearly told how Cleveland Bridge was a deteriorating heritage asset, listed Grade II* which sits on Bath's Primary Road Network (PRN).

And that B&NES Council is a Highway Authority, which is directed by the Department for Transport (DfT) to manage the Primary Road Network and has a statutory duty to keep its highways structures safe.

As the Highway Authority, B&NES operates a bridge assessment process to National Standards. The process can be broken into two parts: the Assessment of the bridge, and the Technical Approval of the assessment. Both functions require a high degree of competency as ultimately the Technical Reviewer is accountable for approving the bridge as safe or agreeing mitigations. The assessment and technical review are an evidence-based process that leads to a safety-critical decision being made regarding the safe use of the bridge. This process is based on technical evidence and is free from external influence.

However, on passing to Cabinet the critical need, from a technical report as to why Cleveland Bridge must be fixed, it became apparent to me that delays to the bridge renovations were a clear political priority for some. The Temporary Weight limit restrictions had stopped HGVs from crossing Cleveland Bridge and this was seen as politically convenient.

Over many months obstacles of various sorts were put in place to delay Cleveland Bridge from being fixed, resulting in Officers making the renovations an operational decision.

I am therefore concerned that the early political delay led to further structural corrosion on Cleveland bridge, which has forced the original 7 month closure to a point where the Council presently is unable to confirm when this bridge will be fixed or open again for two way traffic.

Please can I ask that the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel looks into this matter?

Joanna Wright

Green Party Councillor for Lambridge

Cabinet Member Update: Sustainable Transport, Climate and Nature highlights

Meeting: Climate Emergency Scrutiny

When: Monday 27 June 2022 (4pm)

1. Structural changes

Progress

- New Heads of Service for Transport and Green Transformation now in post
 - o work is underway reviewing strategy, strengthening delivery, driving transformation across the whole of the Council and across B&NES
- New posts created with people in place: Renewable Energy Programme Manager; Principal Ecologist; Biodiversity Net Gain Officer. Appointments made awaiting arrival: Nature Recovery Manager; Climate Strategy & Projects Manager; Green Infrastructure Programme Manager (all starting July/August)
- New Head of Transport Strategy also now in post, and recruitment to new posts also ongoing in Sustainable Transport Team to ensure capacity in place
- The Council has introduced a new approach to place-based working (Area Forum geographies). Provides an opportunity to understand places better and work together better across council departments on key issues
- New Climate and Nature group established, meeting for the first time on 16 June 2022 (a subgroup of the Future Ambition Board, formerly known as the Economic Renewal & Recovery Board)

2. Transport

Progress

- Decarbonisation of Transport: Journey to Net Zero adopted as the plan detailing how the authority can support reduction to net zero of carbon emissions from transport
- Agreed formula to save supported bus services for the next year with West of England Combined Authority (WECA), Bristol and S Glos, whilst a review of the network is completed
- WECA e-scooter trial is in the process of expanding to more of Bath, in anticipation of likely government legalisation of e-scooters later this year, with a view to giving greater opportunity for e-scooters in B&NES to replace car journeys by giving potential for longer journeys
- Liveable Neighbourhood Programme co-design workshops are underway in 15 locations, with plans for a number of pilot interventions by the end of this year
- Construction of cycle lanes on Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road will begin in coming weeks
- Inaugural meeting held of Journey to Net Zero Transport Stakeholder Forum, bringing together voluntary groups and campaigners across the range of transport issues, to support council on effective community engagement, and improve the quality of schemes implemented
- Local Plan Partial Update (currently at enquiry) and New Local Plan development address transport

Plans

- Plans to deliver sustainable transport improvements on, and approaching, key trunk corridors around B&NES through City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement fund
- Begin work with schools to enable students to travel to school independently and sustainably
- Development of the JLTP 4 Addendum (Joint Local Transport Plan) and preparatory work for the JLTP 5
- Delivery and adoption of the Enhanced Partnership between WECA and bus operators
- Further roll out of electric vehicle charging programme

3. Climate

Progress

- **Delivery - Solar Together:** WECA-wide group buying scheme for home installation of solar photovoltaic panels. 367 households accepted the quote. 108 installations completed. 70 batteries installed alongside PV. The scheme is being promoted by the Council; was procured by WECA and is being run by a third party. WECA will evaluate once installation phase complete to consider running a further round.
- **Delivery - Affordable Warmth:** (government grants for retrofitting homes for those on low income) 98 homes upgraded this year (with 300 prior) with a range of measures to both private and social housing
- **Policy - Local Plan Partial Update:** climate and nature policies strengthened, subject to examination currently underway. New Supplementary Planning Documents cover (among other things)
 - o Introduction of net zero building policies for both residential and non-residential developments, alongside an embodied carbon target for large scale development
 - o New requirement for electric vehicle charging infrastructure to be installed on new residential developments
 - o Facilitating a more holistic approach for renewable energy generation through the promotion of co-benefits with elements such as community benefit and biodiversity net gain
- **Communications:** New Net Zero Nature Positive Network launched to enable community groups and residents to share experiences and support local action
- **Staff learning:** 1) More than 160 staff completed Carbon Literacy training since January 2) New Corporate Procurement Strategy training on climate and sustainability

Plans

- **Engagement:** working on Climate and Nature Festival (end September 2022). Now open online for local community groups and organisations to register events
- **On future delivery:**

- Two further care homes approved for solar PV roof installations for completion later this year and work begun to develop longer term pipeline of carbon reduction projects
- Development of area wide approach to retrofitting and development of WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub
- Pixash Lane Recycling Hub will deliver a very low carbon building with a 1700m² solar array delivering 650MWh of electricity per annum, covering most of the site's operational electricity needs

4. **Nature**

Progress

- ***Delivery*** opening of northern section of Chew Valley recreational trail (May)
- ***Policy*** consulted on Nature Positive ambition. 3 supporting priorities identified:
 - Increase the extent of land & waterways managed positively for nature across B&NES
 - Double the abundance &/or distribution of key species across B&NES
 - Enable people to engage with nature more
- ***Funding*** 1) Secured £1.048m WECA funding for Phase I of the Bath River Line, with interventions between Newbridge and Green Park including improved cycling/ pedestrian infrastructure, new planting, wayfinding and public realm improvements. 2) Supported Bristol Avon Rivers Trust successful bid to pilot freshwater biodiversity enhancement markets
- ***Learning*** 1) Launch of Bathscape Outdoor Learning Primary School Resource. 2) Conclusion and report of Environmental Land Management Test & Trial. 3) BNG Training to members; managers and officers

Plans

- Agreement in principle for B&NES UA to lead on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for West of England
- Work underway to implement new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements including review of the role of council land
- Work with partners to explore additional resource for the ***Chew Valley Reconnected*** project
- ***Somer Valley Rediscovered*** preparing a bid to WECA addressing nature recovery, access improvements and community engagement across 5 key greenspaces in Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Westfield. Working in partnership with the three town and parish councils.

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