

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 25th July, 2022

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Joel Hirst, Shelley Bromley, Paul Crossley, Grant Johnson, Ruth Malloy, Lisa O'Brien and Dr Kumar

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Ryan Wills

13 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

14 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Ryan Wills sent his apologies.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

17 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

David Redgewell registered to make a statement regarding net zero but was unable to attend. The statement was circulated and is attached to these minutes.

David Redgewell statement

19 MINUTES

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

20 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Transport's update was circulated. The update is attached to these minutes.

Cabinet Member Statement

21 ENERGY EFFICIENCY RETRO-FITTING

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel, and Jane Wildblood, Strategic Manager: Climate & Environmental Sustainability, gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Introduction
- Update on current action
- Energy @ Home – advice service
- Sharing householder experience
- WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub
- Exploration of B&NES level approach
- The Panel asked to consider...

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

Councillor Hirst asked the following questions (*Officer/Cabinet Member replies shown in italics*):

- Have we got enough expertise and relevant strategic leadership within the Council? *The leadership has been building over the last year, we now have a Director of Sustainable Communities and Head of Green Transformation.*
- How soon until we can drill down and set clear targets, for example setting out the number of households within a timeframe. *There is currently a lot of discussion around this – certain issues are being discussed such as what depth of retrofit constitutes a retrofit. There are also issues around the type of housing (some need deep retrofit).*
- Regarding funding – do we have partnerships with funding organisations to help people? *The authorities with large projects on this are the ones with housing stock. There is the Energy at Home Scheme for advice and signposting to available funding for householders. We have proposed to WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub to try to develop an energy loan scheme.*

Councillor O'Brien asked the following questions (*Officer/Cabinet Member replies shown in italics*):

- Do you have raw data to feed into the new software? *The tool uses national data on Energy Performance Certificates. 60 thousand homes in BANES have EPC's and this number is gradually growing as people buy/sell properties.*
- Some of the jargon used such as 'retrofitting' and 'low carbon heating' could be amended to 'cost saving' – this language may make it appeal to people more and be more accessible. More should be done to get solar panels on roofs, they can repay faster than expected. *The officer stated that this makes sense and is a good point. Every household is different and we need to be flexible.*

- Curo are starting work, this is a massive task due to the condition of some of the properties.

Councillor Johnson asked the following questions (*Officer replies shown in italics*):

- The main problem is the cost to households. The cost-of-living crisis means this is not everyone's priority.
- Is there a cost for the assessor part of the process – do the Council provide this? *We will feed this into the development process, the WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub will be looking at assessors.*
- Could we fund EPC's on houses that we do not already have them for? *These are great ideas and will be fed into the process.*

Councillor Bromley asked about engagement with the private sector and suggested that maybe people don't always know what 'retrofitting' means or what it involves, it can feel overwhelming. We could suggest small steps to begin with. Maybe community engagement would help to show people different types of property and examples of the possible costs savings. The Cabinet Member stated that she liked the idea and gave an example of Bathford Parish Council who did a study with thermal imaging cameras which showed heat leakage in different properties.

Councillor Crossley asked the following questions (*Officer replies shown in italics*):

- What are the festival dates? *24th September – 2nd October 2022.*
- Are all libraries involved? *Agreed that it should involve all BANES libraries, we are in conversation about this.*
- Is the traffic increasing on the energy webpage? *This is variable, if we are promoting it, traffic increases.*
- I do not think housing surveys should be free, they have a value. How can we sell them? *We will consider a different angle.*
- Retrofitting should be seen as an aspirational career, there is a heritage element and it is a skilled job. *Yes it should be aspirational as a career as it is highly skilled. We need to get this message into schools.*
- Heritage organisations should be on the list of organisations to work with. *Planning policies are being upgraded which will bring more advice on listed buildings as does the recently published updated Supplementary Planning Document.*
- We should sort out our own buildings, such as the Guildhall, so that they have the best rating that they can. *We are tackling our own buildings with renewables and retrofits where possible. We are in conversation with Property Services to make this part of their maintenance programme. An example of a current project is Pixash Lane Recycling Centre.*

Councillor Dr Kumar asked why the solar panel scheme was closed to new customers and asked why grants were not available for people to install solar panels. The officer explained that the solar scheme was a WECA scheme – it is now closed and in the installing phase. There will be a review mid Autumn after installation. The officer agreed that solar panels should be promoted as part of retrofitting.

Councillor Malloy asked how people who are not online would know about Hub activities and offers/schemes. She asked about a possible physical hub. The officer

stated that this was a useful idea, she explained that there was a show home in Bristol and pointed to the Bath Green Homes scheme.

Councillor Malloy asked if advice could be given to promote porches regarding heat retention. The officer stated that this advice could be added.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the presentation information and that officers had taken on board their comments.

22 LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE

Simon de Beer, Head of Planning, and Richard Daone, Deputy Head of Planning Policy, gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Background
- Progress so far
- Key changes 1
- Key changes 2
- Accompanying Supplementary Planning Documents
- Key Issues arising at the Examination in week 1
- Key Issues arising at the Examination in week 2
- Next steps

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

In response to a query from Councillor Walker, the officer explained that in line with the core strategy there are 3.5 – 4 thousand houses planned over the next 5 years.

Councillor Crossley asked the following questions (*officer responses are shown in italics*):

- Student accommodation is an issue for residents, what is the occupancy rate of student housing? *We do not have information from University's on this. Officers will seek to get more information on this to Panel members.*
- What is being done to protect family homes being turned into HMO's? *The partial update seeks to ensure sufficient accommodation is made for students, preferably on campus, and extra controls are included in the SPD.*

Councillor Hirst asked the following questions (*officer replies are shown in italics*):

- Can we go further around green belt development and the impact on ecology? *The Local Plan accelerates the biodiversity net gain requirement.*
- Regarding HMO's – have we gone as far as we can to protect family homes? *We are pushing 'on campus' accommodation, university's say they need to grow as businesses, we need to balance the restrictions.*

Councillor Dr Kumar asked the following questions (*officer replies are shown in italics*):

- Upper Bathwick Hill – query about planning permission for 3 new blocks of flats. *We are working closely with the University on a revised masterplan.*
- Park and Ride – will you close sites? *The officer explained that the Park and Ride sites on the green belt would still function but would have wider uses.*
- LPPU – why no mention of rugby stadium? *The officer explained that it was not appropriate to review the policy as part of the LPPU but it will be reviewed via the new Local Plan.*

Councillor Johnson asked the following questions (*officer responses shown in italics*):

- Do we have a figure for HMOs across BANES and what percentage of them pay Council Tax. *We can provide the number of properties occupied as HMOs but cannot provide an accurate figure in relation to Council Tax payers. We can estimate and provide that figures to Panel members.*
- A university would be more successful if accommodation is based on campus.

Councillor Malloy asked the following questions (*officer responses shown in italics*):

- Are there any major changes in how hotel provision is calculated? *The officer stated that, based on visitor accommodation study, this probably needs to be updated. We will look at demand for hotels and project forward the needs for visitor accommodation (this includes Air B&B).*
- Is Air B&B controlled by national legislation? *The officer confirmed that the Planning system provides little controls over short stay holiday lets, but the Government is being lobbied to introduce greater controls.*

The Panel RESOLVED to note the presentation.

23 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the future workplan

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

This page is intentionally left blank

David Redgewell - Public statement to CES Panel 25^h July 2022

On the journey to Net zero we still need funding for bus services in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

Which will require funding beyond October 2022

The Welsh government is putting in £ 48 million in to bus service in Wales .

Bus services have now reached about 70% 75 % of pre covid 19 levels in Bath and Bristol city region and less in Somerset at 60 % 65 % in rural Somerset and part of Banes .

So with the west of England mayoral combined Authority funding and subsidies from Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire for the support services.

85 routes .

The west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council. are planning a service review

Of the Network to start in October

But with most of the New Network starting in April 2022 .

It is very important that the journey to net zero forum is part of the Review.

The mayor and his staff and operators should have 30 at that meeting to explain the proposal.

The policy scrutiny or climate change commission should invite the mayor and the bus operator Stagecoach west.

First group plc west of England

Hct group favesaver Rapt Bath bus company small operator.

This has successfully happened at South Gloucestershire council scrutiny commission.

But we still need to push the Department for Transport and Baroness Vere of Norborton and Grant Shapps secretary of state for Transport for bus and local coach funding with Western Gateway Transport Board and South West Transport Board and the MPs .

Fare box issue.

Whilst we have a number of operators in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset area .

It's very important that the Tap on Tap off Tickets include.

The Bath Rider.

Weston super mare rider .

Bristol rider.

Avon Rider .

Freedom passe

Bus and rail services

And a new rider tickets for Thornbury, Yate and Chipping Sodbury and Clevedon and Portishead.

We need a driver recruitment campaign

And Days out by bus and public transport campaign. Free Travel days like North Somerset.

For Greater Bristol Sundays .

Banes and Mendip.

South Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds.

With buses operated by HCT group, Faresaver, RAPT Bath bus company, Stagecoach South West and West and First group.

We need urgent marketing campaigns with First group West of England,

Faresaver buses, Stagecoach West

and First group Great Western Railway.

To win passengers back onto Bath and Somerset bus Network.

On co-production with the Metro Mayor Dan Norris and his staff plus North Somerset Council.

We need to work on the sustainable transport corridor between.

Bath Spa bus and coach station, Weston, Newbridge, Salford, Keynsham, Bristolington, Arncliffe, Bristol Temple Meads station, Bristol bus and coach station.

Bath Spa bus and coach station,

Peasdown, St John Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton, Shepton Mallet

interchanges, Chilcompton and Wells bus and coach station.

Bristol bus and coach station, Bristol Temple Meads station, Knowle, Hengrove, Whitchurch, Pensford,

Clutton, Farrington Gurney, Clutton, Chewton Mendip, Wells bus and coach station, Glastonbury and street.

As well as working with the New Unity Somerset Council, Mendip District Council to begin with.

On Rail we need to make progress on Bristol Temple Meads to Westbury.

Via Keynsham, Salford New Station, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa, Freshford, Avoncliff, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster or Frome.

We need to make progress on Metro West half hourly services.

With the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority.

Kind regards David Redgewell.

Cabinet Member update – Mandy Rigby, Cabinet Member for Transport

Staffing and structures

Progress

- *New Head of Service for Highways Delivery, Parking and Passenger Transport now in post. Structural changes to ensure capacity below this post in progress.*
- *New dedicated communications post appointed to focus on informing residents about the volume and breadth of work underway and completed by teams.*
- *New Head of Delivery and Transformation also now in post, work commenced on programme office approach to give better visibility to the work programme and progress achieved. New posts created in team include Service and Commercial Lead for the Park and Ride contract and Access Consultant and Equality Officer working across the Directorate.*

Plans

- *Strategic review of key processes, ensuring links between Place Management Directorate and Sustainable Communities Directorate are effective and efficient to ensure that commitments are turned into improvements on the ground.*

Highways Delivery

Delivery

Carriageway Resurfacing Programme progressing well with major schemes on Churchill Bridge Gyratory and A369 Chelwood now completed, A4 Bath Road, Saltford scheduled in for early August and remaining sites impacting schools scheduled in over the Summer Holidays. Remaining sites on plan to be completed by end of September.

- *Surface Dressing Sites now partially completed new surfaces laid but back to complete road markings end of July.*
- *Footway Paving sites in City Centre progressing well and footway asphalt concrete sites also scheduled in over coming months.*
- *Drainage element of programme being developed with supply chain for delivery in the coming months and Street Lighting Column replacement also in planning for delivery in Q2 and Q3.*
- *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*
- *Residents Parking Scheme consultations completed in 7 areas with next steps to be confirmed in the Autumn*
- *Work continues on Cleveland Bridge to ensure statutory highway safety requirements are met*
- *Construction of cycle lanes on Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road will begin 18th July*
- *Clean and Green programme continues with increased gulley emptying and white lining being completed across the area*
- *Traffic Improvement Programme (TIP) interventions continue for delivery within financial year as per published programme*

Plans

- *Full review of Urban Traffic Control System due to commence. Better of management of the network in Bath due to improved coordination of signals*
- *Refurbishment of Gay Street Signals to implement further cycle early start signals*
- *Work on the new road safety strategy, which includes the 'safe systems' approach and a vision zero target (zero killed or seriously injured on our roads by an agreed date).*

Parking

Progress

- Powers to enforce Moving Traffic Contraventions were granted for Bath and North East Somerset Council on 15th July. We were one of only 12 Authorities who were granted the powers nationally. Use of the powers improves road safety for all users.
- Work is now underway to develop the back office processes in line with the guidance to commence enforcement at the agreed sites by the end of 2022.
- Work to implement the revised parking charges continues in line with the agreed changes as set out within the Councils budget. New charges will commence in September

Delivery

- Recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers remains challenging, in line with many other industries. Currently the council has 13 vacancies out of a total of 30 posts and we are working to address this shortfall and the national recruitment challenges by reviewing the way the role is both advertised and how the role is delivered operationally as well as implementing financial incentives such as golden hello and retention payments (please note - financial incentives for issuing PCNs are prohibited and not used or supported).

Passenger Transport

Delivery

- Approximately 2500 children continue to be transported to school on a daily basis
- Significant pressures being seen within Passenger Transport Services for schools nationally. There is a well-documented shortage nationally of transport operators and staff, in particular taxi availability / drivers / escorts / bus drivers. This has been compounded by a surge in Covid and other sickness.
- The Passenger Transport Team in BANES have done everything possible to keep disruption to a minimum including:
 - o hiring PCV drivers from an Agency
 - o hiring PCV drivers from other bus operators
 - o sub contracting the routes to other bus operators
 - o covering the routes with Taxis rather than buses
- Medium term forecast suggests a continued pressure in the market and increasing costs.

Plans

- Review of current procurement framework in progress to ensure compliance with regulations
- Work will shortly commence on the transport planning for next academic year

Emergency Planning and Events

Plans

- Work is underway to strategically review the Councils CCTV and Emergency Control Room functions
- A review of the Councils Commercial Strategy, Events Policy, Street Trading Policies, Outdoor Trading Policy has been commenced to ensure that all elements are aligned and improve the outcomes for all organisers and traders

Delivery

- Event planning and monitoring continues to ensure the event goes according to plan and all attendees are safe:
 - o The Queens Batton Relay event was successfully delivered and well regarded by all who watched and attended the event.
 - o Michael Buble concerts on July 15th and 16th with over 15k attendees each day.
 - o The Bath Carnival provided significant colour and life to the city

- *Work is well underway on the Christmas Market planning and the new look website has been launched*

Clean Air Zone

Plans

- *Work is in progress to implement the HGV Euro 6 charge in line with Cabinet Decision of December 2021.*
- *Engagement with Trade Bodies for HGV commenced.*

Delivery

- *The first full year of the Clean Air Zone resulted in a reduction of 21% in NO₂*
- *Enforcement ethos and approach nationally recognised by independent adjudicators at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal and all other Local Authorities encouraged to follow our model*

This page is intentionally left blank