

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

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

Thursday, 14th September, 2023

Present:- **Councillors** Andy Wait, Michael Auton, Anna Box, Jess David, Alex Beaumont, June Player, Saskia Heijltjes, Grant Johnson and Ian Halsall (in place of John Leach)

#### **11 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **12 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor John Leach gave his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Ian Halsall.

#### **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **15 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

#### **16 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

Malcolm Baldwin - Circus Area Residents Association – made a statement regarding 'The importance of Liveable Neighbourhoods to communities within our heritage environment'. A copy of this statement is attached to the minutes.

#### **17 MINUTES**

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

#### **18 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Sarah Warren, Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel gave an update which covered the following:

- There have been positive outcomes on the Clean Air Zone as set out in the annual report for 2022
- We are trialing e-scooters and e-bikes from a new provider through WECA. We are seeking information on parking arrangements and long-term loan facility.
- 20 further experimental cycle hangers are going ahead across the authority. Many spaces have already been booked.
- We are working with WECA regarding the city region sustainable transport fund.
- Current consultation on Bristol to Bath safe route – all encouraged to respond.
- Regarding bus routes, unfortunately further routes were lost over the summer – there are many reports of buses not arriving. We are putting together a proposed North East Somerset bus network. The proposal is on the desk of the Mayor of WECA. We hope he will restore some routes.
- The Green Transportation Team is feeding into the Local Plan.

Panel members asked the following questions – *the Cabinet Member responses are shown in italics*

Councillor Beaumont asked if any bike hangers are planned for the east side. *The Cabinet Member explained that WECA are about the consult on a new set of locations, suggestions are welcome.*

Councillor David asked if the Panel can have an update on the storage of storage of e-scooters and e-bikes.

Councillor David noted that the Local Plan was on the Panel's future workplan.

Councillor Player asked about the parking issue with e-bikes and e-scooters. *The Cabinet Member explained that the trial period had been extended. She added that there was due to be a press release to advise people to contact the provider with any parking issues.*

Councillor Johnson asked if the Panel could have information on the Cabinet Member update prior to the meeting. *The Cabinet Member agreed.*

Councillor Johnson asked about the revenue from the e-bike and e-scooter scheme and why it does not cover other areas. *The Cabinet Member explained that discussions are ongoing with WECA. She further explained that, over time, the scheme may be extended – this will be in discussion with ward members.*

Councillor Heijltjes asked if vacancies in parking and traffic management meant that income was being lost. She also asked about vacancies in environmental monitoring and about the overspend in recycling. *The Cabinet Member stated that she would seek to get this information.*

Councillor Heijltjes asked if excess parking income is spent on sustainable travel projects like school streets and extended hours for Park and Ride bus services. *The Cabinet Member stated that she would seek to get this information.*

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member.

## **19 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY ON CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY PLANS**

The Chair invited the Cabinet Project Lead, Councillor Oli Henman, to introduce the item. The presentation covered the following:

- Engagement is key to our work in tackling the climate and ecological emergencies.
- We undertake a wide range of engagement activity – some highlights from 2022/23
- Our engagement priorities for 2023/34 are focused around three key themes
- We are developing our ongoing programme of events. Upcoming events for autumn 2023
- Next steps

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

Councillor Heijltjes stated that transport is the missing theme, she stated that one of the most powerful effects on the environment can be people's choice of transport. She asked if the Council can showcase travel choices – such as Councillors using e-bikes. She also suggested that Councillors based in the city of Bath be no longer eligible for free parking when attending Council business through MiPermit or free parking any time by using an outdated paper parking permit, unless they are a Blue Badge holder. She stated that she believes that this is an outdated policy and not in line with our Climate and Ecological Emergencies. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that he has tested an e-bike today, he agreed that more needs to be added to the engagement action plan regarding transport. He agreed about the Council showcasing travel choices but stated that members parking is beyond his scope. He stated that he would take away the point on parking and feed it back to relevant colleagues.

Councillor Box stated that a recent cross party group in Westminster concluded that there is not enough resource for Councils. She asked if we could lobby Westminster who are dragging their feet over their own policy. She stated that next year is an election year and she hoped for a more engaged future.

Councillor Johnson stated that most events are targeted at people with an active interest in climate and nature issues, he stated that the engagement strategy also needs to target people who may not be enthusiastic and do not currently engage. He stated that social media can be politicised and asked how this can be counteracted and turned into positives towards the Council. The Cabinet Project Lead agreed and stated an example of 'solar together' which is aimed at making solar more affordable – this is framed as a practical way to reduce bills rather than preaching a message. He agreed on the need for more community level conversations at rural and parish

level. He also stated that more decentralised and less formal meeting venues can be used for these conversations. He agreed that social media can be toxic and stated that the key for the Council team is to provide shareable and evidence based information. There is no silver bullet but transparency reduces the risk of misinformation.

Council Auton stated that there was a lot of focus on Bath. He stated that he is happy to work with the team with regard to Midsomer Norton where he runs a monthly farmers market and attends Town Council meetings. The Cabinet Project Lead welcomed these suggestions.

Councillor Player suggested that each ward is visited in liaison with ward Councillors who have connections to residents. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that this is the approach that will be taken in that each part of the authority will be targeted over the year.

Councillor David referred to the Green Open Homes scheme and asked if this could be extended to biodiverse gardens/rainwater capture etc. She explained that in Whiteway there is a front garden competition and also the Bristol & Bath Nature Festival was a brilliant event which could be extended to schools during week days. The Cabinet Project Lead agreed and thanked Councillor David for the suggestions.

Councillor Heijltjes asked about information and engagement regarding food waste (guidance on what people buy and how it can be disposed of) and how restaurants could showcase this and policies could show leadership on this issue. She also suggested that schools and parents could be united in projects regarding climate and ecological emergency. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that these were excellent suggestions that can be incorporated.

Councillor Player also suggested community partnership involvement and Bath in Bloom.

Councillor Wait asked about the ongoing issue regarding solar panels on Keynsham Civic Centre. The officer explained that the team are currently working to resolve a legal and technical issue on this. Councillor Wait was reassured and thanked Alistair Singleton (Councillor in the previous administration) for his work on this.

## **20 LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE**

The Chair invited the Cabinet Project Lead, Councillor Joel Hirst, to give an update. Councillor Hirst explained that he has been the Cabinet Project Lead since May and he reports to Councillor Manda Rigby. He explained that there is a balance between the administration wanting to move faster on this issue and the reality of the practical details. He explained that there are currently 15 schemes regarding Liveable Neighbourhoods. He outlined the policy objective which is health and wellbeing and safer travel routes. He stated that the issue of Liveable Neighbourhoods was discussed a great deal around the time of the election and the election outcome is seen as a strong mandate.

Regarding Residents Parking Zones (RPZs) Councillor Hirst stated that with the implementation of the Walcot/Snow Hill and Oldfield Park/Westmoreland RPZs, 7 in total have been completed (including during the last administration). He explained that the schemes are broadly cost neutral; the income is ringfenced and people apply for permits online while blue badge holders are free.

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

Councillor Player asked about enforcement. The Cabinet Project Lead explained that the enforcement team had not been increased for a while so would need to look at this in the budget. Regarding the income, he explained that his understanding was that there are rules around excess income from parking schemes which mean it had limited use.

Councillor Player stated that it was important that residents do not feel they are paying for something that can't be monitored or enforced. She stated that at the moment the scheme is working but students had not started the new term yet.

Councillor Player asked how the permit cost was decided. The Cabinet Project Lead explained that he understood that there had been a market assessment on what was considered reasonable while looking at charges made in other authorities. He added that Bristol may be consulting on increasing their fees.

Councillor Heijltjes stated that she would have appreciated a paper for this item so that she could prepare. She referenced the scheme in Walcot and mentioned some boundary issues with Lambridge. She asked about future plans for RPZs. The Cabinet Project Lead explained that there is a meeting next week to discuss potential new schemes where they will work through requests. He will update the Panel further at their November meeting.

Councillor Halsall stated that there had been a lot of scepticism about RPZs – some people believe it is a cash cow so the information about the funding is useful and needs to be made clear. Councillor David agreed and explained that her ward had had overspill from the neighbouring RPZ – she asked if there was a plan to look at particular types of RPZ. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that the policy is on the website, it was not anticipated that the policy would be replaced soon.

Councillor Johnson stated that it would be useful to have prior information on items before the meeting. He stated that he did not have much connection with RPZs but acknowledged that parking enforcement is an issue in Paulton particularly at school pick up time. He stated that the enforcement issue is not just about Bath and RPZs.

Councillor Box stated that in Keynsham there are lots of houses with no drive so asked that Keynsham be considered in terms of residents parking. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that he was keen to hear about these issues where residents lose out so that they can be protected.

Regarding Liveable Neighbourhoods, Councillor Hirst stated that the aim is to improve residential streets. He stated that a lot of work has been done in the last 4

years - 15 schemes were identified (and co designed with the community) and 3 have been brought forward. The Council has invested £1million in the last 4 years and £6million funding from WECA is expected to be confirmed. Since May the priority has been getting schemes into action but it is a tight team and construction costs are rising, also Government rhetoric is pro motorist. He stated that he would bring a breakdown of future plans to the November meeting of the Panel – he stated that a full business case had to be completed for each of the schemes being brought forward. He stated that the hope was for 5 experimental schemes coming online and an evaluation of the 3 existing schemes. He stated that there were originally 15 schemes with another 70 suggestions from previous Councillors, he asked how the Panel think these should be prioritised. He also asked the Panel view on whether the ‘rolls royce’ level of community co-design should be maintained.

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

Councillor Halsall stated that if the ‘rolls royce’ level of co-development increased delay maybe it could be scaled back to speed things up. Once schemes are implemented, residents will see the benefits.

Councillor Heijltjes stated that we must adhere to the criteria to confirm the WECA funding for the £6million. The Cabinet Project Lead agreed and stated that a business case will be completed.

Councillor Beaumont asked about schemes outside of Bath. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that the ambition was to extend to many areas but not as many schemes were proposed in North East Somerset. He believes this will change.

Councillor Player stated that the showcase schemes need to be considered as not all areas are the same. The Cabinet Project Lead agreed and stated that there are a range of areas in the 15 schemes.

Councillor David stated that engagement must to done to ensure people are with us but maybe the process could be streamlined.

Councillor Heijltjes stated that in terms of engagement it is very important that people experience the effects – planters can be cheap to remove. We should be bold – put in experimental interventions and then consult on what people think of the effect.

Councillor Halsall stated that it would be useful to review the 70 suggestions to check if they are all still relevant.

## **21 LOCAL FOOD GROWING DISCUSSION**

The Chair invited Ceri Williams, Scrutiny Officer to introduce the item. The officer explained that the Panel can add value to the policy development on this issue and suggested a task and finish group be set up with a view to reporting back to the Panel at a future meeting.

Panel members agreed that a task and finish group would be the best way forward and asked that membership be opened up to other Scrutiny Panel members.

Councillors David, Player, Auton, Leach and Johnson registered their interest.

Councillor Box asked that the following be considered: an emphasis on preventative medicine and a framework around sustainability, bio diversity, carbon impact, economic viability and education. Please consider deprived populations.

## 22 PANEL WORKPLAN

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

- Update on storage/parking with regards to e-scooters and e-bikes
- Liveable Neighbourhoods and Residents Parking Zones update (November 2023)
- Task and Finish Group on Local Food Growing feedback report
- Rivers – current state of our rivers (and canal)
- Council house building and homelessness update
- Biodiversity/hedgerows
- Bath (and Oldfield Park) railway ticket office closure (a member briefing)
- Nature recovery
- Allotments/wild growth areas

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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"The importance of Liveable Neighbourhoods to communities within our heritage environment".

Good morning,

to some of us the rationale for Liveable Neighbourhoods (LNs) was never about mere traffic interventions.

For those who viewed the earliest implementations of LNs in our city as, to quote a phrase, "low hanging fruit" were wrong then and would remain wrong if we don't press a 're-set button' and grasp a larger vision. That vision should be to pursue those Liveable Neighbourhoods, where champions already exist ..... a Liveable Neighbourhood which will deliver real value not just to a particular local neighbourhood but to our Bath city-wide community as a whole.

A new Administration of any political persuasion, pressing the 're-set button', should not lack ambition but come out 'swinging'!

The media and other propagandists are guilty of creating narratives that divide communities instead of bringing them together.

That errors may have been made in early LN implementations is less important than the fact that key councillors and appropriate officers have listened and are now actively adjusting some of the introduced measures accordingly.

[No one has a monopoly on wisdom.....and certainly not myself, but now it's vitally important that meaningful LNs are implemented, on a phased basis if that is more appropriate and cost effective, .....LNs that will prove the case and deliver that real value!]

A meaningful LN should deliver not just necessary and desirable traffic interventions but improve and underpin as many aspects as possible of the public realm in which they are introduced ..... encouraging and enhancing the health and general condition of that local community as well as, in the case of key heritage areas in our city, its visitor and tourist economy.

LNs, introduced and targeted with real vision and imagination, could significantly assist key heritage zones such as my own CARA catchment area in creating better management of the fast increasing pedestrian tourist/visitor footfall that we are certainly experiencing. This, in addition to improving the overall environmental condition for local residents and businesses. This is where the REAL added value lies of introducing in any next phase a meaningful Liveable Neighbourhood.

'Over-tourism' is already becoming manifest in some of our key heritage areas.

The difficulties, fast increasing for many Bath heritage areas such as our own, which are vitally important to our overall city economy, now require imaginative intervention and significantly improved resolution of the current toxic mix of vastly increased local and visitor footfall and the continued and dangerous culture of motor vehicle rat-running.

Let's use a sensitively introduced but meaningful LN to pro-actively, not just enhance and support work undertaken by a local community to improve its own public realm, but to forward-think and better manage the important attributes of a key and valuable heritage area .....valuable by its nature to our entire city and its economy as a whole.

A relatively low-cost, and if necessary from a financial point of view, phased but sensitively introduced Liveable Neighbourhood could easily over-shadow any 'hiccups' experienced in earlier implementations and become an exemplar for other areas of Bath and indeed for other cities.

Let's remember, success is judged by results not intentions.

Malcolm Baldwin.

Circus Area Residents Association.

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# Bath & North East Somerset Council

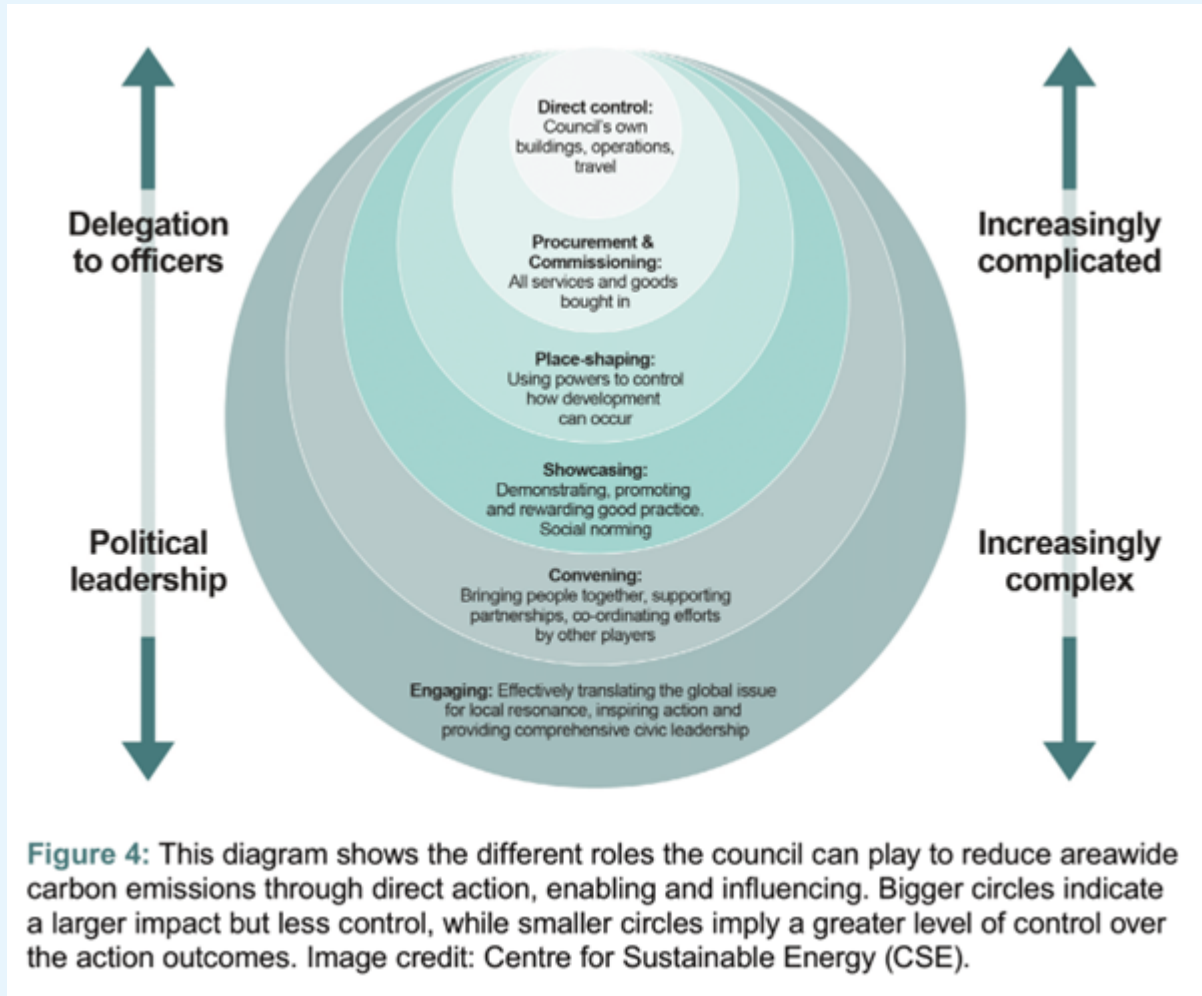
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**Improving People's Lives**

## Climate & Ecological Emergency Engagement Strategy

CES PDS Panel  
14 September 2023

# Engagement is key to our work in tackling the climate and ecological emergencies



The Council can take action directly (on our own operations) and through our regulatory 'place-shaping' role – but our greatest impact comes through providing leadership for others:

**Showcasing** – promoting good practice locally (eg Green Open Homes) and nationally (eg our nationally-leading Net Zero Energy planning policies)

**Convening others** – to co-ordinate action through ongoing partnerships (eg FAB), workshops and events (eg Large Business Forum)

**Engaging** – with local residents and stakeholders through parish groups, festivals and media channels

# We undertake a wide range of engagement activity – some highlights from 2022/23 included...

- Council **Newsroom channel** on climate and ecological emergency – providing regular media communications on the Council's work
- **Social media** campaigns eg the A-Z of Sustainability and Energy Saving Advice
- **New Energy Efficiency**, Retrofitting & Sustainable Construction **guidance** (SPD) published online
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **Climate & Bio-diversity Festival**: 56 events; 38 organisations
- Renewable Energy **Community Conversations** – facilitated by CSE in three rural parishes across B&NES, looking at community priorities and perspectives on renewable energy
- **Parish Liaison** Climate & Nature Workshop – focused on renewable energy, sustainable transport, retrofit and local nature plans
- Re-formed Climate Emergency **Public Services** Working Group
- New **Climate & Nature partnership group** – bringing together business, community and public sector representatives on shared action
- Engagement with **local business** through the Bath BID conference, B&NES Economic Strategy business workshop, the Large Business Forum and the first B&NES Business Show
- **Bristol and Bath Festival of Nature** activity programme included three Bathscape wildlife walks and an outdoor exhibition of artwork on beetles, pollinators and the value of 'weeds'
- Bathscape-led '**bioblitz**' at **Bath City Farm** with around 100 people joining activities as part of the City Nature Challenge UK weekend



# Our engagement priorities for 2023/24 are focused around three key themes

## • Home Energy

- **Solar Together** (encouraging take up of solar PV offer via WECA)
- **Retrofit West** (promoting supplier and homeowner engagement with West of England retrofit 'accelerator')
- **Bright Green Homes** (maximise take up of homeowner retrofit grants for eligible residents)
- Local Energy Advice Demonstrator Project – a new project lead by BWCE in partnership with B&NES, focusing on retrofit of heritage properties, starting later this year
- Green Open Homes (4-5 November – promoting action on home retrofit, in partnership with BWCE)

## • Supporting individual and community action for climate and nature

- Support for Climate Hub/Climate Emergency Centre
- Engagement with parishes (eg Chew Valley C&N Emergency Working Group)
- Community Conversations
- Festivals (eg Festival of Nature; Bathscape Walking Festival, Somer Valley Walking Festival)

## • A sustainable local economy

- B&NES Economic Strategy and new Local Plan
- Doughnut Economics workshops
- Business engagement

# We are developing our ongoing programme of events.

## Upcoming events for autumn 2023 include...

Event	Date	Info
<b>Bathscape Walking Festival</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> September	An expanded programme of walks will showcase Bath as a walkable landscape city during this year's Bathscape Walking Festival. Fa <a href="https://www.bathscape.co.uk/event/bathscape-walking-festival-5/">https://www.bathscape.co.uk/event/bathscape-walking-festival-5/</a>
<b>Somer Valley Walking Festival</b>	9-10 September	Somer Valley Walking Festival aims to encourage local people and visitors to explore the beauty of the local countryside and also to discover its rich heritage. <a href="https://www.somervalleyramblers.org.uk/somer-valley-walking-festival.html">https://www.somervalleyramblers.org.uk/somer-valley-walking-festival.html</a>
<b>Green Infrastructure Strategy – Stakeholder Workshop</b>	25 September	A half day workshop plus local visits to review the impact of the current GI Strategy over the past 10 years, multi-functional benefits of GI and priorities for the new strategy for the next 10 years.
<b>Community Resilience Day</b>	28 September	A free event run by the council and the Environment Agency and will include talks, workshops and free emergency planning resources for Community groups, businesses and parish and town councils wanting to plan for climate resilience. <a href="#">register for the event online</a> .
<b>Bath Abbey - Extraordinary Earth Day</b>	30 September	Visit Bath Abbey to see Luke Jerram's Gaia and meet local people taking action to protect our shared planet.
<b>Doughnut Economics – stakeholder workshop</b>	3 October	An inspiring workshop led by Kate Raworth, bringing together invited representatives of the four key sectors identified by Kate in her work on Doughnut Economics (State, Market, Households and Commons) for a workshop to explore sustainable economic approaches in BANES.
<b>Economic Strategy – Business Workshop</b>	19 October	A follow up to our initial workshop with 40+ BANES businesses, to discuss the emerging priorities in the draft Economic Strategy, including a 'Greener Economy'
<b>Green Open Homes</b>	4-5 November	A weekend celebration of homes in and around Bath that have incorporated energy efficient features <a href="https://www.bwce.coop/green-open-homes-bnes/">https://www.bwce.coop/green-open-homes-bnes/</a>
<b>Community Energy Conference</b>	8 November	We are hosting the Wessex Community Energy Network conference, providing a regional forum to share information and build capacity for local energy supply in

# Next Steps

- We are currently reviewing and developing our engagement strategy and plans for 2024 onwards
- This includes our approach to community consultation and engagement, building on recent experience of community conversations and other innovative engagement methods
- We will be looking to pilot new 'conversations' in the new year.
- Our engagement over the next 18 months will support the refresh of our overall climate strategy for 2025 – helping to achieve our 2030 goals
- Feedback and thoughts from the Panel to inform this work are welcomed!