

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 30th September, 2019

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Sue Craig, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Lisa O'Brien, Grant Johnson and Dr Kumar (in place of Tom Davies)

10 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

11 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Tom Davies gave his apologies for the meeting and was substituted by Councillor Dr Kumar.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

14 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

16 MINUTES

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

17 CORPORATE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

David Trethewey, Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services introduced the report and explained that the Corporate Strategy was being discussed by the PDS Panel's whose comments would be considered by Cabinet and Council in February 2020.

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

Councillor Hirst listed a number of details to be addressed regarding the climate emergency agenda such as – insulation/community energy schemes/planning policy regarding solar panels etc/licensing process for taxis –limiting to electric vehicles/walking and cycling infrastructure/cost of public transport – using our resources to make it cheaper/network of lampposts – possible use for electric charging points. The Director noted that the Council had declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and that the Corporate Plan was looking at what the Council could prioritise in the short term. He explained that Council involvement may be in some cases to be encouraging others to take action.

Councillor O'Brien pointed to the corporate priority 'Prevention' and stated that she hoped that there could be a serious and sensible review of single use plastic in the care system and that non-critical items could be re used. Regarding the priority 'Giving people a bigger say' she queried the use of 'citizens juries' as this implied a small group of interested parties. She preferred the terms 'working party' or 'consultation groups'. She also asked if the cost of setting up these groups could be shared with others such as parish councils. The Director explained that research is being carried out into forms of engagement, he emphasized that these would not be decision making bodies.

Councillor O'Brien explained that Keynsham Town Council had pledged to reduce single use plastic and had incorporated this as a stipulation in their grant system. She suggested the Council use this method.

Councillor Craig stated that she felt it was important to state what is not included in the corporate strategy so that it is clear. She stated that the Council must be clear about how our income may need to change, for example a key funding stream is car parks. She added that the Council should also have a clear policy regarding events management such as not allowing diesel generators. Councillor Craig referred to the change in law regarding separating food waste and suggested that this was an opportunity for recycling rather than sending the waste to Bristol. The Director stated that the report to Council on this will be around building partnerships and that there was a lot of good work going on already.

Councillor Born asked if there should be more comments regarding the environment such as the safeguarding of green spaces and air quality and more emphasis on improving public health. The Director explained that this was a short version of the corporate priorities which would be fleshed out with more detail.

Councillor Hirst stated that he was supportive of citizens' juries and that officers could research where the use of them has gone well. He also suggested that there could be a scrutiny inquiry day around climate emergency which could drive partnerships with the community.

The Panel agreed the recommendations.

18 COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME UPDATE

Graham Sabourn, Head of Housing introduced the report.

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

Councillor O'Brien asked about the benefits of the Council becoming a house builder. The officer explained that this would allow for additionality on house building sites – where the threshold was 30% affordable housing on a particular site, the Council could choose instead to build 100% affordable housing. The Council would have more control over additionality. Councillor O'Brien stated that this would need to be well managed to keep the balance between social housing and market housing. The officer stated that it was unlikely that there would be sites with 100% affordable housing and it would be more like 30% - 50%.

Councillor O'Brien asked if there is sufficient control over planning criteria in order to promote carbon neutral buildings. *This query would be forwarded to a planning officer for comment.*

Councillor Johnson asked if the plan was sufficiently ambitious considering the 5000 people on the waiting list for housing. The officer explained that 5000 is slightly misleading and that while most want to move, he explained that 750 need to move. Councillor Johnson asked how the delivery had been rated 'excellent' over three years and the officer explained that this was from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Councillor Hirst stated that the report was helpful and showed the direction of travel. He asked how the housing could be provided quickly, the officer responded that "purchase and repair" could be an option. Councillor Hirst asked about properties being lost to student housing and HMO's. The officer responded that blocks of student housing can free up houses for families in the area.

Councillor Born asked if past decisions on HMO's in areas of high density in the city could be reversed. The officer explained that Article 4 is not retrospective so there is not an option to reverse on this issue. Councillor Craig suggested that universities are advised not to raise their numbers unless students can live on campus.

Councillor Born asked if we could insist on 30% affordable housing for both private developers and housing associations. The officer explained that private developers will be policy compliant but additionality (above the required level) can be paid for.

Councillor Walker asked if empty properties could be bought and rented. The officer explained that there were 250 empty properties in the authority and that around 30 of these could be suitable for social housing.

The Panel agreed the recommendations.

19 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted its future work plan.

The Panel noted that any items suggested within the meeting would be considered at the Chairs and Vice Chairs meetings and also at the agenda planning meeting with the Chair of the Panel.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services