

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 13th January, 2020

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Tom Davies, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Sue Craig, Lisa O'Brien, Manda Rigby (in place of Dr Kumar) and Ruth Malloy (in place of Joel Hirst)

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Grant Johnson

20 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

21 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Kumar sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Rigby.

Councillor Hirst sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Malloy.

Councillor Johnson sent his apologies.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

24 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

26 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting (30th September 2019) as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

27 CLEAN AIR ZONE UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation on the 'Bath Clean Air Plan Update' from Cathryn Brown, Team Manager - Licensing and Environmental Protection and Chris Major, Group Manager – Transport and Parking which covered the following:

- Background
- Recent Progress
- Proposed charges
- Proposed zone
- Public consultation
- Queen Square
- Support packages
- Financial assistance scheme
- Exemptions
- Concessions
- Financial forecasts
- Programme
- Further information
- Other local authorities
- Summary

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

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

Councillor Craig thanked the officers for their hard work and raised the following points – *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Some concerns about Queen Square and potential queuing traffic - glad to hear of the ongoing monitoring of this area.
- More information on anti-idling measures and enforcement. *The officer explained that this enforcement is dependent upon funding from central government and would be progressed when this funding is provided.*
- What are the plans regarding a Coach Strategy, especially with regard to Bog Island? *The officer explained that this strategy is linked to the wider Transport Delivery Plan which will be brought to the Panel and to Cabinet but that it was currently in the very early stages of development.*
- How are financial assistance schemes accessed if people do not have use of the internet. *The officer explained that travel advisors and community liaison officers will signpost people to information.*
- Is there support if people live outside the boundary but work in Bath. *The officer explained that businesses that regularly enter the zone (that are able to provide proof) may be eligible for financial assistance.*
- Sole traders should also be considered. *The officer explained that it was the aim to contact all businesses and welcomed input from Councillors if they know anyone that has not been contacted. People can register an expression*

of interest online. Councillor O'Brien added that contacting businesses in the whole of BANES was important as there may be a lack of understanding in places. She urged officers to use town and parish councils to pass on information.

Councillor Rigby thanked officers for all their work. She stated that she was glad to hear that ongoing communication was part of the plan. Councillor Rigby asked if baseline targets are set now for data monitoring as part of the success is getting evidence to move on to the next stage. *The officer explained that there is a monitoring and evaluation plan in the full business case and that baseline data will come from various sources including auto traffic counters. There will be updates as we go along. It is more difficult to monitor behaviour change but there will be some quantitative data relating to this.*

Councillor O'Brien stated that there has been abuse of the anti-idling and also weight restrictions and asked if the authority will have more powers of enforcement when the CAZ going through. *The officer stated that yes, officers will be authorised with enforcement powers following a report to Cabinet in September 2019.*

Councillor Born commended the officers for their hard work and raised the following points – *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Regarding the table in the business case, are figures adjusted up and down. *The officer stated he would investigate this outside of the meeting.*
- In some cities they have screens to show the level of air quality, could we use this model? *The officer explained that there is a continuous air quality monitor at Snow Hill which can provide real-time information and that the team are investigating various ways to publicise this information. There are some technical issues to consider.*
- Is it likely that there will be short-term or long-term shortfalls in revenue? *The officer explained that the team was working to make sure that no revenue impact falls on the Council.*
- Is there a contingency plan for Queen Square? *The officer explained that the team will be looking at the impact on traffic in the context of the wider programme for the city. The aim is to move people towards less journeys and cleaner vehicles.*

Councillor Bromley thanked the officers for their work and raised the following points – *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Are NO2 levels measured as an average? Are levels high at peak periods eg. Lansdown Lane (near to WASPs – Primary School). *The officer explained that there is an annual average and an hourly air quality objective. The officer stated that data regarding Lansdown Lane could be provided and one of team has been working with WASPS regarding the use of alternative forms of transport (e.g. walking) to get to school.*
- Encouraging children to walk to school is great but most traffic is commuters and children are walking through this pollution. *The officer explained that there is air quality monitoring at Lansdown which confirms that the annual air quality objective is not exceeded, however, it is recognised that there will be*

peaks in levels at different times of the day. It is beneficial for children to walk to school as pollution levels within cars moving in traffic can also be an issue.

There was some discussion with Councillor Kumar (not in attendance as a member of the Panel at this meeting) regarding the inclusion of Sydney Buildings in the CAZ. The officer stated that this situation would be monitored and it is important to recognise that improvement in air quality will also be felt outside of the zone. Councillor Rigby stated that, at a meeting with residents and officers, it became clear that some of the issues they had could be solved by other measures and generally the CAZ was just one programme but that it cannot be expected to solve all the problems with congestion and pollution.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the progress made as set out in the presentation;
- Forward the comments made above to the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency for inclusion in the item at the Cabinet meeting on 16th January 2020.

28 **PARKING CHARGES POLICY**

Chris Major Group Manager – Transport and Parking introduced the report.

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

Councillor O'Brien raised the following points – *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Caution should be used regarding residents permit schemes in less prosperous areas of Bath. *The officer explained that there are 21 residents parking zones throughout the area and more are being considered, residents are generally in favour. Residents cars still cause pollution and these vehicles for short journeys.*
- Regarding Proposal E – Overnight and evening car park tariff Bath, there is often no late night public transport alternative. This could seem like a money making proposal. *The officer explained that private car parks do have fees of this type.*
- Regarding Proposal K – Charges for Blue Badge holders when using Keynsham car parks, this is contrary to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. I would challenge this. *The officer thanked Councillor O'Brien for her feedback.*

Councillor Davies suggested that in any roll-out of a new scheme, innovative solutions could be found to avoid the cliff edge of increased charges to residents. Some examples are to offer a long lead in time to charges or apply charges at the time people buy their next car.

Councillor Davies asked officers to consider whether it was possible to introduce differentiated charges in the Council's pay for parking on streets and car parks. These charges would be based on the same principles being suggested for changes to the parking permits and could use the Mipermit system already in place. The officer thanked Councillor Davies for his feedback.

Councillor Craig stated that she did not agree with charges for Blue Badge holders as they do not have the choices that others have. She also stated that there should be some help for low earning residents who live inside the CAZ.

Councillor Born stated that she agreed with a long lead in time regarding charges for residents permits. She stated that she supported any measures that could help the situation regarding coach parking at the time of the Christmas Market and also supported closing loopholes regarding G – Medical permit review and H – Hotel permit review.

Councillor Rigby stated that there should be fairness and consistency in this area and that officers should look at how many permits there are as opposed to spaces. She also stated that officer could look at the size of vehicles. *The officer explained that the DVLA does not show the size of vehicle.*

Councillor Rigby stated that she welcomed Hotel permits being reviewed (Proposal H) and that residents should be the top priority.

Councillor Walker stated that on the last day of the Christmas Market the city centre was completely full and there was no parking. She suggested that VAS signs be installed at Odd down advising people to use the park and ride.

Councillor Bromley stated that consideration should be given to reducing residents parking permit charges in more deprived areas of the city and also that RUH workers should be encouraged to use public transport.

Councillor Malloy stated that she agreed that blue badge holders should not be charged and agreed that residents permit charges in Weston and other areas should be differentiated.

Councillor Walker stated that all coaches should use the park and ride sites and visitors should be made to use the park and ride buses to come into the city.

The officer thanked all Panel members for their feedback.

The panel **RESOLVED** to pass the above comments on the proposals to the Cabinet Member.

29 LITTERING REVIEW (INITIAL REPORT)

Sarah Alder, Team Manager Strategy and Contracts (Environmental Services) and Pam Jones, Neighbourhood Environmental Services introduced the report.

Officers corrected some figures shown on page 12 (or page 2) of the report – the correct figures now show on the website.

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

In response to Councillor Walker asking about Airb&b cleaners who put rubbish into public bins, the officer explained that it depends on neighbours reporting this and also depends on whether the property has a domestic or commercial collection.

Councillor Craig raised the following points. *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- There is a littering issue outside some local businesses on the Lower Bristol Road (and other areas) where smokers do not have dedicated facilities and instead throw cigarette butts onto the street. *The officer explained that littering legislation is currently based around fining the individual but that anti-social behaviour orders could be looked into if businesses do not provide a place to put cigarette butts.* Councillor Walker asked that council contractors be made aware of the £2million cost for cleaning drains caused by cigarette butts being thrown down the drains. This has been seen at the rear of the building.
- Regarding 3GS, generally people have been surprised at being fined for cigarette butts. If the contract is not renewed we should use the feedback as an information exercise. Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods explained that regarding 3GS – enforcement is a good thing and it changes behaviours.
- Regarding abandoned bikes, they could be given away if not claimed after three months rather than destroyed. *The officer explained that they work with charitable organisations regarding abandoned bikes, including Julian House.* Councillor Craig commented that Julian House workshop can use damaged bike parts.

Councillor Bromley supported a deposit/return scheme. She also stated that she felt that parks could not really be compared to National Trust areas as people pay to visit National Trust land.

Councillor Born stated that she was surprised at the low level of resources that go into the Street Cleaning service and congratulated officers in managing this. The Cabinet Member agreed. Councillor Born stated that some residents outside of the city centre say their streets are not cleaned and drains not swept, she felt that this preventative work could mean bigger problems do not build up. Councillor Born made some observations – refuse collectors sometimes leave a trail of rubbish behind them and also the places that homeless people sleep are sometimes filled with rubbish when they leave.

Councillor Born asked if there is any data regarding behaviour change since 3GS began issuing fines. The officer explained that the figures do not show any patterns as it depends on the areas that have been patrolled.

Councillor Davies asked if there was any benchmarking information regarding the recycling rates for street bins. The officer explained that there is no breakdown for litter bins and also that there is a high level of contamination in these bins. She explained that there is engagement with other authorities. She further explained that there are two new recycling bins (Victoria Park and Royal Crescent) where levels of contamination are being monitored.

Councillor Rigby raised the following points. *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- A lot of litter in Bath is related to fast food and street trader outlets. It is good to try to address this responsibility at the licensing stage.
- There is a volunteer network (eg. for litter picking), maybe this could be harnessed for street cleaning. The Cabinet member agreed that the Council is more reliant on the volunteering sector and there may be untapped potential.
- In areas outside of the city centre there are huge amounts of fly tipping – are fines at the right level. *The officer explained that flying tipping is investigated and the maximum fine is £400. Further action is down to the discretion of the officers.* The Cabinet member stated that there was an issue with resources regarding enforcement and fly tipping.

Councillor O'Brien raised the following points.

- Refuse collectors do a great job.
- People should be fined for littering with cigarette butts.
- It is good to have bins in parks – volunteer groups such as Wombles and No Place for Litter look after certain areas.
- We have asked for a sign near fast food outlets asking people to take their litter home. The Cabinet member stated that digital signs can be used for this.
- There has been a general improvement in attitudes towards recycling.

Councillor Craig raised the following points.

- Volunteers could also help with clearing leaves away from drains (they could be provided with different colour bags). Maybe the Council could agreed to collect the leaves once they have been cleared.
- Packaging causes a lot of problems, the Council could lobby the Government on this.

Councillor Malloy raised the following points.

- Blocked drains and leaves can contribute to flooding.
- Litter pickers could be offered at a discount to encourage volunteering.
- There is a No Place for Litter summit – The Cabinet member explained that this was organised by the community groups themselves and believes their intention is to bring people together to try to take forward ideas.

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

30 DRAFT HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPERS INITIATIVE

Graham Sabourn, Head of Housing and Ann Robbins, Housing Strategy & Commissioning Manager introduced the report.

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

Councillor O'Brien raised the following points – *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Concerns over estate agents discriminating against people on benefits regarding private lets.
- Regarding the safe sleep provision (20 beds) – does this continue into the Summer? *The officer explained that people are more likely to be drawn in during the colder months and opportunities for contact and support for people is maximised. The venue can only be used in the winter. It is better to contact and support people than to double the beds available.*

Councillor Craig raised the issue of boaters being moved on by the Canal and River Trust and stated that the definition of homelessness is having no permanent place of residence. *The officer stated that they are aware of the difficulties of the boaters but had helped to put in place the prior notification process. The Canal and River Trust is now a charity.*

Councillor Davies asked what the next steps are regarding setting qualitative and quantitative factors. *The officer explained that there is a wealth of data and would be interested in ideas of how to report this to the public to make it interesting. The officer stated that there are two important figures – the number of households in temporary accommodation and the numbers of rough sleepers. He explained that there is a better system of estimating numbers of rough sleepers now that he had more confidence in. Councillor Davies asked that the Panel be annually updated on the progress of the Strategy.*

Councillor Born raised the following points – *Officer responses are shown in italics.*

- Has the introduction of Universal Credit affected homelessness and rough sleeping? *The officer explained that there has been a small increase but that agencies had carried out a significant amount of prevention work. Universal Credit has had an impact on national levels of rough sleeping.*
- Is there a focus on elderly rough sleepers? *The officer explained there have been some examples of people moving from Manvers Street Hostel into residential care.*
- Do you have resources for dual diagnosis? *The officer explained that they would find out their allocation soon.*

Councillor Rigby asked what can be done for people who do not want to stay in hostels regarding support such as storage and help to register to vote. *The officer explained Julian House are looking into a storage facility in their basement. There is a protocol that if any important documents are found, they are handed in at Julian House. People are also able to use Julian House as an address regarding voting.*

Councillor Walker stated that Bed and Breakfasts can be a short-term solution and that we can work with private landlords. She asked if private rent allowance can lead to people becoming homeless. *The officer explained that the authority has no control over local housing allowance rates but have worked with people on budgeting and Julian House run a jam jar account scheme. There is private sector training on tenancy sustainment and work with churches regarding day-care facilities.*

The panel **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the contents of the Strategy as set out in the report and request an annual update;
2. Forward the comments made above to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development for inclusion in the item at the Cabinet meeting on 16th January 2020.

31 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted its future workplan.

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 5.55 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services