

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 21st June, 2021

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Walker, Joel Hirst, Shelley Bromley, Lisa O'Brien, Dr Kumar, Ryan Wills and Joanna Wright

Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel: Councillor Sarah Warren

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services: Councillor David Wood

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

Councillors Paul Crossley, Grant Johnson and Tim Ball had sent their apologies to the Panel.

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 made a statement to the Panel, a summary of which is set out below. A copy of the statement can be found online as an appendix to these minutes.

We are very concerned the now that public transport and bus service have transferred to the West of England Combined Authority as the city region Transport Authority. But without precept powers what resources are being allocated by the city and county of Bristol, Bristol Mayor, Banes and South Gloucestershire Council to revenue support socially supported bus services especially to serve rural and orbital bus services in Bath and North East Somerset for example Bath Spa bus station to Peasedown St John, Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton and Farmborough.

There is also a need to have subsidies for the Severn Beach, St Andrew Road, Avonmouth Dock, Portway Parkway, Shirehampton, Sea Mills, Clifton Down, Redland, Montpelier, Stapleton Road, Lawrence Hill, Bristol Temple Meads, Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa, Freshford, Avoncliffe, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Frome or Warminster.

We welcome the work on the 25% reduction in service from 24th January 2021 due to lockdown and the protection of essential journeys for key workers access to supermarkets Post Office, Banks, health care facilities and vaccinations centres.

But regret the loss of catering services between Bristol Temple Meads, Keynsham, Bath Spa, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Salisbury and London Waterloo. The Department for Transport appear to be removing catering services on the Express train network on emergency recovery contracts.

We need to see Bath Spa Bus Station Travel Centre facilities reopened as Travel Centre and Tourist Information Centre for green sustainable tourism in Bath and North East Somerset and Somerset and the need for public toilets in Bath Spa Bus and Coach Station, including disabled toilets.

We welcome progress by Bristol City Council Mayor to find a way forward on a devolution deal at WECA Mayoral Combined Authority and new governance to allow North Somerset Council to join WECA Mayoral Combined Authority.

The bus back better bus improvement plan by the WECA Mayoral Transport Authority and North Somerset Council needs to improve Sunday evening and rural services and cross border service into Somerset and Wiltshire.

Please note that the West of England Combined Authority meeting is on 23rd June 2021 at Bristol City Hall at 1030. Please note WECA Mayoral Combined Authority Scrutiny Commission is in Bristol City Hall 23rd June 2021 and the Board with the Metro Mayor Dan Norris is 1130 at the Civic Centre in Kingswood 25th June 2021.

The Chair thanked him for his statement on behalf of the Panel and asked that it be passed to the B&NES Councillors who sit on the WECA meetings mentioned due to take place later in the week and the Cabinet Member for Transport.

19 MINUTES: 7TH JUNE 2021

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

20 CLEAN AIR ZONE UPDATE

The Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Team Manager introduced this item to the Panel and gave a presentation. A summary is set out below.

Preparation for the CAZ launch

- Over 8000 early warning letters were issued to drivers of non-compliant vehicles driving within the CAZ prior to launch
- 9500 businesses were contacted via telemarketing company to raise awareness of the launch and the financial help available
- Core scheme ANPR cameras and software tested extensively with government teams
- Financial assistance scheme was promoted and a surge in applications was received

CAZ Mitigations

- A bus upgrade programme with a view to achieving a fully compliant scheduled bus fleet operating in Bath. From our modelling this is a key deliverable to achieving compliance
- A financial assistance scheme providing grants and interest free loans to businesses, individuals and community groups to upgrade non-compliant vehicles. Upgrade rates have exceeded expectations and we are seeking more funding from central government
- A package of exemptions that support vital services, disadvantaged groups and those with hard-to-replace vehicles, along with a means-tested general exemption as part of the financial assistance scheme

CAZ launch- 15 March 2021

- There were no technical issues on the day of launch
- B&NES and JAQU (Joint Air Quality Unit) teams collaborated well and there were regular, daily check-ins during the first 2 weeks of the scheme going live
- Ongoing discussions between central government and Wiltshire Council on traffic and air quality monitoring

Ongoing support post CAZ launch

- A period of '**soft enforcement**' has taken place where only the zone entry charge has been collected
- Support and flexibility for vehicle owners affected by business rule changes which lead some vehicles (mainly vans and motorhomes) to change from a status of compliant to non-compliant
- Sought clarity about the compliance status of M1 motorhome vehicles which will now be exempted from charges

Initial statistics following launch

- Initially, approximately **32,000** vehicles were travelling in the CAZ each day (not including locally exempt vehicles) and older, diesel LGV's represent the

largest category of non-compliant, chargeable vehicles which have a disproportionate impact on air quality

- In total the financial assistance scheme has received **2080 expressions of interest**, of which **1650 vehicles** have proceeded to having a telematics device fitted. Of those, **743** owners proceeded to apply for finance and **625** are currently recording telematic data. **506 vehicles** have been approved for upgrade and drivers are in the process of taking ownership of their vehicles in the coming months
- Since launch over **28,000 PCN's** have been issued, although a number of these will have been waived due to issues such as the business rule change, and these issues have now been resolved; typically, 25% relate to vehicle owners within B&NES and **over 54,000** zone entry charges have been paid
- There is an emerging downward trend in the number of vehicle entrants which are subject to a CAZ charge which suggests an increasing level of compliance with the scheme

Evidence of changing behaviour

Ipsos Mori has been commissioned by government to complete surveys with businesses, before and after the CAZ launch in Bath. Initial results show:

- Awareness of the CAZ has increased; by March 2021 over 70% of businesses knew a great deal or fair amount about the CAZ; this is an increase from approx. 50% in Nov/Dec 2020
- More businesses support the CAZ than oppose it
- Most businesses understand that the CAZ is introduced to improve air quality but there is a misconception that it will generate income for the Council

Initial reflections following launch

- The financial assistance scheme has been a key element of delivering a successful launch and provides additional air quality benefit; incentivisation is necessary alongside enforcement
- After 3 months, we continue to have challenging conversations with certain groups to build understanding, but the emerging impression is that the scheme is becoming 'business as usual' for the public

Monitoring and Evaluation

- There will be monitoring and evaluation of a range of measures, including air quality, relating to the first 3 months of the scheme. This will be published on the Council's webpages <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/bath-clean-air-zone> around late Summer.
- Whilst very few vehicle movements are actually impacted by the CAZ restrictions, there has been a general increase in traffic levels as restrictions have lifted and increases in working from home and home deliveries have meant an increase in vehicle movements in residential areas, we continue to monitor traffic levels across the road network and publish the results of these surveys

Next steps...

- Full enforcement of the scheme, including non-UK vehicle enforcement
- Bringing forward other mitigation packages including Only Mile Delivery schemes
- Further updates will be provided to the Panel as the scheme progresses

Councillor Lisa O'Brien asked how the Council can enforce charges on non-UK vehicles.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that a third party managed this on behalf of the Council.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien asked if any thoughts had been given to the voluntary retrofitting of domestic vehicles.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that there would need to be a discussion on how this could be facilitated – possibly with Government funding.

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel commented that CAZ was a very well managed project and that she would look into the possibility of a retrofitting project.

Councillor Shelley Bromley asked if other areas of the Council could be included in a CAZ.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that it would be timelier to have that discussion in around 12 months and that a proper consultation would be required on any amendments / additions.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked whether on street electric vehicle charging points are being considered to assist those businesses that have upgraded / purchased such vehicles.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that she believed information on this issue was to be presented to the Cabinet in the coming months and would try to find out further details for the Panel.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked if the Council were working with WECA on possible future Clean Air Zones locally.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that they are in regular discussions with Bristol & South Gloucestershire Councils so that broad alignment of Zones is sought.

Councillor Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar commented that in his ward of Bathwick there are several areas and roads where NO₂ exceeds the EU and national legal limit of 40 µg/m³ as acknowledged by the officers, with the main roads being Bathwick Street and Pultney Street.

He added that Cleveland Bridge is the main conduit for linking A36 and A46 and to some extent the main culprit for this pollution too. He asked if the closure of Cleveland Bridge permanently for HGVs over 18 tonnes could be considered to protect our lives, the lives of our progeny and giving a better environment to our city.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that Cleveland Bridge is within the Zone, but that closure of it was not within the scope of the scheme.

Councillor Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar commented that some of his residents were complaining that though their property is confirmed by the online CAZ system to not be in the Zone the department running the scheme were sending penalty charges to traders who have come to do work in their properties.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that she was aware that this boundary anomaly was being looked into.

Councillor Ryan Wills commented that it was good to see the support for the Zone through the Ipsos Mori survey but asked if it was known whether the businesses that replied were inside or outside of the Zone.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that she was not aware of that information. She added that the team were committed to providing updates on the project on a quarterly basis.

Councillor Joel Hirst commented that the focus of the project should remain on health. He asked if the quarterly update would include data relating to traffic displacement and when it would be likely to see that the Zone is doing what we hope it will.

The Clean Air Zone Team Manager replied that some baseline data is available and that this will continue to be monitored over the next six months to see if trends continue. She added that investigations will be carried out if this differs from what is expected.

The Chair thanked the Clean Air Zone Team Manager and her team on behalf of the Panel for the work they have done so far and for the presentation.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the progress made as set out in the presentation.

21 DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

The Director of Place Management introduced this item to the Panel and gave a presentation. A summary is set out below.

The Challenge

- Neighbourhood (and Highways) Services are the front line of the Council
- A range of statutory and legal requirements for the council to discharge
- High profile and high reputational impact
- What could we do differently?
- With limited resources, where should we invest any additional funding secured?

Context (2008 and beyond):

- Significant service efficiencies have been achieved
- Insourced recycling services and changed the way we deliver services
- Prioritised activity around the Council's statutory duties and maintaining public health and safety
- Recognised that there is a significant backlog of works required on the highway network
- Implemented Fix My Street 'report it' system – Good scheme, looking to make further adaptations

Breadth of services

Highways

- 1200 kms of roads
- 17,000 streetlights
- 25,000 road gullies
- 1040 kms Footways and footpaths

Parks

- 270 Parks and Open Spaces managed
- 6 Heritage Parks
- 59 Play Areas
- 28000 Trees & 7 Woodlands (to date)

Waste

- Waste and recycling collections provided to 86,435 households
- Every 4 weeks over half a million refuse and recycling collections take place
- Cleansed over 1300 miles of highway
- Emptied litter bins two/three times a week or over 90,000 times a year

The efforts of all staff must be recognised

The request:

- Consider developing a Task and Finish group to help Cabinet and Officers: Identify what would success look like for our communities in:
 - The short term
 - 2 years
 - 5 years
- Undertake a review of the opportunities considering both the local and national picture; and
- Make recommendations to Cabinet Members on how any investment should be targeted

Councillor David Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services commented on how important it is for the Council to get the basics right and of how proud he is of the teams involved in this work.

Councillor Joel Hirst commented that it was a huge challenge and that he would like to see more promotion of Fix My Street to make members of the public aware of how to use it.

The Director of Place Management agreed that the more that Fix My Street is promoted the better and would look into how that can be progressed.

Councillor Joel Hirst asked if further street cleansing and other functions would be possible if a further precept was collected by the Council.

The Director of Place Management replied that he was unable to answer that question as he did not know how that process would work.

Councillor Dr Yukteshwar Kumar commented that recently we have seen an upward trend of not collecting waste on designated days. He said that residents are incredibly unhappy and that he had written to several officers and Cabinet Members regarding collections of waste from the newly built temple on around 25 May and had not yet had a response.

The Director of Place Management replied that they do try hard to deliver services on time and within budget and that staff were working to keep functions in place. He added that he would investigate the specific problem raised.

Councillor David Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services said that many officers are overworked at the present time and working within a challenging environment He added that he also would look into the issues raised by Councillor Kumar.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien said that she very much appreciated the work of the staff in refuse collection as it was an important service for residents. She asked what actions were being taken to address the shortage of refuse HGV drivers.

The Director of Place Management replied that the Council are in active contact with an agency for such drivers.

Councillor Shelley Bromley praised staff for doing an amazing job in a work area that has increased over the past 18 months. She added that she thought Fix My Street was an excellent service and welcomed further promotion of it.

The Chair thanked the Director of Place Management and his teams for their work and his presentation.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to agree to developing a Task and Finish group to:

- i) Identify what would success look like for our communities in:
 - The short term
 - 2 years
 - 5 years
- ii) Undertake a review of the opportunities considering both the local and national picture
- iii) Make recommendations to Cabinet Members on how any investment should be targeted

22 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE, ASSOCIATED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (INCLUDING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS) AND THE WECA SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Deputy Head of Planning Policy and Highway Development Control & Transport Policy Manager introduced this item to the Panel and gave a presentation. A summary is set out below.

Role of the Local Plan Partial Update

Spatial Development Strategy (SDS): 2022 – 2042

New Local Plan: 2022 – 2038

- New Planning Policy Framework to deliver the SDS
- New spatial Strategy
- New Plan period
- New targets e.g. the housing requirement, employment land, renewable energy and ecology
- Planning Reform

Local Plan Partial Update - To 2029 (adopt 2022)

- The Climate emergency (eg facilitate renewable energy regeneration, retrofitting, parking standards,
- The nature emergency (Biodiversity Net Gain)
- Address the shortfall in Housing Land Supply
- The green recovery (including Milsom Quarter and protecting employment land)
- Houses in multiple occupation
- University campuses and student accommodation

- Remove P&R sites from Green Belt
- Green Belt Villages
- **NB the scope and extent of changes of a partial update are limited**

Key SPDs Timetable

- Draft SPDs – consult alongside LPPU in August/September
- Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting SPD – adopt autumn/winter
- Transport SPD – adopt alongside LPPU

LPPU: Options Consultation feedback

- Around 2,350 comments (1,800 standard/petition style comments on Bath Rec or Whitchurch)
- Key relevant issues raised included:
 - Support for zero carbon development policy and reducing carbon via retrofitting
 - Flexibility needed in policies
 - Impact on viability/affordable housing delivery
 - Biodiversity Net Gain – maximise
 - Sustainable transport modes should be considered first, but don't be inflexible for rural areas

The Climate Emergency

LPPU will include policy changes addressing the 3 climate emergency priority areas for action:

- Energy efficiency improvements to buildings
- Local renewable energy generation
- Sustainable Transport - increased shift towards walking, cycling and mass transit

Sustainable Transport

Update existing policies to:

- Strengthen focus on sustainable travel
- Ensure development transport choices are required to place sustainable modes first
- Increased linkages between transport, health, equality and inclusivity
- Embed Liveable Neighbourhoods measures and principles
- Ensure active travel benefits of Green Infrastructure are delivered
- Require ULEV charging infrastructure provided in new development

P&R sites in the Green Belt

Removal of the Park & Rides sites from the Green Belt (if exceptional circumstances to change the Green Belt are accepted by the Inspector) and broadening their role to become transport interchanges with solar canopies.

The Ecological Emergency

- Updating adopted nature conservation policies so that they even better protect irreplaceable habitats and facilitate nature recovery
- Bringing forward a new policy (in advance of the national requirement) for developers to deliver at least 10 % Biodiversity Net Gain as part of development

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Transport SPD:
 - Parking
 - Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles
 - Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Design
 - Travel Plans
- Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting SPD

Parking standards

- Residential (Origin) Parking changed to Maximum Standards
 - Achieve low car developments where conditions exist to do so, i.e. excellent accessibility, car clubs, Controlled Parking Zones
 - Avoid over-provision, as can occur with minimum standards.
 - Sufficient parking to limit risk of overspill.

Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicles

- Specifications for standards for connections and sockets.
- Suitable capacity in electricity network, may involve sub-stations.
- Avoid petrol/diesel cars abusing EV spaces.

Sustainable Construction/Retrofitting SPD

Summary of the Scope of Review

- Combining the SPDs
- Updating the presentation (photos, illustrations and format)
- Updating the wording – more positive focus on what can be achieved & how
- Updating the technological information
- Adding a new section on fuel poverty/affordable warmth

Councillor Shelley Bromley commented that she was encouraged to see the work planned in relation to retrofitting and asked about the availability of grants to residents.

The Deputy Head of Planning Policy said that they will work closely with the Housing team and will seek to set out funding/grant options on the website alongside the SPD.

Councillor Joel Hirst said that he was impressed with the scope and direction of the work. He added that the vision for the developments of the Park & Rides was exciting and that availability of electric bikes from these sites would be an enhancement. He asked how would retrofitting be viewed with regard to Listed Buildings.

The Deputy Head of Planning Policy replied that there is strong legislation in place in terms of Listed Building Consent. He added that each application would be looked at on its own merits and that it is intended that the revised SPD will provide practical and positive guidance for owners of such properties in seeking to retrofit energy efficiency measures.

Councillor Dr Yukteshwar Kumar asked if the Council were planning to provide Electric Vehicle charging on main roads in the future.

The Highway Development Control & Transport Policy Manager replied that she felt that Electric Vehicle charging on main roads would be unlikely.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked how B&NES were looking to address the projected increase of people living in the area over the coming years (especially those in the 20-30 age group) and how could this housing need be made affordable.

The Deputy Head of Planning Policy replied that decisions would be underpinned by information from within the Local Housing Needs Assessment. He added that this was a key issue for the Council and it would be important for planning policy to help steer the right provision in the right areas.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien asked why it appears some areas were deemed to have low potential for the development of renewable energy and others high potential.

The Deputy Head of Planning Policy replied that an assessment of landscape sensitivity and potential across the District has been undertaken and this takes account of and identifies potential opportunities for mitigating impact.

Councillor Lisa O'Brien commented that she was concerned with some elements of the report as Keynsham is not always provided with a direct bus service and residents in some of the new developments, around two miles from the centre, will need a vehicle to travel to work.

The Highway Development Control & Transport Policy Manager replied that the SPD will look to address this in more detail and that figures would be based on current patterns of ownership.

The Chair commented that she felt that it was a good vision for the future and thanked the officers for their report and presentation on behalf of the Panel.

23 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item and noted the following requests for future items.

- Air Quality Update
- Light Pollution
- WECA Update
- Electric Vehicle Charging

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services