

## **Cabinet Member Update: Sustainable Transport, Climate and Nature highlights**

### **Meeting: Climate Emergency Scrutiny**

**When: Monday 27 June 2022 (4pm)**

#### **1. Structural changes**

##### *Progress*

- New Heads of Service for Transport and Green Transformation now in post
  - o work is underway reviewing strategy, strengthening delivery, driving transformation across the whole of the Council and across B&NES
- New posts created with people in place: Renewable Energy Programme Manager; Principal Ecologist; Biodiversity Net Gain Officer. Appointments made awaiting arrival: Nature Recovery Manager; Climate Strategy & Projects Manager; Green Infrastructure Programme Manager (all starting July/August)
- New Head of Transport Strategy also now in post, and recruitment to new posts also ongoing in Sustainable Transport Team to ensure capacity in place
- The Council has introduced a new approach to place-based working (Area Forum geographies). Provides an opportunity to understand places better and work together better across council departments on key issues
- New Climate and Nature group established, meeting for the first time on 16 June 2022 (a subgroup of the Future Ambition Board, formerly known as the Economic Renewal & Recovery Board)

#### **2. Transport**

##### *Progress*

- Decarbonisation of Transport: Journey to Net Zero adopted as the plan detailing how the authority can support reduction to net zero of carbon emissions from transport
- Agreed formula to save supported bus services for the next year with West of England Combined Authority (WECA), Bristol and S Glos, whilst a review of the network is completed
- WECA e-scooter trial is in the process of expanding to more of Bath, in anticipation of likely government legalisation of e-scooters later this year, with a view to giving greater opportunity for e-scooters in B&NES to replace car journeys by giving potential for longer journeys
- 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
- Construction of cycle lanes on Upper Bristol Road and Beckford Road will begin in coming weeks
- Inaugural meeting held of Journey to Net Zero Transport Stakeholder Forum, bringing together voluntary groups and campaigners across the range of transport issues, to support council on effective community engagement, and improve the quality of schemes implemented
- Local Plan Partial Update (currently at enquiry) and New Local Plan development address transport

### Plans

- Plans to deliver sustainable transport improvements on, and approaching, key trunk corridors around B&NES through City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement fund
- Begin work with schools to enable students to travel to school independently and sustainably
- Development of the JLTP 4 Addendum (Joint Local Transport Plan) and preparatory work for the JLTP 5
- Delivery and adoption of the Enhanced Partnership between WECA and bus operators
- Further roll out of electric vehicle charging programme

## **3. Climate**

### Progress

- **Delivery - Solar Together:** WECA-wide group buying scheme for home installation of solar photovoltaic panels. 367 households accepted the quote. 108 installations completed. 70 batteries installed alongside PV. The scheme is being promoted by the Council; was procured by WECA and is being run by a third party. WECA will evaluate once installation phase complete to consider running a further round.
- **Delivery - Affordable Warmth:** (government grants for retrofitting homes for those on low income) 98 homes upgraded this year (with 300 prior) with a range of measures to both private and social housing
- **Policy - Local Plan Partial Update:** climate and nature policies strengthened, subject to examination currently underway. New Supplementary Planning Documents cover (among other things)
  - o Introduction of net zero building policies for both residential and non-residential developments, alongside an embodied carbon target for large scale development
  - o New requirement for electric vehicle charging infrastructure to be installed on new residential developments
  - o Facilitating a more holistic approach for renewable energy generation through the promotion of co-benefits with elements such as community benefit and biodiversity net gain
- **Communications:** New Net Zero Nature Positive Network launched to enable community groups and residents to share experiences and support local action
- **Staff learning:** 1) More than 160 staff completed Carbon Literacy training since January 2) New Corporate Procurement Strategy training on climate and sustainability

### Plans

- **Engagement:** working on Climate and Nature Festival (end September 2022). Now open online for local community groups and organisations to register events
- **On future delivery:**

- Two further care homes approved for solar PV roof installations for completion later this year and work begun to develop longer term pipeline of carbon reduction projects
- Development of area wide approach to retrofitting and development of WECA Retrofit Accelerator Hub
- Pixash Lane Recycling Hub will deliver a very low carbon building with a 1700m<sup>2</sup> solar array delivering 650MWh of electricity per annum, covering most of the site's operational electricity needs

#### 4. **Nature**

##### **Progress**

- ***Delivery*** opening of northern section of Chew Valley recreational trail (May)
- ***Policy*** consulted on Nature Positive ambition. 3 supporting priorities identified:
  - Increase the extent of land & waterways managed positively for nature across B&NES
  - Double the abundance &/or distribution of key species across B&NES
  - Enable people to engage with nature more
- ***Funding*** 1) Secured £1.048m WECA funding for Phase I of the Bath River Line, with interventions between Newbridge and Green Park including improved cycling/ pedestrian infrastructure, new planting, wayfinding and public realm improvements. 2) Supported Bristol Avon Rivers Trust successful bid to pilot freshwater biodiversity enhancement markets
- ***Learning*** 1) Launch of Bathscape Outdoor Learning Primary School Resource. 2) Conclusion and report of Environmental Land Management Test & Trial. 3) BNG Training to members; managers and officers

##### **Plans**

- Agreement in principle for B&NES UA to lead on a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for West of England
- Work underway to implement new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements including review of the role of council land
- Work with partners to explore additional resource for the ***Chew Valley Reconnected*** project
- ***Somer Valley Rediscovered*** preparing a bid to WECA addressing nature recovery, access improvements and community engagement across 5 key greenspaces in Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Westfield. Working in partnership with the three town and parish councils.