

PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 JULY 2023

Present: Cllrs Shane Bartlett (Chairman), Jon Andrews, Piers Brown, Barry Goringe, Brian Heatley, David Shortell, David Tooke and Bill Trite

Apologies: Cllrs Andy Canning and Rod Adkins

Also present: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Les Fry and Cllr Andrew Kerby

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure), Antony Littlechild (Sustainability Team Manager), Carl Warom (Climate and Ecological Policy and Project Manager), David Bonner (Service Manager for Business Intelligence and Performance), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and John Miles (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

James Potten (Communications Business Partner - Place) and Anna Eastgate (Corporate Director - Place Services)

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

The Chairman noted that the Vice-chairman had sent his apologies for the meeting and therefore the committee would need to elect a Vice-chairman for the meeting.

It was proposed by B Goringe seconded by B Heatley

Decision

That D Tooke be elected Vice-chairman for the meeting.

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Chairman's Update

There were no updates from the Chairman on this occasion.

14. Public Participation

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

15. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from councillors.

16. Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology: Phase 1 (2021-23) Progress Report - Summer 2023

The committee received and considered a report of the Climate and Ecology Policy Officer which provided a review of progress made in delivering the original climate and ecology action plan during the first phase of the programme and some of the challenges ahead. It was noted that the strategy and action plan were long-term programmes that would evolve over time. The committee's views would be used to inform the shape of the next phase of the programme for delivery of the refreshed 2023 strategy and action plan.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion, points were raised in the following areas:

- Funding issues including the receipt of Shared Prosperity Funding to continue major programmes such as Low Carbon Dorset and the need to secure long-term funding in this area, particularly external funding. This would continue to be explored.
- Resources and staff capacity to undertake work including the preparation of bids for funding.
- Clarity sought on the council's strong performance on waste and recycling rates. It was noted that the council compared its performance to other unitary councils as they both collected and disposed of waste.
- A request for further information to be provided on areas in progress regarding climate adaptation and resilience in future reports. Officers provided information on work taking place to better understand the council's climate resilience and a government national adaptation programme.
- The need to understand the particular circumstances of Dorset in undertaking a resilience assessment. It was noted that the next national adaptation programme was expected to provide more relevant local data.
- Opportunities within the Council's estate to support work including tree planting. It was noted that an opportunity assessment was being developed for a wide range of opportunities, including climate and ecology.
- Issues around EV charging and the impact of grid infrastructure capacity.
- Issues around nitrate mitigation and proactive work that was being undertaken by the Council.
- A link to the associated action plan would be sent to committee members following the meeting.
- Differing views were expressed relating to emissions around land and agriculture and the strategy for this.

- Detail of continuing engagement being undertaken with other bodies including town and parish councils, schools and statutory housing providers.
- Further detail of engagement with housing providers would be provided to committee members following the meeting.
- Understanding of the impact of increasing numbers of electric vehicles on roads.
- Issues around the placing of photovoltaic panels in car parks and on highways land. This could be raised at a meeting with Highways England to be held shortly.
- Issues around renewable energy on industrial parks.
- The importance of making links with the emerging local plan.
- Issues around travel to schools and colleges considered and improvements that could be made locally.
- An update provided on the Canford renewable energy green hydrogen project and other opportunities across the county.
- The communications strategy for raising awareness of work and progress in the area including successes in achieving grant funding.
- A request to consider needs and opportunities regarding reservoir capacity.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chairman provided a summary of the key points arising as follows:

- A need to consider how targets were set so that progress could be reviewed and whether a traffic light system could be developed to clearly show progress.
- The need to understand opportunities on the Council's estate for areas such as planting opportunities and water supply management.
- Further investigation suggested around opportunities for placement of photovoltaic panels in car parks and on available highways land.
- A need to consider issues around travel to school and colleges, looking at the locality around schools and investigation of how improvements could be made locally.
- Importance of developing a finance strategy for this area.

The Sustainability Team Manager noted that a further report would be provided to the committee in the Autumn, which would provide a quantitative outline of progress on annual carbon emissions reductions.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and for the work undertaken by the team in this area.

17. **Performance Scrutiny**

The committee considered the performance dashboard and highlighted some areas of interest. These included:

- Short- and long-term sickness levels across the council – a report on the direction of travel was requested.
- Staff turnover – a further report to be brought to the committee.
- Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates – to be reviewed in 3 months and issues raised as required.
- The processing and input of data into the performance dashboard was being reviewed.

18. Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Councillors reviewed the committee's work programme and noted items to be considered at forthcoming meetings. An informal session was to be held for committee members to review the committee's work programme.

19. Cabinet Forward Plan and Decisions

The committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan and decisions taken at recent meetings, which the committee could use to identify potential areas for post decision review.

20. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

21. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.29 pm

Chairman

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