

PLACE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Nocturin Lacey-Clarke (Chair), Ray Bryan (Vice-Chair), Alex Brenton, Craig Monks, Sarah Williams, Alex Fuhrmann, Jack Jeanes and Barrie Cooper

Apologies: Cllrs Louie O'Leary and David Tooke

Also present: Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Richard Biggs, Cllr Peter Dickenson and Cllr Ben Wilson

Also present remotely: Cllr Belinda Bawden, Cllr Jill Haynes, Cllr Ryan Hope, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Cathy Lugg, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Steve Robinson, Cllr Jane Somper and Cllr Chris Tomes

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

Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Lisa Cotton (Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services), Chris Matthews (Head of Human Resources), Catherine Howe (Chief Executive), Bridget Betts (Environmental Advice Manager), Nina Coakley (Head of Change), Antony Littlechild (Sustainability Team Manager) and Connor Pearson (Corporate Sustainability Officer)

32. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Louie O'Leary and David Tooke.

33. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 September 2025 were confirmed and signed.

34. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35. Public Participation

A written statement was received from Unison and read out by the Chair.

36. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from councillors.

37. **Our Future Council – update and review**

The Committee Chair introduced the item and invited questions and debate from members. The committee discussed the following topics:

- The direction and approach to delivering transformation in the council.
- Consultation with employees and unions, including carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and providing accessible documents.
- Changes to the delivery of the Our Future Council programme compared to how it was being delivered initially, including how the appointment of the permanent Chief Executive has changed it.
- Financial savings targets and how they would be met with slower staff reductions, including additional financial controls being implemented.
- There would be an ongoing cost of £3.3m until these savings could be found. It was expected that the new Transformation Management Office could have a more efficient and organised approach to support savings proposals, compared to how transformation was operated previously.
- Former involvement from PwC in initialising Our Future Council and the value that the council received from their involvement.
- Centralisation of transformation staff in a new Transformation Management Office and the number of redundancies made to transformation staff.
- Data and monitoring contacts and communications through the new Customer Hub, including how demand would be managed for peak times of contacts into the council.
- How Our Future Council was using technology and the effect this would have on digitally excluded residents accessing services.

The Chair outlined a set of recommendations as a result of the discussion:

1. The Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee receive Our Future Council progress reports with quantitative data on a 6 monthly basis.
2. There should be clear, simple and consistent language through future committee reports.
3. The progress reports should include comparisons with KPI's.
4. Data collected on communications and contacts through the Customer Hub should be presented to scrutiny through a future report.

ADJOURNMENT

At 19.53 the committee adjourned for a short comfort break and reconvened at 20.00.

38. **Climate and Nature Progress Report – Autumn/Winter 2025**

The Sustainability Team Manager introduced the Climate and Nature Progress Report. The report had a greater focus on quantitative information and nature recovery. The committee received a presentation which outlined the progress towards climate targets.

Committee members discussed the report and asked questions of officers. The following topics were discussed:

- The local and national target dates for decarbonisation and why they were different.
- Progress towards county-wide decarbonisation and measures to get back on track for council emission targets.
- Concerns about meeting targets for certain emissions where the council has limited or no control over them.
- How carbon emissions are estimated and measured.
- How the council could compare its progress towards reducing emissions with progress by other councils.

Following the discussion on climate, the Environmental Partnerships Manager outlined the council's nature recovery work and the relevant parts of the progress report related to nature recovery. In relation to this part of the report, committee members raised and discussed the following topics:

- The definition and criteria for doing nature recovery.
- Community projects for nature recovery and the use of a map for tracking these initiatives.
- Opportunities for involving town and parish councils in nature recovery projects, such as tree planting, and which organisations and groups were already doing nature recovery projects.
- The scope to include nature recovery in the local plan.
- The risks to continuing nature recovery work if funding from central government was cut.
- The DEFRA reporting metrics for nature recovery and the frequency for reporting these metrics locally. It was suggested that these metrics were included in the progress reports.

Following the discussion, the Chair set out the recommendations raised during the discussion:

1. Including more comparisons to KPI's in the next quantitative Climate and Nature progress report.
2. Ensuring it is clearer where progress is being made towards a climate target.
3. Including nature recovery and the nature recovery map in a future member webinar.

39. Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The committee noted its work programme.

40. Executive Arrangements Forward Plans

The committee noted the Executive's Forward Plans.

41. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

42. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.30 pm

Chairman

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