

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2 March 2022

Attendance:

Councillors
Ferguson (Chairperson)

Cramoysan
Kurn
Pearson

Tippett-Cooper
Warwick
Westwood

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Clear (Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing), Learney (Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management) and Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Cook

[Audio and Video Recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fern.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Warwick declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of items on the agenda that may be related to her role as a County Councillor and as County Council Executive Member for Climate Change and Sustainability.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson made no announcements.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 19 January 2022 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke during public participation, as summarised below.

Ian Tait

Spoke following up on his matters raised at the previous meeting in relation to air quality, the electric vehicle strategy and the limited use of electric taxis in the district and reported that, to date, Mr Boardman was still waiting to receive contact from relevant officers. In addition, Mr Tait made reference to his deputation at Cabinet regarding City Bridge and highlighted the need for necessary improvements to pavements to encourage pedestrian use.

In response, the Strategic Director confirmed that officers would be reminded to contact Mr Boardman accordingly.

6. **REVIEW OF MEADOWSIDE AND WINCHESTER SPORT AND LEISURE PARK PROVISION (HEP023)**

The Chairperson welcomed Alison Norman from Everyone Active to the meeting who provided an update on the progress made to date.

Councillor Clear introduced the report which provided an update on the performance of the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park (WSLP) since it opened in May 2021 and Meadowside Leisure Centre (MLC) following refurbishment since April 2021, both operated by Everyone Active. In addition, the report set out use and activity figures and outlined the contract with Everyone Action which contained a number of key performance indicators that were monitored regularly and reported back at advisory board meetings where data was reviewed.

The Corporate Head for Economy and Community clarified that the centres had seen over 400,000 visitors during the last nine months, with geographical data of those visiting being gathered via user's postcode information.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised.

- The thematic breakdown of data analysis
- Improvements to telephone enquiry response times
- Clear pricing structures for facility use (i.e. hydrotherapy pool) including the promotion of concessions
- Access structures for community groups, military personnel etc,
- Core pricing protection
- Ongoing recruitment issues
- Bicycle storage
- Overall viability following increases to energy costs
- The investment and management of Meadowside Leisure Centre

These points were responded to by the Cabinet Member and other relevant officers present.

During debate, members welcomed the report and the great work that had taken place to date at both centres, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member encouraged members to visit Meadowside Leisure Centre to view the facility since its refurbishment.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member, the representative from Everyone Active and the community team for their input and the report.

RESOLVED:

That the performance of Everyone Active and the range and quality of sport and leisure provision at the council's leisure centres, be noted.

7. **CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME - HOUSING/PROPERTY POLICIES/ACTIONS (HEP024)**

The Strategic Director and the Property Services Manager introduced the report which set out the council's progress to reducing carbon emissions within council owned homes, new home development and initiatives within private sector housing and outlined the background to the report.

A report 'Making Homes Carbon Neutral' had been considered by Cabinet on 10 March 2021 which focussed on a 'fabric first' approach to specific areas of works. A retrofit co-ordinator had been appointed by the council to oversee the formulation of a risk based strategy to ensure risks were minimised and it was recognised that this was key to delivery.

It was emphasised that the emerging local plan was critical to how new developments and private sector initiatives could commence. It was noted that there was broad support for carbon neutrality being at the heart of the plan, with the tests anticipated around viability, therefore a consultant had been appointed to carry out a viability assessment.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised and responded to accordingly.

- Clarification of the percentage of council owned homes, in comparison to privately owned and rented properties and the number of void properties annually - it was reported that there were 5,000 council owned stock with plans to build an additional 1,000 dwellings. There were approximately 350 void properties per year, equating to 8% of the council stock.
- Clarification of risks around costs and materials – it was noted that costs were increasing across construction tenders. Specialised materials and the availability of specific skilled trades could prove be difficult to acquire and source.
- Planning restrictions to the retrofit of historic housing stock and proposals to change to planning policy.

- New homes building standards – It was reported that Passivhaus standard looked to limit the amount of energy used to heat a home and it was the aim to achieve this on all new developments to meet the council's net zero carbon challenge.
- Options to reduce energy use for tenants over the short to medium term.
- Sharing skills and best practices with other authorities and organisations.

During debate, the committee recognised the need for continuous tenant engagement in the retrofit process. However, it was emphasised that the climate emergency was a responsibility for the whole of the district and for everyone to contribute towards.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the housing team for the report which was welcomed by the committee, recognising the considerable commitment of the council to retrofitting council owned homes. In addition, it was noted that, once the proposed sustainable long term retrofit plan was available, this be considered by the committee via the Carbon Neutrality Programme, including the impact of measures on carbon reduction, and value to the tenants and the council.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress made to date in relation to the housing theme of the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, set out in sections 3 to 6 of the report, be noted; and
2. That the comments of the committee, as set out above, be noted.

8. CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME - CARBON OFFSETTING (HEP021 AND PRESENTATION)

Councillor Williams introduced the report which set out the options for carbon offsetting and the position the council was working within. The report also outlined alternative options that could be used to support the council's targets and allow it to work towards a carbon free district.

The Sustainability Officer then gave a presentation outlining out the background, providing detail of the five different types of carbon offsets for emissions reductions and removals and setting out the key considerations and recommendations for the committee's consideration.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised and responded to accordingly.

- Community Energy Projects
- Mapping of available council land for tree planting and renewable energy
- Nitrate offsetting

- Full assessment of costs for trees (including planting, resources and management costs)
- Development and scale of solar farms
- Lead in times for offsetting and estimated costs
- Carbon Offset Fund (provision to set offsetting limits for developers)
- The need to educate to raise understanding and awareness

During debate, the committee emphasised that carbon offsetting should not be used as an 'easy option' tool to negate the need to reduce carbon output but should be monitored and balanced to align within the process.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the climate emergency team for the report, the contents of which were welcomed by the committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and presentation be noted and the approach, as set out in the report, be endorsed; and
2. That the comments of the committee, as set out above, be noted.

9. DRAFT TREE STRATEGY (HEP022)

Councillor Williams introduced the report which set out a draft strategy which brought together information regarding the council's management and statutory functions in relation to trees and outlined how the council would address its responsibilities to protect and enhance the tree stock in the district.

The Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing provided an update on the next steps to be taken which would include revisions to the strategy following comments by the committee and engagement with various stakeholders and residents ahead of the final strategy being submitted to Cabinet for adoption during Summer 2022.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised and responded to accordingly.

- The need for alternative formats of the document for a varied audience to comprehend
- Climate change impact on native species
- The status of the strategy for planning purposes (i.e felling of trees)
- Enforcement cases and the management of resources
- Use of the 'Your Winchester' app for residents to report issues and take photographs out of office hours
- Search engine to establish tree ownership

During debate, the committee emphasised that the strategy would assist the council with enforcement and preventative measures in order to protect trees and maintain the canopy now and for the future generations.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the natural environment team for the report which was welcomed by the committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and noted; and
2. That the comments of the committee, as set out above, be noted

10. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22**

RESOLVED:

That the work programme for 2021/22 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.50 pm

Chairperson