

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 19 January 2022

Attendance:

Councillors
Ferguson (Chairperson)

Cramoysan
Fern
Kurn

Pearson
Tippett-Cooper
Westwood

Deputy Members:

Councillor Cook (as deputy for Warwick)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Quality), Tod (Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery) and Williams (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency)

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Warwick

[Audio and Video Recording](#)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Cramoysan be appointed Vice-Chairperson of the committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson made no announcements.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30 September 2021 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Four members of the public spoke regarding various agenda items, with two of those speaking at this point on the agenda, as summarised briefly below.

Emma Back (on behalf of Sports Arts and Leisure Trust (SALT))

Paid tribute to late Councillor Lynda Murphy and her dedication to climate change. Reference was made to the management of open space scoping report, with particular reference to biodiversity, community tree planting and the application to the Woodland Trust for free tree packs available to charity groups. In addition, she considered there should be greater protection of open space (including small pockets of land) and emphasised its importance to the community and the carbon footprint. Reference was also made to the larger tracks of recreational land which were under threat of development over the longer term that also required protection and referred to potential legal protection with 'Fields in Trust' for consideration.

In response, the Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing advised that he was confident the council would seek to support and encourage community tree planting. The conflicting priorities between various areas of the council in respect of the protection of open space was recognised and officers would feedback regarding the potential use of Fields in Trust at other sites.

Ian Tait

Spoke with reference to the electric vehicle strategy and was speaking for taxi drivers in the district. It was noted that to date, only one fully electric taxi was operating in Winchester. It was considered that the lack of rapid vehicle charging points was an issue with only one being available which was currently undesignated for exclusive taxi use. In conclusion, he stated that whilst he welcomed the Air Quality Briefing Update paper, he considered that there were benefits to having discussions with taxi drivers, to enable them to emphasise the issues faced.

In response, the Chairperson advised that as the newly appointed Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Williams may wish to attend the Taxi Drivers' Forum going forward and expressed thanks to Mr Boardman for becoming the first taxi driver to operate from a fully electric vehicle and supporting the agenda for climate change.

6. **CARBON NEUTRALITY PROGRAMME - ENERGY POLICIES/ACTIONS (HEP016)**

Bill Gunyon (on behalf of WinACC Renewable Energy Action Group) spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Bill Gunyon

Welcomed the agenda item in renewable energy. He made reference to the topic of the local plan and made observations on the districts overall energy agenda for the short and long term and considered that the question that would be asked by the review team was 'What is the scale of renewable energy generation that you wish the local plan to encourage?'. He suggested that the 2030 target for local energy generation within the carbon neutrality action plan, was in need of review for input into the local plan process and confirmed that WinACC were due to publish an energy plan shortly to submit evidence for this view and were keen to assist where possible.

In response, the Service Lead: Community and Wellbeing thanked Mr Gunyon for his comments which he advised would be addressed when the plan was updated.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced the report which set out the progression towards reducing carbon emissions for energy and the challenges in achieving the council's carbon neutrality ambitions. Officers provided an update on key issues and specific areas of the programme including the local plan, the collaborative work carried out with Hampshire County Council, community energy generation and the local electricity bill.

Members asked a range of questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member, Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing and officers, as summarised below.

- From a planning prospective, there had been a shift in Government priorities from onshore to offshore wind farms. However, it was recognised that currently there was more potential in terms of solar opportunities in the district.
- In relation to the local electricity bill, the most up to date figures of the level of support were now available with 445 councils (including 79 local authorities), 727 local and national organisations and 291 MP's in support.
- It was recognised that in order to achieve and progress the local energy generation 2030 target, specialist external consultants and advice from other local authorities and partners would need to be explored further.
- The committee requested targets and timescales against the activity actions contained in the report and it was noted that a road map regarding the district's carbon footprint would be developed to incorporate metrics, key points and identify priorities.

During debate, members welcomed the report and recognised the need for continued engagement with the community to educate, raise awareness and inform of the incentives of community energy schemes and targets.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the community team for the report which was welcomed by the committee and emphasised that as well as looking at renewable energy generation, it was also important that the council continued to work on schemes to reduce energy consumption.

In addition, the Chairperson also noted that while the committee was generally supportive of the proposal to use council owned land for renewable energy generation schemes, it recognised that to generate the amount of renewable energy required, it would probably be necessary to work with other partners.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be received and noted;
2. That the comments of the committee in relation to the following points be noted, as set out above:
 - a. The principle of using council-owned land for renewable energy generation;
 - b. The opportunity for the Local Plan to promote and encourage increased renewable energy generation across Winchester district; and
 - c. The potential for community energy schemes to succeed in Winchester district.

7. MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE - SCOPING REPORT (HEP017)

The Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing introduced the report which set the scene for papers that would come forward to the committee at subsequent meetings in respect of the management of open space for consideration.

Members asked questions which were responded to by the Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing. The questions asked included topics as summarised below.

- Clarification of the maintenance of grass verges, planting and the biodiversity of areas – it was reported that this matter would be discussed with the natural environment and landscapes team for inclusion within the 'Management of open spaces of ecological importance' report due to be considered by the committee in September 2022.
- Clarification of land protection measures for open space pockets of land areas
- Ecology issues surrounding rivers and re-wilding opportunities in open spaces.

- That the proposed All Member Briefing regarding the Biodiversity Action Plan scheduled to take place in early 2022 include details of how verges are being managed.

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the community team for the report which was welcomed by the committee, noting that the two future reports should take into account the requirements of the new Environment Act.

RESOLVED:

1. That the comments of the committee set out above be noted: and
2. That the following reports related to the management of open space be added to the committee work programme on the dates as stated below:
 - (a) Draft Tree Strategy – March 2022
 - (b) Management of open spaces of ecological importance – September 2022

8. **FUTURE OF WASTE AND RECYCLING (HEP020 AND PRESENTATION)**

Sarah White spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Sarah White

Welcomed the contents of the report and presentation and the opportunity to see further improvements to door step recycling and standardisation and consistency in practices around the country in relation to waste and recycling collections. She queried the timescales to achieve the aims and aspirations referenced within the presentation and the various other recycling facilities available for materials such as hard and soft plastics, which were limited and in short supply. She suggested working with supermarkets to encourage them to provide recycling bins for plastics in areas north and south of Winchester, the promotion of recycling for charities, and also utilising car park areas to install an increased number of recycling bins to enhance recycling ability and options ahead of the Environmental Bill.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs White for her comments which were addressed during the discussion of the report thereon.

Councillor Tod introduced the report which set out the progression towards reducing carbon emissions for energy and the challenges in achieving the council's carbon neutrality ambitions. He made reference to the background and direction of travel that the council were adopting in respect of how the waste management system would achieve and respond to the Environment Bill to deliver significant performance improvements.

The Service Lead: Environmental Services gave a presentation setting out the current position, the changes being introduced to waste and recycling for Hampshire, its impact on the Winchester and the next steps going forward at this early stage.

The committee asked a range of questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member, Service Lead: Environmental Services and other relevant officers present. The questions asked included topics as summarised below.

- Ability to achieve and improve recycling rates
- Working with partners to encourage recycling provision at supermarkets, increase recycling bin provision for plastics and other materials
- Producer responsibility for packaging waste.
- Short term solutions such as the formation of a communications network to engage and encourage residents in recycling opportunities for household waste
- Reducing carbon and increasing energy generation
- Financial risks of the strategy

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked everyone present and summarised the following points as the outcome on behalf of the committee:

- (i) That the direction of travel of the strategy be supported.
- (ii) The need to ensure that the carbon impact of future decisions and actions be considered.
- (iii) The need to work with the partnership to develop actions as soon as practical to ensure readiness to respond to the Government's requirements.
- (iv) That the interim measures required i.e. between now and the Government's new arrangements coming into force need to be carefully considered. Possible actions included: the consideration of food waste collection, a communications strategy to encourage more recycling, reduction and reuse of waste materials which could be formulated and promoted across the partnership. Including support and encouragement of private and commercial recycling companies and trade waste operators.
- (v) The need to actively engage and work in partnership with businesses and voluntary groups across the district in order to help people increase recycling effectively as part of the communications strategy, and for this work to start now in advance of the changes coming into force.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and presentation be received; and

2. That the comments of the committee, as set out in (i) to (v) above, be noted by Cabinet.

9. **AIR QUALITY BRIEFING UPDATE (HEP019 AND PRESENTATION)**

The Service Lead: Public Protection introduced the report and gave a presentation setting out an update on the state of air quality within the Air Quality Management Area and the wider district, the latest impacts of the Covid pandemic on air quality and provided insight into the potential future approach for Air Quality Management by the council.

The committee then proceeded to ask a range of questions of the Service Lead: Public Protection and others present. The questions asked included topics as summarised below.

- Encouraging use of the green waste collection service and engage with residents to raise awareness regarding the impact of bonfires and the use of domestic wood and coal burning stoves in partnership with surrounding local authorities.
- Winchester air quality supplementary planning document.
- In response to points raised by Mr Tait during public participation, the Service Lead: Public Protection confirmed that he would arrange to discuss matters with Mr Boardman and clarified that there was only one rapid vehicle charging point in Winchester currently. This was due to installation costs and the current low demand for its use by the taxi community. However, it was noted that there were proposals to install an additional rapid vehicle charging point unit at the new Sport and Leisure Centre.
- Operational costs to maintain the air quality management process

At conclusion of debate, the Chairperson thanked those present and welcomed further papers regarding the air quality action plan coming forward for consideration at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and noted; and
2. That the comments of the committee be noted by the cabinet member.

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 10.25 pm

Chairperson