



Buckinghamshire Council

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2021 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.25 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

B Chapple OBE, K Ashman, P Brazier, M Caffrey, R Carington, C Cornell, E Culverhouse, E Gemmell, S Guy, D King, L Sullivan, M Walsh, W Whyte and A Wood

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

S Broadbent, P Strachan, G Badhan, E Barlow, I Thompson, C Ward, S Winkels and R Zierler

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A Poland-Goodyer.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

5 COP26

The Chairman invited Councillor P Strachan, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, to update the Select Committee following the COP26 conference in Glasgow. The Cabinet Member summarised outcomes from COP26 which included:

- There were reasons to be hopeful following the Methane Pledge, Declaration of Forests and Land Use, the bringing forward of emission reduction targets and the Glasgow Climate Pact.
- International co-operation was crucial to climate change action as the UK accounted for around 1% of global emissions.
- Locally, Buckinghamshire accounted for 1% of the UK's emissions. Within the county, the

Council was responsible for around 0.3% of carbon emissions.

- Engagement and changing behaviour locally would be key to addressing climate change.

The following points were noted in the Committee's discussion:-

- Refuse arrangements currently in place were contracts set up by the legacy District Councils. A review could only be carried out at a contract break point and contractor performance was monitored on a daily basis.
- The current combined food and waste collection service arrangements in the Wycombe area had no negative environmental implications.
- Buckinghamshire's Strategy was aligned with the initial outcomes from COP26. Officers were still considering any further implications that the conference would have on the Strategy.
- Data on carbon dioxide emissions in Buckinghamshire by industrial sector and former District Council boundary would be circulated after the meeting.

ACTION: Ed Barlow

- The new Local Plan would have a site allocation process that could include renewable generation. The suitability of a site took multiple factors into account (e.g. local ecology and connection costs) so developing a suitable site template would be challenging. Outside the county, imported renewable energy may become more important with Government strategy focusing on offshore wind sites in north-east England.
- The council was drafting its Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy which would focus on maximizing charger availability through the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) grants and capital bids into the council's budget. The Strategy would also consider trialing on-street charging options. National investment would be required into the national grid and power supply infrastructure. Members hoped that the emerging strategy would be ambitious by delivering enough electric vehicle chargers to meet growing demand and also provide overnight on-street chargers that drew less power from the grid.
- Transport was a large contributor towards emissions within the county accounting for approximately half of local emissions; half of transport emissions were generated on the motorways. The haulage industry was considering hydrogen based vehicle alternatives.
- The Council could influence behaviours such as encouraging active travel, local walking and cycling plans to reduce car journeys. The driver of change would be at an individual level by changing attitudes and behaviours.
- Glasgow City Council was working towards a 2030 target to reach net-zero.
- Following COP26, the environmental charity CDP had published its 'Cities A List 2021' which recognized local efforts for climate action and ambition (<https://www.cdp.net/en/cities/cities-scores>).

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for the update.

6 CLIMATE CHANGE & AIR QUALITY STRATEGY UPDATE AND CORPORATE CARBON REDUCTION

The Committee received a report from Councillor P Strachan, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, on the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy. The presentation also included an overview of how the strategy was impacting all departments and portfolios within Buckinghamshire Council. The Strategy had been adopted by Cabinet on 19 October and since then the council had successfully organized its Green Wheels in Motion event on 10 November. A working relationship had been established with Lunaz to recycle vehicles to electric equivalents with a specific focus on the waste fleet.

As part of the Queen's Green Canopy, 240 trees would be sent to schools and care homes across

Buckinghamshire and would be planted as part of National Tree Week (27 November – 5 December). A Roadside Tree Planting Process had been launched whereby residents could request tree planting on road verges. This process was addressing health and safety issues associated with planting by the roadside, ensured the right tree was planted in the right place and maintained during its early years. The Cabinet Member also highlighted how climate change was being addressed across all the council portfolios and services. The next area of priority would be how the council used contracts and procurement to further support its reduced climate change targets.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:-

- The Council was in the process of replacing the 189 trees that had been funded by the Climate Change budget and had made a medium term financial plan (MTFP) bid to replace unsafe trees on Highways.
- The Bus Service Improvement Plan, which aimed to improve connectivity, reliability and frequency of the service, had now been submitted to Government. One of the Plan's ambitions was for bus engines to be upgraded to Euro 5 and Euro 6 standards thereby reducing emissions. The service encouraged operators to improve their fleets and reduce emissions, and did monitor compliance with inspections. The council's recent agreement with Lunaz for recycle waste collection vehicles may also extend to buses in future.
- Members asked that consideration be given to ways that the Council demonstrated leading on high standards to address climate change. There was suggestion of an emissions spot check on buses and HGVs within the county as part of an Enforcement Programme.
- Members also suggested that the legacy webpages relating to energy efficiency for homeowners should be harmonized, updated and simplified to improve accessibility for residents looking to carry out improvements.
- The details of changes to OZEV charging guidance would not be known until after the New Year but it was hoped changes would allow for increased flexibility of electric vehicle charging point installations at car parks.
- The Bee Squared project, initially taken up in Hazelmere, was now being considered by a number of Community Boards. The Cabinet Member welcomed the project and encouraged other Community Boards to consider similar schemes depending on their locality. Members also commented that the Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) had carried out an historic bee pollination project in verges and Highways which Community Boards could look to emulate.
- The success of the NEP's Bucks Buzzing programme highlighted the importance of communication by encouraging residents to take part.
- The Bucks Best Kept Village competition was scheduled for next year and would include village conservation as part of its criteria.
- The Cabinet Member for Transport advised that the council's first Living Green Bus Shelter was scheduled to open on Bicester Road, Aylesbury, which aimed to encourage pollination and capture particulates.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for updating the Committee on the Strategy.

7 FLY TIPPING

The Committee received a report on Fly Tipping within Buckinghamshire which was introduced by Councillor P Strachan, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change. Fly tipping had risen during the pandemic period and was now reducing to pre-pandemic levels. The increase in demand had been a challenge to the resources of the service. Consistently over half of waste tipped in the county had been brought in externally, most notably from West London and

Slough. The Enforcement Team investigated illegal waste through examination for evidence, taking statements from eyewitnesses and surveillance. These operations continued during the lockdowns despite courts being unable to process cases between 19 March – 5 August 2020. 46 cases had been successfully prosecuted during 2020 compared to 47 in both 2018 and 2019. The backlog from the pandemic had now been cleared. In 2021 vehicles used for fly tipping had been seized in High Wycombe and Chesham. This power was a strong addition to the service following the council becoming a unitary authority.

The priorities for the service were outlined which included continuing enforcement responses and trying to influence London authorities, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Ministry of Justice and the Sentencing Council. A planned covert surveillance operation had been temporarily deprioritized during the pandemic and would now be reinstated. The Cabinet Member also highlighted the SCRAP fly tipping campaign, which was refreshed in September 2021, to target ‘cash in hand’ payments which made fly tipping easier through less traceability.

The following points were raised during the Committee’s discussion:-

- The householder was legally responsible for waste that had been fly tipped so would be liable to pay Fixed Term Penalty Notices (FTPN). It was noted that a majority of waste that had been fly tipped would have been processed for free at the county’s Household Waste sites.
- In conjunction with other local authorities, the Council was engaging with DEFRA to improve and streamline the service. The Sentencing Council had also been approached regarding sentencing measures as fines did not take into account costs the council incurred when clearing up fly tipped waste.
- The service had worked with the Ivers SmartVille Team to assist with two cases in Richings Park. This CCTV and ANPR initiative had been important with these investigations.
- Members suggested that the information highlighted in the report would be useful for Parishes, with particular note being that:
 - A significant proportion originated from outside Buckinghamshire and;
 - That the majority of fly tipped waste could have been recycled for free.
- Members had found Fix My Street to be a useful tool to report fly tipped waste.
- The Committee thanked all the officers for the work being carried out across the service.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for the service update.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

The Select Committee received a report detailing the upcoming work programme for the Committee. One item had been added to January’s meeting regarding the Integrated Household Waste Recycling Centre Contract.

Following the last meeting, information had been circulated to the Committee regarding Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) and it was suggested that this be considered as a future agenda item.

9 WASTE & RECYCLING CONTRACT UPDATE

This was an information only report. Members were invited to refer any questions to the Senior Scrutiny Officer via email following the meeting. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment advised that the refuse service in the south of the county was now provided by Veolia following a smooth transition of the contract from Biffa at the start of November.

- 10** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Thursday 20 January 2022 at 10am.