



Buckinghamshire Council

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2020 IN VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MS TEAMS, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.15 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT

S Broadbent, C Clare, A Cole, G Hall, A Hill, M Hussain, M Hussain, C Jackson, S Jenkins, D Lyons, Dr W Matthews, M Smith, P Strachan and M Titterington

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Durkan, S Bambrick, B Chapple OBE, D Martin, N Naylor, E Barlow and C Harriss

Agenda Item

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Martin and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth & Sustainability. Councillor Alan Hill advised that he would have to leave the meeting at 11am.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Three public questions were considered at the meetings as attached to the agenda and verbal responses were provided by the Cabinet Member Transport, Cabinet Member for Sports and Leisure and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for a number of additional questions received and these would be responded to outside of the meeting or at a future meeting of the Committee. Information on asking public questions was available in the Council's Constitution and from Democratic Services.

15 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman noted working groups for both Home to School Transport and the Climate Change Strategy had been established on a cross party basis and met since the last meeting. Members of the Education Select Committee had also attended the Home to School Transport working group. The Chairman informed the Committee that an update would be provided by David

Martin, Cabinet Member for Logistics later in the meeting.

The Climate Change working group had met twice and an update was being provided to the Committee at the meeting. It was noted that members of the Committee received many emails on the Climate Change topic from the public and not all of these could be answered during the meeting, however some subjects may be answered by the publication of the Strategy. Public engagement work was being undertaken by the Cabinet Member and officers to make sure that the policy was robust as possible.

The Chairman thanked the members of both groups for their participation and input.

16 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY - UPDATE

Mr Bill Chapple, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Ed Barlow, Head of Energy provided an update on the Climate Change Strategy.

Bill noted that since the last meeting the second lockdown had taken place. The scale and pace of work on the Strategy across the council had been impressive during a time when resourcing and responding to the COVID 19 pandemic was also taking place. Bill explained that the timetable for the Strategy was ambitious during this difficult time of uncertainty around the impact on the ways of working and living. Bill explained that the consultation was no longer taking place in December, further time would be required to consider the impact of the pandemic and to consider deliverable financial details of the Strategy.

Bill was proud of the achievements so far on the emerging Strategy. He thanked the Committee and Working Group, and looked forward to meeting again to discuss the matter.

Ed Barlow provided a presentation and it was noted that a motion at Council on 15 July directed the work on the Strategy to enable a net zero of carbon emission by 2050, potentially 2030 subject to resources. This would be combined with the Low Emissions Strategy which focussed on air quality issues. Ed confirmed that the timeline had now changed as the public consultation due to be held from 16 November to 16 December had been postponed at this stage.

With regards to the public questionnaire released in September it was highlighted that regarding climate change 95% of people were concerned and 79% were very concerned, this was higher in comparison to figures in 2019. The concern of residents was influenced by scientific and personal experience. Personal experiences and physical evidence influenced concern regarding air quality. Respondents were also more aware of physical measures taken by the Council to reduce emissions, such as changes in street lighting to LED, rather than policy or management actions.

Development of the Strategy had included internal staff workshops, briefings and engagement with Community Board Coordinators, TECC Select Committee Working Group meetings, dialogue with environmental groups and a public questionnaire with 1370 responses.

Two main areas explored by the working group were the need for clarity and transparency over data and for this to be communicated clearly on why and what was being used. Also, the Council's role in addressing climate change and the control and mechanisms used to influence actions.

The Chairman commented that he was disappointed by the announcement. Bill assured the Committee that he had thought long and hard about the postponement and the aim was to still take the strategy to the February Cabinet meeting. However, due to the uncertainty around the

pandemic details could not yet be confirmed. The Chairman noted that he would like the Working Group to meet at least once before the next meeting to add value and critique.

In response to further questions the following points were noted:

- Regarding flexibility in the Strategy it was noted that work was being undertaken on immediate changes such as improving the energy efficiency of Council buildings, installing renewable energy such as solar panels, reducing emissions in the council's fleet with electric vehicles, upgrading the lighting to LEDs, large scale tree planting, working with Community Boards, suppliers and partners to reduce emissions and by using the planning system to deliver low carb development following the Planning White Paper.
- There was concern that the Strategy was floundering at this early stage. It was suggested to consult third party consultants to help continue with the Strategy. Bill noted the disappointment in the postponement of the consultation and commented that the Strategy would cover the whole Council and effect everyone. When completed it would need to be prepared properly to be submitted to members and the public.
- It was noted that regarding the Aylesbury Vale District Council target to be carbon neutral by 2030 that this had been a decision made by the legacy council and Buckinghamshire Council members had agreed a target of 2050.
- There were 3 scopes for emissions: scope 1, direct emissions; scope 2, electricity and scope 3, supplier emission or supplier chains. The Councils approach used scope 1 and two, and business travel from scope 3 using data available. Regarding benchmarking with what other local authorities were doing in relation to emissions it was noted that this was difficult due to the variations in comparison to other areas.
- It was suggested that expansion beyond transport be investigated.
- New contracts and suppliers were being considered. Investigations were being undertaken into making the Council's buildings more carbon friendly. Commitment was required by everyone to be responsible to reduce emissions.
- It was suggested that information be provided on the Council's website to help people understand and make better choices to help reduce their carbon emissions. It was confirmed that this would be investigated.
- Concern was raised that individuals were progressing on becoming carbon neutral ahead of the Council.
- It was confirmed that work would continue on the Strategy and information would be provided as soon as it was available.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and Ed Barlow for the update.

17 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - UPDATE

The Chairman confirmed that a tabled updated from Mr David Martin, Cabinet Member for Logistics would be provided.

The following points were noted:

- Regarding a previous question regarding car parking charges in Aylesbury it was noted that there had been no recent car parking charge increases in Aylesbury. One car park had introduced contactless payments, replacing the old method of putting coins in machines and paper tickets in the windscreen.
- David thanked Members for support and feedback on the customer experience which would feed into improvements in the service. Residents were encouraged to write to the Cabinet Member with comments, suggestions and to provide feedback.
- David thanked all members of the home to school transport working group, of which the

majority of members were from the TECC Select Committee. One meeting had taken place which produced useful feedback and recommendations.

- During the national lockdown public buses and school transport were running as normal. It was noted that the safety of passengers was of paramount importance and the service was engaging with and providing regular briefings to all suppliers on safety measures.
- The Council continued to financially support the county bus operators to enable improved social distancing on public bus routes that take children to and from school.
- Occupancy on council commissioned school transport vehicles was maximised, which supported reducing unnecessary car journeys. The Council buses enabled 5000 fewer car journeys which contributes to the reduction in carbon emissions.
- Transport with regard to social care had been impacted by the pandemic as respite centre and day centres were taking individual risk-based assessments on their opening hours and thereby transport requirements. Officers were working with respite and day centre managers to organise transport safely on a case by case basis. These residents were very often amongst the most vulnerable and at risk residents. However, it was confirmed that all residents who require this transport were provided with this.

The Chairman thanked David for his update and it was confirmed that the Working Group would meet again to provide input on the service area.

18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September were agreed as a correct record.

19 WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the external provider item had been moved to the January meeting and would be a lengthy meeting. Also the date of the next meeting had been moved to the 21 January 2021 at 2pm due to the Budget Scrutiny taking place during the first week of January. The draft work programme was noted and confirmed.

20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting would take place at 2pm on 21 January 2021. It was expected that this meeting would take place via MS Teams.

The Chairman thanked Members for attendance and questions to the meeting.