

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 27 October 2020 at 6.00 pm by Remote Meeting

Present: Councillors M Boylan, C Cassar, V J Holt, T L B Janke, T J Nelson, G L Offland and G C W Reynolds (Chair).

Also Present: Councillors L D Carter (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services and Regeneration) and C Healy (Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Historic & Natural Environment and Climate Change)

In Attendance: D Germany (Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Waste & Neighbourhood Services Performance), A Lowe (Associate Director: Policy & Governance), M Powell (Service Manager: Strategic Transport, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), K Robinson (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer), D Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services), and S Worthington (Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer)

ENVSC9 Apologies For Absence

None.

ENVSC10 Declarations Of Interest

None.

ENVSC11 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ENVSC12 On Street Waste and Recycling Briefing

The Director: Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services provided a brief overview of on street waste receptacles in the Borough.

Members heard that the Authority had looked to learn from other Local Authorities, and had identified that any recycling litter bin would have to be a standalone bin so that any visitor could identify and use it and should be co-located next to a regular waste bin for ease of use. The bins would need to be conveniently located, in high footfall locations. There were a number of recycling bins in the Town Park as well as one in Wellington and a container in Newport, on trial with the Town Council.

On the design of litter bins, lidded bins were deemed a fire risk and

inaccessible for some people with disabilities.

The Authority had also been trialling the separation of litter in Woodside, and it was noted that out of the litter collected 30% was recyclable. The Council weighed the litter and worked with Veolia on recycling it. The Council would be looking to expand the trial.

Officers noted among the things to consider on introducing recycling bins would be reducing contamination, promoting the benefits of using the bins, monitoring, and the one off costs of the containers themselves.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services and Regeneration expressed the Cabinet's openness to innovation. Members were assured that Cabinet wish to continue with the positive steps already made in recycling in the Borough.

A debate ensued and Members posed a number of questions:

Was there anything the Council could do to work more closely with brands that contribute to the litter problem (e.g. fast food outlets)?

The Government had launched proposals on how to reduce the use of materials that could not be recycled, such as taxation. The Cabinet would continue to feed back to the Committee on any information that was received.

The Council wrote to all fast food outlets ahead of reopening after the lockdown. Nonetheless, litter from such outlets began to appear soon after their reopening. The Council was looking to expand its enforcement efforts with data and intelligence gathering to optimise its approach to litter.

Bins in high footfall areas of the Borough Towns had issues with overflowing bins that fill up quickly at peak times. The bins were unable to handle the large number of food outlets. Was this a normal problem?

Bins in high footfall areas had seven-day coverage but some of these bins were not owned by the Council, and therefore would not be emptied by the Council.

Concerns were raised about the design of some bins in the Borough due to frequent overturning and wind blowing rubbish out.

Bins that had been overturned could be repaired in some cases but the Council was keen for operatives to record the condition of bins for monitoring. There were historic reasons for differing bins designs in the Borough.

Who monitored recycling targets?

The Council monitored the recycling rates, reports were provided by Veolia on a monthly basis. This data was audited and reported to The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Members also discussed issues of contamination of recycling bins with non-recyclable waste.

RESOLVED – that the Committee recommend to Cabinet the roll out of dual recycling bins in the high streets and parks of the Borough with detail to confirm the final wording delegated to the Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Cassar left the meeting at 18:55.

ENVSC13 Transport Briefing

The Director: Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services informed Members that it had been a challenging year, with the flooding and then COVID-19. As the council had moved into recovery, transport actions had been moved front and centre. Despite the challenges the year had posed, progress had been made.

The Committee heard that there were 11 key actions, some of which were relatively broad, that had been identified for Transport. A brief verbal overview of the 11 actions was provided for Members.

The Council desired its Climate Change Action Plan to remain a live document, open to change as the situations changed and opportunities developed. For this reason, due to COVID-19, an updated version of the Action Plan would be brought to Cabinet in February 2021 before being published on the Council's website.

Members welcomed the presentation and the noted the opportunity presented by the pandemic to examine sustainable transport solutions.

The Committee asked a number of questions:

Had the Council considered a commercial arm concerned with electric vehicle charging? Could the Council invest now so that it could profit in the longer term?

This was an opportunity and it would likely come out during the Council's review. It was important to future proof infrastructure.

What work was being done with developers to ensure that those without off street parking could charge their electric vehicle?

The Council was engaging with other authorities, assessing the options that existed. After this, the Authority would be working with new developments to ensure that the infrastructure was in place.

There was also an issue with grid capacity and Western Power were going through consultation so that they could develop the grid in accordance with the Borough's aspirations and plans.

ENVSC14 Work Programme Review

The Associate Director: Policy & Governance gave an overview of the Committee's work programme, discussing the comments and updates made by officers at the Council. Updates primarily focussed on the timeframe for items to come to the Committee.

ENVSC15 Chair's Update

The Chair expressed their hope that the Committee would meet again in December.

The meeting ended at 7.36 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday, 17 December 2020