



Telford & Wrekin
C O U N C I L

Addenbrooke House Ironmasters Way Telford TF3 4NT

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date	Monday, 15 March 2021	Time	6.00 pm
Venue	Remote Meeting		

Enquiries Regarding this Agenda

Democratic Services	Kieran Robinson	01952 382061
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<u>Committee Membership:</u>	Councillors M Boylan, C Cassar, V J Holt, T L B Janke, T J Nelson, G L Offland and G C W Reynolds (Chair), Co-optees
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AGENDA

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| 1. Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | |
| 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting | 3 - 8 |
| 4. Nomination of a Vice Chair | |
| 5. Grounds and Cleansing Contract Monitoring | 9 - 12 |
| To receive the report of Councillor L D Carter (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services and Regeneration). | |
| Dean Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services) and Debbie Germany (Strategic Waste & Neighbourhood Services Performance SDM) will also attend for this item. | |
| 6. Local Plan Working Group Update | |
| The Chair will update Members on the work of the joint working group. | |
| 7. Chair's Update | |

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ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 17 December 2020 at 6.00 pm by Remote Meeting

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

Also Present: Councillor C Healy (Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Historic & Natural Environment and Climate Change)

In Attendance: J Galkowski (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer), A Lowe (Associate Director: Policy & Governance), F Mercer (Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services), H Rayet (Climate Change & Sustainability Coordinator), K Robinson (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer), and D Sargeant (Director: Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services).

ENVSC16 Declarations Of Interest

None.

ENVSC17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ENVSC18 RRR - Environmental & Infrastructure Update

The Committee received a presentation from the Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services that set out the Council's Recovery, Reform, and Reset (RRR) agenda.

Members heard that that the RRR was a part of the Council wider recovery programme. There were monthly meetings of a group of core officers and Cabinet Members to develop and monitor actions from the action plan. From an initial nine priorities, the group had now rationalised the initial nine areas into three key areas – connectivity, green recovery, and infrastructure.

COVID had changed the way residents worked, lived, and played. While life had begun to return to a degree of normality, people's lives would be different. Home working was one such difference that would likely remain. There had also been a raised awareness of space standards, in both homes and gardens. Access to reliable broadband had also been highlighted by the pandemic. There was a growing appetite for green spaces.

Attempts were being made to address these issues through the planning system. The Local Plan was being re-examined with the aim of improving

inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability in the Borough. The Local Authority was to examine how it could negotiate schemes so that they were designed holistically from the outset, looking at energy, site layouts and related infrastructure, and provision of electric vehicle charge points, amongst other provisions.

The Council had also engaged with residents. My Wild Telford was launched on Twitter to engage with residents and advertise the Borough's green offer. Rights of Way in Telford were also promoted, with a Definitive Map of the area's Rights of Way due to be published in December 2020, it had last been published in 1965. The new map would be available online and was considered both accessible and timely. The categorisation of public Rights of Way would also be examined, with officers looking at how important routes were, how they could be improved, and how to prioritise maintenance.

Members were informed that the Council had conducted a study on the value of its nature reserves. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) received 3.6 million visits per year; 2.4 million of these visits were made by active travel and 1.2 million by car. Of the 3.6 million visits, 1.1 million were made by first time visitors.

The Council aimed to leave LNRs in a better state than they had been in the past; the Council had looked at a net gain approach that assigned a common numerical value to sites. The Borough had a value of 6819 biodiversity units (bu), or 12 per hectare. This was effectively £75 million worth of bu - £135,000 per hectare. The value of woodlands had been examined; Telford & Wrekin had canopy cover over 15% of the Borough, higher than the national average. In terms of area, 49% of urban areas had canopy cover, compared to 8% in rural areas. Canopy cover also varied by ward, with Edgmond having the lowest (8%) and Ironbridge the highest (55%). The Council protected 682 hectares of accessible woodland. The Woodland Trust estimated that 70% of residents in Telford and 20% in Wrekin were within 500m of woodland; the average household was within 100m of 62 trees. From this, the Council was able to look at trees per head and target planting.

The Committee were also briefed on the net zero carbon transition. The Council would look at a green recovery and had promoted energy efficiency grants, retrofitting, and improved insulation. On green recovery, the Council would re-examine its existing office spaces due to the long-term impact of home working.

A discussion followed and Members posed a number of questions to officers – *There did not appear to be any measurable outcomes in the presentation, just a thematic overview, would specifics be brought to scrutiny in due course?*

This was an overview but it established the baseline position for Telford & Wrekin, this was an important position to understand where the Borough had to develop in the future. The work on social value, biodiversity value, and spatial distribution had allowed the Council to decide what and where work was needed.

Would My Wild Telford be available on other social media platforms?

My Wild Telford had started on Twitter as the Council wished to see how it worked on one platform, monitoring the engagement received, before spreading to other platforms. The account's posts were, however, often shared across other social media channels and were included in newsletters.

How would the impact of actions be measured?

On Rights of Way, the impact would be measured by how many people used the new tool. In the New Year, categorisation of green and recreation spaces would begin and this would give a base level to measure the impact of actions against.

Would the Council consider, as part of its plan, making LNRs more accessible by active travel?

This was part of why the work on access had been performed, it was important to understand who visits and how they got there. Understanding where connectivity gaps were was key. Officers would examine how to increase active and sustainable travel links to LNRs.

In terms of the Telford Land Deal, would the Council consider the economic alongside the environmental recovery? Could the Land Deal be used to bring green industry to Telford?

That was certainly something to consider and could be discussed with the appropriate directors. This was something that the Government also supported, particularly from a planning perspective.

Would green poverty be included in the planning for planting schemes?

It was a complicated matter as it was important to create and improve a number of different types of habitat, such as re-wetting in the north of the Borough. It was important trees were planted in the correct places with the right habitats.

ENVSC19 Climate Change Update and Plan Refresh

The Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services delivered an update on the Council's work to combat climate change.

The Council had declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and had a declared aim for carbon neutrality by 2030, for the Council, and the aspiration that the Borough would be carbon neutral by the same date. The Climate Change Action Plan was published in February 2020.

Despite the challenges presented in 2020, the Council had been delivering on its plan. Members heard that the Council had six new electric vans, with a value of 1 ton of carbon emissions saved; there was also the potential to replace further vehicles with electric vehicles in the future. The Council had also made progress with its sustainable buildings project, retrofitting buildings with solar panels and LED lighting. These were especially beneficial projects as they reduced emissions, saving 268t CO₂e, and brought about costs

savings and grant funding. Habitat creation had also created 9t CO2 storage from enhancing habitats. There had also been a pilot cutting scheme using hay from rich grassland in other areas.

Members were also informed of actions that had been delivered in the community. The Council's Trees4TW scheme had been a success; having to be closed early due to the popularity of the scheme and the worry that oversubscription was likely. Work was also being carried out with the Council's contractors to introduce carbon reduction plans and food recycling schemes.

Funding had been secured for new cycle stands and facilities and the Local Authority had been successful in a second round bid to carry out further work on cycling and footpath infrastructure.

The Council had engaged with residents over climate change actions; there had been campaigns to raise awareness for residents, a significant amount of work had been done around World Environment Day, campaigns on recycling week, and a reusable facemask campaign. Officers were encouraged by the responses received from residents in the Residents Survey. There was a strong appetite for greater action on climate change.

A number of actions were in progress; eight more buildings would be retrofitted; officers were examining decarbonising heat and installing heat pumps; natural cooling was to be installed for the Council's data centre (an action brought forward from 2025).

NuPlace's Southwater development had received planning approval and work would begin in early 2021. All units would have electric vehicle charge points and solar panels. A planning application for another site, at Donnington Wood Way, was also being submitted with the same environmental provisions and a number of additional features. Fifteen of the properties on the Donnington Wood Way site would be involved in a battery storage pilot scheme that would be monitored with a view to incorporating battery storage in future schemes.

A number of additional actions were under consideration such as establishing a Climate Assembly, renewable generation auctions for residents, and verge rewilding amongst a range of other actions.

A discussion ensued and members asked a number of questions –
It was great to hear that the Trees4TW had been popular; could the Committee hear more on other habitats?

Often people think of woodland when they think of carbon storage but other habitats could be as beneficial. There was a commitment to bring forward schemes for habitat creation and there was Government funding for these schemes that the Council was actively bidding for.

Where was the Council in terms of the parish and town council climate change toolkit?

The toolkit had been shared and the councils were involved in the Climate Change Partnership. There were a number of grant funding opportunities for the councils which had not previously been applied for which were now receiving applications. The main barrier for organisations was match funding.

Could the Council look at requiring private builders to abide by the future homes standard?

House building was difficult as private developer's viability reports stated that schemes would not be viable if they were to abide by such standards. Change would be needed at a national level, but the Council could lobby for change.

Could the Council examine having more local food in its own café and in schools? Would it also be possible to have a veggie day?

The Council wished to strengthen procurement so it had already looked at some of this. Discussions were being held with the café and schools over menus with a view to having vegetarian/vegan days. Work could be done with schools to encourage take up and a change in behaviour.

ENVSC20 Work Programme Review

No updates were proposed. The Committee would be looking at Waste & Recycling and Grounds & Cleansing Service Contract Procurement in the New Year. There would also be joint work with the Communities Scrutiny Committee on the Local Plan.

ENVSC21 Chair's Update

None.

The meeting ended at 7.53 pm

Chairman:

Date: Date Not Specified

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Grounds and Cleansing Contract - idverde Environment Committee – March 2021

1. Background

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview to the Grounds and Cleansing Contract Telford and Wrekin Council has with its partner contractor idverde. As requested by Environment Committee, in providing an overview of the services delivered, there is particular emphasis on the environmental commitments made by idverde in delivering the service, progress made to date and actions going forward.
- 1.2 A 10 year £4.2 million annual contract was awarded to idverde that started on 1 April 2019. The objective at the time was to deliver enhanced standards and reduce operating costs when compared to the previous delivery model.
- 1.3 There are circa 100 employees working for idverde, many of whom live in the borough. Sharing with Balfour Beatty, idverde occupy Granville House and have small satellite depots across the borough.
- 1.4 The contract is based on performance; this means that the Specification states the service outcome to be achieved and the contractor should determine how best to achieve it. The exceptions to this is grass cutting which is based on frequency and reactive tree work.

2. Service Standards

- 2.1 Like many contracts of this scale and type, there is a Performance Framework in place to manage service responses and for the contractor to use IT to increase efficiency.
- 2.2 The scope of services included in the Contract are:
 - **Grounds maintenance:** grass cutting, shrub/ hedge maintenance, trees, sports grounds, grave digging
 - **Cleansing maintenance:** litter picking and bin emptying, sweeping, weed control, sign cleaning, and fly tip, graffiti, and gum removal.
 - **Optional Additional Services:** Including, services for Parish and Town Councils
 - **Added Social Value and Working with Communities and Partners**
- 2.3 Timescales for response and performance standards are defined by Zones which dictates the response times and standards expected. The differences in zonal areas is outlined below:
 - Zone 1 – high footfall areas (town and district centres, SW1, town park)
 - Zone 2 – high density areas (housing and district parks)
 - Zone 3 – main routes in the borough, medium density housing and playing fields
 - Zone 4 – medium and low density housing and all other Council owned land

3. Environmental Management

- 3.1 idverde have aspirations as a company to reduce their impact on the Environment and meet ISO 14001 standards. Their stated aims are:
 - Reduce waste, recycle, compost
 - Source socially and environmentally friendly materials

- Minimise use of primary resources
- Minimise water consumption
- Use quietest and cleanest operations
- Work with local communities

3.2 There is also a contract specific climate change action plan that has been developed and agreed; this plan is regularly reviewed and contributes to the Council's Climate Change commitments.

3.3 The tables below provide details of the contract specific action plan.

Actions taken in year 1 of contract

	Actions taken:	Net GHG emissions achieved, tonnes CO2e
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New efficient vehicles, plant and equipment purchased at start of contract and maintained as per manufacturer's guidelines • All vehicles / plant fitted with trackers and video screen installed at main office to identify "nearest to scene" when responding to incidents. • Full training given to operatives using plant to ensure it is used in an efficient manner • Ensured correct equipment was purchased following consultation with staff to ensure all aspects of works and locations were considered. • Local suppliers used to reduce "product miles" travelled • Monitor fuel and utilities consumption monitored to obtain base line figure 	753 tonnes CO2e

2020-22 Three Year Rolling Action Plan – Proposals

	Actions Proposed	Action Timeframe
1	<p>Continue to ensure efficiencies with vehicles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual training in efficient driving techniques (braking, accelerating and speed) and switching off engines to reduce idling hours of vehicles. Daily visual checks on vehicles to ensure maximum efficiency of vehicles, e.g. regular tyre pressure checks. • Regular servicing of vehicles to maintain optimum working condition and fuel efficiency. 	2020-2022 ongoing
2	<p>Keep route optimisation under review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify routes software to minimise mileage. Possible use route optimisation software to assist. 	2020-2022 ongoing
3	<p>Assess the potential use of electrical vehicles and plant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to assess potential electrical equipment availability and assessment whether battery performance is sufficient to ensure that service delivery can be maintained 	2020-2022 ongoing
4	<p>Promote environmental awareness among staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff receive Environmental awareness training 	2020-2022 ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote energy reduction in depot and office areas, encouraging lights and heaters to be switched off when rooms not in use, computers to be switched off when not in use, overnight and at weekends. Encourage use of recycled products 	
5	<p>Promote travel to work schemes to reduce the number of journeys to and from the depot and offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage lift sharing to work place Continue promotion of 'Cycle to work' scheme and make available to all staff Where appropriate, non-frontline staff to work from home on full/part time basis to reduce vehicle journeys 	2020-2022 ongoing
6	<p>Assess the potential use of alternative fuels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate use of Green Fuels such as Biodiesel and Bioethanol across multiple idverde contracts to build up data to assess its future use in the T&W contract 	2020-2022 ongoing
7	<p>Identify areas of land for carbon offsetting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas of land that can be planted up with trees. This will offset CO2 emissions from other parts of the service and will enhance and encourage biodiversity. 	2021
8	<p>Encourage local procurement of products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage procurement teams to purchase from local suppliers as far as possible to reduce "product miles" travelled. 	2020-2022 ongoing

Vehicles and Equipment

- 3.4 idverde are currently reviewing electric vehicles for their operational fleet and there will be dedicated electric vehicles purchased for each of the new Community Action Teams. The additional cost of these is being funded by idverde. Telford & Wrekin Council will install charging points at Granville House to support this and build on our existing EV infrastructure at the depot.
- 3.5 A variety of electric hand tools are being used with some petrol tools being replaced with electric.

Maximising Waste Value

- 3.6 Increasing recycling to reduce environmental and cost impact is key and all green waste and street sweepings are sent for recycling via our waste partner Veolia. To date there has been 4,258 tonnes of street sweepings and 1,535 Tonnes of green waste recycled.
- 3.7 Bulky wood is collected and sent for biomass and wood is chipped and reused wherever possible.

Maximising Recycling

- 3.8 Environment Committee have put forward a recommendation to Cabinet for the trial of dual aperture litter bins that will be considered by Cabinet at the 18 March meeting.
- 3.9 Opportunity is being sought to increase recycling through the separation of litter during litter picking. A pilot has been trialled in Woodside to establish how much

litter could be recycled. This demonstrated 45% of litter collected could be recycled, representing an estimated saving of £13,500 per year. The next phase of the pilot is for idverde to trial bespoke equipment in order to maintain efficiency of the litter picking operation. Street Champions will also be given the opportunity to recycle litter. Recycled litter is kept separate so it can be passed to Veolia for processing.

Grass Cutting

- 3.10 574 sites are Meadow cut. Meadow cutting involves managing a site to maximise the value for wildlife. In these areas, plants are allowed to grow and complete their full life cycle (grow, flower and set seed) before they are cut. Where possible, the clippings are then collected, to avoid enriching the soil (wildflowers prefer nutrient-poor soils). In carrying out this process we create vital refuge for many bees, butterflies, birds, bats and bugs. They provide food, such as nectar for pollinators/food for many butterfly caterpillars, and act as corridors allowing wildlife to move between larger pockets of wild spaces.
- 3.11 A scoping project is underway to look at reducing the amount of grass which is cut on playing fields. The aim is to leave the core playing field at the same standard and frame the edges which will reduce the number of cuts per year from 16 to either 4, 2 or 1, thus reducing the environmental impact.

Green Flag Status

- 3.12 Green Flag status for all our borough parks is a goal we are seeking to achieve working with idverde in the next two years. Telford Town Park has Green Flag Status and Dawley and Hartshill were awarded Green Flag last year. We are actively working towards Green Flag status for Bowring that will be followed by Dale End.
- 3.13 Green Flag parks will continue to be assessed annually on the management standards and visitor experience. The use of chemical weed spray is limited in the parks with cultural methods wherever possible; all green waste is composted.

Added Social Value

- 3.14 An annual Initiatives and Added Value fund of £10,000 is set aside by idverde. This fund is launched and communities can apply for funding for environmental projects to benefit their area.
- 3.15 Provision of apprenticeships is also a requirement within the contract, along with training and support for communities.

Debbie Germany
SDM: Waste & Neighbourhood Services Performance