

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee - Climate and Place held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY, on Wednesday, 19 July 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Adam Boyden (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Steve Ashton

Cllr Bente Height

Cllr Henry Hobhouse

Cllr Matthew Martin

Cllr Alan Bradford

Cllr Edric Hobbs

Cllr Dave Mansell

Cllr Harry Munt

In attendance:

Cllr Leigh Redman

Cllr Dixie Darch

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr Michael Dunk

Cllr Helen Kay

Cllr Frances Nicholson

Cllr David Woan

Cllr John Hunt

Cllr Tessa Munt

Cllr Gill Slocombe

Cllr Ros Wyke

10 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillors Martin Dimery, Marcus Kravis (substituted by Cllr Mike Stanton), Alex Wiltshire and Tom Power (substituted by Cllr Norman Cavill).

11 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2

Resolved that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Climate and Place held on 17 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

A question was raised as to why there was not an item for 'matters arising from the

last meeting' and it was agreed that this would be looked into.

12 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

No additional declarations of interest were received.

13 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

The following statement and questions were submitted and read out by Ms Eva Bryczkowski.

Welcome to Chaos Road

I live at the beginning of Sharpham Road, covered by section 38, which we understand is the responsibility of the Highways and Transport Department.

I've just been out of my front door, and happened to see a car going past.

I also saw small children playing on the pavement and main road.

This is a common occurrence

Children are riding their bicycles, scooters, some are on roller skates and skateboards.

Drivers who don't know the layout of the estate do not realise that when they turn round a blind corner they will be met by oncoming cars, in a very tight space. This is the narrowest road on the estate, with cars parked on either side of it, with vehicles going in both directions.

With children playing on the pavement and road, there is definite risk of harm.

Residents have been informed by Councillor Rigby that traffic calming measures are not considered a sufficient priority because there have been no reports of injury or fatality so far.

QUESTION ONE

Councillors, do we really have to wait for an injury or fatality to occur before the Highways and Transport Department treat the need for traffic calming measures as a priority?

QUESTION TWO

One of the residents on the estate has met with two Glastonbury councillors, who will see what they can do about traffic calming measures.

This will most probably take a long time.

Will councillors please treat this as urgent, before an injury or fatality occurs?

QUESTION THREE

Can a timescale be given as to when our concerns will be dealt with?

The Service Director for Infrastructure and Transport confirmed that it would involve a number of officers, and at the request of the Vice-Chair involve the local division members, and would take a little while. But a written response would be provided to Ms Bryczkowski.

The issue of phosphates considered at the last meeting was raised and Cllr Hobhouse made a proposal, seconded by Cllr Ashton and amended by Cllr Martin that:

September's meeting would focus on the sewage and the phosphates issue in the county and that any extant items be considered in an additional meeting in October.

The motion was put to the vote and carried.

14 Future Transport - Agenda Item 5

The Committee was advised that with the Council had to have a new Local Plan and Local Transport Plan in place by 2025.

A presentation was given highlighting the:

- Local Transport Plan process
- Local Plan process
- Guiding principles adopted by the Executive
- Placemaking & Movement principles
- New 'vision led' approach to local transport plans which focused on outcomes and local priorities
- Carbon reduction and the Local Transport Plan
- County's carbon emission data
- The proposed next steps

Members discussed the presentation and the following points were made:

- Because people would find carbon reduction challenging and would be concerned, there was a need to ensure things were properly explained. Outlining how it would apply to them, and highlighting that it was not a war on motorists.
- The need to look at alternative fuels for council vehicles particularly the

recycling fleet e.g. biofuels, gas turbines or electricity, the current front runner, where the biggest reduction in carbon was likely to be achieved.

- Sufficient public transport e.g. buses and trains , so people don't have to drive, reducing carbon and saving them money.
- The need for cycling infrastructure e.g. quiet streets and the need to engage with bus services on allowing passengers with bicycles on board.
- Cross party support on climate change action was needed.

Members acknowledged that a task and finish group should be set up with its scope to be drafted in due course.

Resolved

That a Local Transport Plan Task & Finish Group be set up.

15 Climate, Sustainability and Environment-Next Steps - Agenda Item 6

Members considered a report setting out the next steps of the Council's strategic approach to Climate, Environment and Sustainability, to ensure that the Council was committed to reducing carbon emissions, achieving Net Zero and supporting nature's recovery.

The Committee acknowledged that cross party support on climate change was needed. They agreed to the setting up of a task & finish group support the refresh of the Climate Strategy, and development of the key performance indicators. for the service.

Resolved

That a Climate Strategy Refresh Task & Finish Group be set up.

16 Somerset's Approach to Green Growth - Agenda Item 7

This item was deferred.

17 Staplegrove Housing Infrastructure Fund - Agenda Item 8

The Committee considered a report on the Staplegrove Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) that would be going to the Executive on 2 August 2023. It was explained that this allocated site, for 1500 houses within the Development Plan, was being developed in two separate phases. The HIF, which would be available until March

2024, would help deliver the Staplegrove Spine Road, primary school and associated infrastructure early in the development.

In response to questions it was explained that a pragmatic approach was being taken on what could be achieved. The Staplegrove West site had a developer on board and outline planning permission with a phosphate solution in the form of an off-site wetland scheme. Unfortunately, the Staplegrove East site, which contains the primary school, did not yet have a developer on board and was in the hands of a land promoter. A planning application had been submitted but it had stalled due to the phosphates issue and would need to come back to the Planning Committee.

Members recognized that one of the benefits of the HIF funding, that the Council would be responsible for granting to developers as a commercial loan, was that the repayments could be recycled and used to unlock further housing within the Somerset (West) area.

The Committee acknowledged the work that would be needed in order to bring the project into fruition and requested that the division members be engaged with. They also noted the recommendations to the Executive.

Resolved

To note the Staplegrove Housing Infrastructure Fund report going to the Executive.

18 Mendip Local Plan - variation to order of 16 December 2022 - Agenda Item 9

The Committee received details of a report that had been taken to the Executive as an urgent matter following a judicial review of the Mendip Local Plan. They noted that the Council was now being required to confirm its commitment to commence the Mendip Local Plan regarding the site allocations and that it would have to go out for a further six weeks period of consultation.

Resolved

To note the actions taken by the Executive following the judicial review.

19 Scrutiny Call-ins - Agenda Item 10

Members received a verbal update on a call-in request that had been received from a councillor about the Review of Parking Fees & Charges 2023 considered by the Executive on 27 June 2023.

In response to the concerns and queries raised, the Chair of the Climate and Place

Scrutiny Committee had requested detailed information from the relevant Council officers.

Upon receipt of this information he advised the councillor that whilst he understood their concerns over the parking charge increases in specific areas, the details contained within the answers provided were sufficient enough for him to conclude that the matter had been considered at great length and did not warrant being called back to Scrutiny.

(The meeting ended at 12.29 pm)

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CHAIR