

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY SUB-COMMITTEE 21st January 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillors Boulter, Hornsey, Milln, Powell, Stevens and Toynbee

Attending: Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Becci O'Reilly Committees, Events and Contracts Officer

As this was the first meeting of the new committee there was no Chair in place. The Clerk reminded everyone that the meeting was taking place under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 Sections Four and Five

CBD2020/21.01 CONFIRMATION THAT MEMBERS COULD TAKE PART IN THE MEETING

The Clerk verified that all members could see and hear the meeting and could be seen and heard.

CBD2020/21.02 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Boulter proposed, Councillor Stevens seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED That Councillor Toynbee be elected to Chair the Sub-Committee

CBD2020/21.03 CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC ACCESS

The Committees, Events and Contracts Officer confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed and was being recorded.

CBD2020/21.04 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillor Kenyon and the Mayor.

CBD2020/21.05 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Kenyon had nominated Councillor Stevens as his substitute.

CBD2020/21.06 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED That Councillor Powell be elected Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee.

CBD2020/21.07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

CBD2020/21.08 WORKPLAN FOR THE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Chair introduced this item; it will be the focus of the group's work going forward. Among such a wide range of linked issues within the general heading of climate change and biodiversity it was possible to be overwhelmed. To avoid that it was necessary to address issues that as far as possible could be delivered by the City Council. She thanked Councillor Oliver for having given some thought to this and for

sending the Clerk some suggested areas for action. These had been circulated to members with the agenda for this meeting.

The proposals were: improving biodiversity in parks and open spaces; increased use of flowers and shrubs in the built up areas; pursuit of funding for district solar power initiatives; the provision of LED bulbs for home unable to afford efficient bulbs; and the introduction of separate bins for recyclable street litter. The discussion focussed on which of these were feasible and how they might be progressed.

It was noted that we can push and prod the unitary authority on some of these matters, but we need to have our own list of objectives too. The Clerk reported that he and Councillors Kenyon and Wilcox would be meeting the Allotments Society (HALGS) shortly to discuss re-balancing the allotments agreement and part of that would be about more effective use of rain water to avoid dependence on expensive piped water for all needs. This could be widened to include encouraging biodiversity in allotment management. We could also seek a policy on the use of slug pellets and measures to encourage organic gardening on the allotments.

We can seek Herefordshire Council's permission for wild flower beds using native species that will support bees, butterflies etc in parks and there were many opportunities in the larger parks such as Bishop's Meadow or Aylestone to develop that. However, the prevalence of flooding in some areas needs to be taken into account, with some parks limited to species that will survive regular drowning.

Members considered the relationship with Hereford in Bloom and the possible use of competitions and local awards for good environmental practice in local gardens. This would be different from the traditional "best kept garden" award which focussed on immaculate appearance rather than biodiversity. As well as considering larger parks and encouraging gardeners we could also have local awards for balconies and hanging baskets to enable urban residents with limited or no garden space to contribute and be recognised.

One competition could be for reclaiming run down areas and derelict land for diverse and environmentally sensitive use.

It was noted that all the ideas above were worth progressing, what was needed was some research on what other councils have already done so best practice could be captured and brought to Hereford. The Clerk said he had discussed this with the Mayor's Secretary who is currently without most of her duties as mayoral work had been sharply cut back during lockdowns. She had agreed, pending the restructuring of officer roles later in the year to undertake trawls of the internet to find such examples and list what others had done that we could learn from. Members very much appreciated this willingness to work outside her job description in order to continue to make a contribution to the work of the Council in difficult times.

A number of potential partners were identified, including Judith Whately the Herefordshire Council Principal Sustainability and Climate Change Officer with whom the Clerk would make contact after the meeting) the BID, Hereford in Bloom, Close House, Aspire and the Tree Forum. There was some discussion as to links with the Youth Council and for the time being this would be dealt with through the two members of this sub-committee who also regularly meet with them, Councillors

Hornsey and Powell. The possibility of co-opting a Youth Council member onto this Sub-Committee was noted as something to consider in future.

The discussion moved on to possible extension of the proposed heating system for Castle Green Pavilion which is the subject of a grant request from the Friends. This would be explored in those discussions. Likewise the possibility of additional power from the buildings at Rotherwas which have solar panels to supply a district heating system should be considered, probably via the Herefordshire Council link noted above.

Consideration was given to the LED light bulb issue. The main problem to resolve is a simple non-bureaucratic way of establishing need, it was felt that this might be best done through a Housing Association or other provider.

The idea of separated waste collection on the streets is also a Youth Council suggestion and will be taken up with Herefordshire Council. It is notoriously difficult to get people to do this. Shrewsbury Town Council have introduced a branded re-useable cup for coffee etc which encourages re-use or failing that thoughtful disposal. It was noted that with street numbers well down during lockdown this was an idea whose time would come when economic and social activity started to pick up again.

After a wide ranging discussion the following points were agreed as useful actions at this stage:

- Research into examples of community awards and other incentives to good environmental practice among other councils.
- Contact the Herefordshire Council's lead officer in this area regarding the points listed above.
- Contact with the BID, HALGS and Herefordshire's Parks Management Team about the possible installation of flower beds with native species etc.
- Production of a full set of terms of reference for Council to establish this Sub-Committee with a clear role as part of the restructuring of Committees due to be agreed at Council on 9th March.
- Good publicity and social media presence to make more noise about what we are doing.

The Clerk noted that the Mayor's Secretary was currently not at full capacity as the number of mayoral engagements was very low during the Covid restrictions, she would be asked to do internet based research on a number of the initiatives above.

CD2020/21.09 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Reports from research into initiatives identified above

Draft terms of reference for consideration by Council

CD2020/21.10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting had been called on a Thursday to avoid clashes with other meetings held on Tuesdays. This would continue until May, when the merger of Finance and Policy and Governance and Procedures into a single committee would free a Tuesday in the

calendar. It was important on Thursdays to avoid clashes with Youth Council and Planning Committees.

The next meeting was agreed as Thursday 4th March 2021.

Signed

Date