

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY SUB COMMITTEE 4th March 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Diana Toynbee (Chair), and Councillors Dan Powell, Cat Hornsey, Sue Boulter, Aubrey Oliver, and Jeremy Milln

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

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was being held under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 Sections Four and Five

CBD2020/21.11 CONFIRMATION OF MEMBER ACCESS

The Chair confirmed that all members were able to see and hear the proceedings of the meeting.

CBD2020/21.12 CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC ACCESS

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

CBD2020/21.13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from the Mayor and from Councillor Kenyon.

CBD2020/21.14 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

CBD2020/21.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

CBD2020/21.16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

CBD2020/21.17 WORKPLAN FOR THE COMMITTEE

The Chair thanked Lesley and Alyson for the amount of research they had done since the last meeting and urged members, if they hadn't already done so, to follow up the many links that had been found to areas of interest.

It was noted that the possibilities for a programme on the Council's allotments was covered in another report on this agenda. Councillor Milln offered to follow up with contacts at Stafford Borough Council to see what could be developed around competitions similar to their green In Bloom awards. It was noted that a competition needs to be judged on the basis of before and after photographs of areas that have been improved such as wildflower beds. The next phase in developing this would be to contact friends and other groups who take an interest in local parks and open spaces.

It was noted that among the research the concept had been discovered of forest schools which was something that could be developed with local schools, especially in the primary sector.

Possible involvement of the Youth Council, a competition regarding window boxes and the need to make contact with Growing Local is Going Local who are running a project in Belmont and have received City Council funding were also noted.

After discussion members and officers were nominated to pursue various proposals as listed below:

Staffordshire Council, learning from their experience - Cllr Milln

Searching social media for Friends Groups and similar – Connor Powell or other officer as directed

Circulars to primary schools re conservation areas and biodiversity projects – Steve Kerry

Check college and High Schools activity via the Youth Council – Councillors Powell and Hornsey

Planting tips and gardening advice (once a reliable source is found) – Connor Powell

Growing Local liaison – Becci O’Reilly

Seed swaps, information and possible introduction of a project - Cllr Milln

Hinton Community Centre activities especially their community garden – Vince McNally

Hydroponic gardening for people with no access to open space or with disabilities – Cllr Hornsey

All the above were formally agreed as items to be proceeded with and reported to subsequent meetings.

CBD2020/21.18 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Clerk explained that when committees are reorganised he normally writes terms of reference for Council approval himself. However, as this was a new committee he would welcome some views from members as to how they wished to proceed. These matters would be resolved by Council in May when the new committees would be formally set up and members elected to them.

Members considered firstly whether this should be a sub-committee or a committee, noting that there was no difference in the staffing and procedural workload that arose whichever option was taken. The issue was whether the Council’s response to climate change and the need for greater biodiversity was sufficiently long term and sufficiently important to warrant a committee in its own right. Members clearly expressed a preference for a committee as opposed to a sub-committee.

There was some discussion as to numbers, typically a committee is between seven and eleven members. However, the Council had always adopted the view that if a lot of members were keen to be involved Council permitted that by enlarging a

committee. Likewise, if only a few were keen Council made a small committee rather than pursuing people to put their names forward just to make up the numbers. The proposal would be for nine members initially.

Some sort of general review or scrutiny of the whole of the Council's environmental impact, including decisions of other committees would be included in the terms of reference. It was noted that social media activity would be very important in the work of this Committee and the Clerk asked those members who are also members of Governance and Procedures Committee to bear that in mind when they consider the final staff restructuring matter which they are awaiting consultation responses on at the moment.

It was noted that members of the public could be co-opted. The Clerk advised against co-opting more than there were members, as the Council must retain control of its policy making in this, and all other areas. An open invitation to groups to engage might be preferable than co-option, but for a few individuals with specific expertise to bring this was a reasonable option. It is in the powers of all committees to do this.

Regarding funding, it was agreed that some formal split of the parks and open spaces and street scene budgets to create one "pot" for Community Development Committee and one "pot" for the new Committee might be reasonable. Also, the relationship with Hereford in Bloom might sit more logically with this Committee than Community Development. A query was also raised about progress with a possible handover of King George V and Bishop's Meadow areas which is not being pursued at the moment, partly due to frequent flooding. This might be re-visited in the light of plans to plant wildflower beds in city parks.

It was then proposed by Councillor Tyler, seconded by Councillor Boulter and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee considers it would be more appropriate to be set up as a committee, with a remit to include a general overview of the Council's environmental impact, spending powers to deliver projects on street scene and parks and open spaces and the areas listed in the workplan above.

That the Clerk would include these points in his draft terms of reference to be recommended to Council in May.

CBD2020/21.19ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk reported on a meeting between himself, Councillor Wilcox and Councillor Kenyon and the Allotments Society trustees. A number of green issues had been raised including irrigation and water conservation, non-destructive pest control such as encouraging hedgehogs to settle and feed on slugs and snails rather than pellets which leave poisoned carcasses for other fauna to feed on and the preservation of green areas. The Society had asked for approval to turn some grassed areas onto additional parking, which had been refused. Some hardcore or gravel (about 20 tonnes in all) would be supplied by the Council to enable existing parking areas to be restored to fully usable condition, but no new areas would be allowed. In future there would be an emphasis on 'do it yourself' and sense of corporate ownership by the

plot holders and reducing dependence on the Council for all works and contracts for services. This would be beneficial in environmental, financial and community building terms.

This was noted and would be kept under review.

CBD2020/21.20 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Ongoing delivery of the work plan items listed above

Wildflower planting (following the successful work with local supporters in Aylestone and the Tupsley Quarry)

Bartonsham Permissive Path access and maintenance

CDB2020/21.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday April 15th 2021 at 6 pm

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting at 7:15 pm

Signed

Date