

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE 23rd November 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Diana Toynbee (Chair) and Councillors Powell, Owens, Hornsey, Oliver, Milln (part) and Boulter

Attending: Steve Kerry, Town Clerk

CBD2021/22.21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from the Mayor and Councillor Tyler.

CBD2021/22.22 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

CBD2021/22.23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CBD2021/22.24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Councillor Powell, seconded by Councillor Owens and unanimously

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the 5th October 2021 be agreed as an accurate record and be signed accordingly by the Chair.

CBD2021.22.25 REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

Councillor Milln joined the meeting at this point.

It was noted that this year the Council might either make, or encourage from the wider community, an application to the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Grant Scheme, and that the assistance of Dave Tristram, the Council's new External Funding and Community Support Officer, would be sought.

The Clerk explained that the business plan from October 2019 pre-dates the major floods, Covid, the creation of this Committee, COP26 and several other relevant matters. It is therefore somewhat out of date. The timing of this review is to coincide with the budget preparation process and both completed documents would be presented to Council for ratification in January 2022.

Members then reviewed the section of the plan referring to environmental and planning objectives as these are the ones that would now fall into the Climate and Biodiversity Committee remit.

Paragraph 3.3 to read "develop a programme of environmental audits of major policies and projects, lobby for Rotherwas and other new residential developments to have combined heat and power with sustainable sources. As part of this to publicise the Council's position on these matters and to review the environmental impact of the Council's work to achieve a carbon neutral impact."

Paragraph 4.1.1 to note that the western bypass project is not going ahead and to support a modal shift towards more sustainable transport solutions (Town Clerk's note this was also

considered by Planning Committee and a suitable form of words to address points raised at both committees will be developed).

Paragraph 4.1.2 to campaign for a safe and sustainable route from north to south of the river for cyclists and pedestrians. Re-affirm commitment to the “20 is plenty” campaign for a city wide 20 mph limit on residential and city centre roads.

Paragraph 4.1.3 to add “to review whether detrunking the A49 is still possible and also review the 2016 remediation scheme to encourage cycling and walking.”

To add a paragraph about sustainability and good practice on allotments to recognise and build on the work done under the service level agreement with the Allotments Society.

CBD2021/22.26 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY AWARDS

It was noted that there had been no challenge from any other committee or at Council to the idea of the community awards, which have been in abeyance for a couple of years due to Covid, being reinvented under this more specific heading. The River Carnival was an excellent platform, to use for making the awards and would bring them to the attention of a wide audience. After some further discussion of the options that have been considered, it was agreed by affirmation that there be the following awards:

Best primary school project

Best secondary school project

Best school project from the special schools sector

A generic community champion award that could be either a group or an individual

In all awards the focus would be on creativity and originality rather than simply scale.

CBD2021/22.27 RIVER QUALITY

It was noted that the same motion as the one recently passed by the City Council had gone to Ross-on-Wye Town Council and was likely to be passed. Llanfellin Community Council in Wales (which includes Builth) had also passed the resolution.

The Clerk was asked to follow up with Herefordshire Council to see if there was any plan to consider the motion at a council meeting there. Since the meeting it has been confirmed that the following motion was passed on 8th October:

In Motion – Wye and Lugg bathing water. Councillor Louis Stark moved the motion. Councillor Jeremy Milln seconded the motion. Council debated the motion. In summary the improvement to water quality from the proposal was supported but there was concern that the proposal would encourage swimming in dangerous and environmentally sensitive rivers.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED – that:

This Council notes:

- 1. The rapid deterioration in the water quality of the Rivers Wye and Lugg, which is evident from citizen science testing and visual observation. The rivers are important natural assets*

and the council is extremely concerned at their current state. As well as an importance as natural habitats, they are also a recreational resource for many, including use for swimming and other waterborne activities;

- 2. The recent success in Ilkley in designating parts of the River Wharfe as bathing waters, and the increased regulatory protection that has resulted;*
- 3. The historically low level of funding which the Environment Agency has available to enforce existing regulatory controls. This Council therefore resolves to call upon the executive to:*
- 4. Investigate seeking designation of appropriate stretches of the Wye and Lugg to be officially identified as bathing water.*
- 5. Urge concerned residents to support the River Action petition, which asks the English and Welsh governments to double the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales's regulatory budgets so that they can more effectively enforce the existing legal protections for the Wye and Lugg;*
- 6. Forward this resolution to the Members of Parliament in Herefordshire, to ask them to support the campaign by River Action for increased funding for the Environment Agency.*
- 7. Forward this resolution to other English and Welsh councils in the Wye Valley to ask them to support the campaigns for bathing water status and for increases in regulatory budgets.*

CBD2021/22.28 ACONBURY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT AND HINTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

Councillor Hornsey reported on the outstanding work being done at Aconbury by a volunteer who is also connected with Hinton CC. The project is to develop a vegetable garden, and involve the youngsters (who are one step away from falling out of the school system altogether due to behavioural issues) in team work, outdoor pursuits, gaining gardening skills, harvesting fresh produce, cooking it and eating the vegetables they have grown as part of trying to improve diet. The social and health benefits were considerable and it had been highly effective. There is a wish list of just under £1,000 for kit and supplies to develop this. Whilst this could be the subject of grant application the Clerk suggested it would also be a suitable use of his delegated power to support parks and open spaces initiatives, and that if the Committee asked for that it might be possible to get funds out before Christmas, rather than waiting until February for a grants meeting.

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

RESOLVED To ask the Clerk to use his delegated powers to authorise the spending of up to £1,000 to support the Aconbury PRU gardening projects as a parks and open spaces project.

CBD2021/22.29 CCLA ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT

The Clerk reported that a member of Policy and Resources Committee had raised this when the matter of the Council's medium term investment strategy was being discussed. Clearly the issue cuts across the remit of two committees and the Clerk enquired as to whether a joint meeting should be sought. On balance members agreed that this should be considered by as many Councillors as possible and that therefore it was best dealt with by way of a presentation to a council meeting in the New Year (although not in January as that meeting already had a full agenda).

CBD2021/22.30 THE GREAT COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Councillor Toynbee reported that Herefordshire is well advanced with this and we might want to subscribe to the Herefordshire Green Network and register with the Great Collaboration. It was agreed that we should certainly register with the Great Collaboration and invite someone to our next meeting to talk to the Committee about how this could be developed.

It was noted that the Committee can vote to co-opt members onto itself and that they would be voting members of the Committee. The Clerk advised that there should always be a majority of councillors forming the committee so it did not become an external body but that there was a role for a well-informed co-option or a permanent invitation. Planning Committee had a similar arrangement with the Civic Society which had worked quite well for several years.

Further consideration to possible co-options would be given at the next meeting. Possible people to contact would be the Tree Wardens, Hereford in Bloom, Wildlife Trust, Big Skill and Great Collaboration

CBD2021/22.31 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 1st February 2021 at 6 pm.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Date