



HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE 16 APRIL 2024

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillors Cat Hornsey, Jeremy Milln, Rob Owens (Chair), Ben Proctor (Vice Chair), Diana Toynbee, Sam Potts (replacement for Dan Powell).

Attending: Dave Tristram External Funding and Community Support Officer.

CBD2023/24.50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillor Powell.

CBD2023/24.51 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Potts was substitute for Councillor Powell (duration of meeting).

CBD2023/24.52 DECLARATIONS ON INTEREST

Councillors Proctor, Milln and Toynbee declared non-pecuniary interests in Item 5 - Herefordshire Wildlife Trust application, as members of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. Councillor Owens declared a pecuniary interest in Item 5 as an itinerant paid member of staff of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.

CBD2023/24.53 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Potts iterated that at all local government meetings he had attended, substitute councillors could only be appointed at the beginning of the meeting, and not part of the way through. This is to be ruled upon by the Town Clerk. Councillor Potts will also ask Lynda Wilcox (HALC) for advice on this situation.

Councillor Toynbee asked if there had been any update on the Water Fountain presentation from February's meeting, but nothing has so far been forthcoming.

It was proposed that the committee would agree to look (and potentially support, depending on the quality of the application) at any proposal that came forward regarding this matter. It was proposed by Councillor Owens, seconded by Councillor Proctor, and carried by a vote of 4-0 with two abstentions (Councillor Hornsey was only present for part of the presentation at the February meeting, Councillor Potts was not present) and

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2024 be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

CBD2023/24.54 SMALL GRANT APPLICATION – HEREFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST (YAZOR BROOK) – APPLICATION FOR £4,717.56

Councillor Owens declared a pecuniary interest as he is occasionally employed by HWT as a Wildplay instructor. All other attendees other than Councillors Hornsey and Potts declared a non-pecuniary interest as either members or volunteers.

Councillor Owens remarked that HCC has had a long relationship with HWT, with much good work being delivered. Councillor Proctor remarked that the container cost and rental was at the 'high end' in terms of cost. Councillors. Owens and Hornsey responded that this was largely because the storage site is near to the City Centre.

Councillor Milln enquired as to why we are only being asked to pay for the project for 12 months. This is because unless an SLA is in place, grants are only awarded for a maximum 12 month period.

Councillor Toynbee asked DT to chase the Environment Agency on their decision on funding their element of the project.

It was generally felt that this was a strong application from an organisation with a proven track record of delivery in this field, and also that the project fitted the Biodiversity priority of the committee's priorities in terms of HCC grants.

Councillor Potts proffered that this was a robust and strong application from a stable organisation. and recommended that HCC support the application in full. Before a decision was made, DT reminded the committee of the 'additional merit' clause for project applications costing between £3-£5,000.

It was proposed by Councillor Potts and seconded by Councillor Proctor that the project be funded in full. As an (occasional) paid employee of HWT Councillor Owens abstained. The proposal was passed unanimously, with one abstention and

RESOLVED That a grant for £4,717.56 be awarded to Herefordshire Wildlife Trust for the Yazor Brook project.

CBD2023/24.55 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY GRANTS CRITERIA

Councillor Hornsey opened the discussion by suggesting that there should be simple, easy and understandable methods of measurement for projects, and that perhaps we should look at using the Carbon Calculator. Councillor Potts followed this up by saying that HCC should be entitled to 'claim' carbon reduction measurements achieved by applicants that we have funded.

Councillor Hornsey also opined that there should be a maximum of one application per organisation, to either Climate and Biodiversity or Community Development, as multiple applications are likely to disadvantage smaller organisations, who are one of the grant scheme's target areas. It was also suggested that the existing SLA framework could be used to assess year on year applications.

DT suggested that both schemes be incorporated into one grant application form, with specific questions for either tranche highlighted where necessary. Councillor Milln had compiled some Climate and Biodiversity specific clauses which were discussed and agreed by the committee to be pertinent and suitable.

Councillor Proctor was also of the opinion that Climate and Biodiversity applications should primarily be environment focussed, and that 'community benefit' would not necessarily be a priority for applications. Councillor Toynbee recommended that we should not be too restrictive in what organisations could and could not apply for.

Councillor Proctor said that he did not think that there would be many organisations likely to apply to both strands of the scheme. Councillor Proctor suggested a maximum of one

application per organisation for Community Development and Climate and Biodiversity in any 12 month period. It was also suggested and agreed that applications totalling more than £5,000 would be referred to full Council for approval.

RESOLVED That the above suggestions were agreed in principle. It was suggested that DT add these considerations into a new version of the application form, and that these be discussed subject to agreement and approval at a future meeting.

CBD2023/24.56 CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY AWARDS

A process needs to be agreed for Climate and Biodiversity awards 2024-25 until the Mayoral Commendations process has been considered in the hope these can be incorporated.

Councillor Hornsey announced that the Youth Council has expressed a desire to set up a system of Eco Awards aimed at young people. It was suggested that they be accommodated within the existing awards process. Councillor Proctor suggested commendations via the Junior Mayor.

It was asked what would the awards actually achieve?

Councillor Potts commented on the proliferation and plurality of awards, and that a review of the whole system was somewhat overdue. The awards should be awarded to resident Herefordians, and that all existing awards schemes should be streamlined and unified into a branded offer from HCC.

It was agreed by the Committee that this item needs to be routed to Policy and Resources Committee for further discussion, on the recommendation that a branded and unified awards scheme is needed to reflect a cohesive City Council position and policy.

Councillor Proctor was of the opinion that the Youth Council be a part of this process and that there should be a firm proposal. Councillors Potts and Hornsey felt that nothing should be decided until Policy and Resources Committee have discussed the matter. This was proposed by Councillor Potts and seconded by Councillor Hornsey. The vote was carried by 5 votes to 0 with Councillor Proctor abstaining and

RESOLVED That matter to be forwarded to HCC Policy and Resources Committee for further discussion and consideration.

CBD2023/24.57 AVARA FOODS CLASS ACTION – RIVER WYE CATCHMENT AREA

Councillor Potts stated that he had contacted Lynda Wilcox of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils) for advice as to whether HCC should be involved in either supporting this matter or as a signatory to this proposal. Lynda's advice was that we should not be involved in, or be seen to be, supporting such an action. 'Class Action' entails that, even though we may be paying a subscription, or making a financial contribution to such a cause, we would not have any effective say or veto in anything that such an organisation may propose to undertake or action in the public arena. Historically, this has resulted in supporting organisations being taken to court, etc. Effectively we would be exposed to all of the risk(s) with none of the benefit.

Councillor Owens additionally pointed out that legal costs in such a situation could potentially be attributed or awarded to any organisation or individual who is a signatory to the Class Action.

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

RESOLVED That this matter be removed from future agendas forthwith.

CBD2023/24.58 ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

It was decided that the Putson Solar Street Lighting project should be re-routed to Community Development Grants for evaluation and approval, as it does not sit with the proposed priorities for Climate and Biodiversity grants.

Councillor Proctor spoke about potential Carbon Footprint measurement and reporting by HCC officers. A discussion needs to be had around officer availability and resource before this can be taken forward.

Councillor Toynee mentioned the 'Great Collaboration' event, and how HCC could be involved.

The list of items on Minutes of 27.02.2024 which have still not been discussed, namely

- Review of Allotments policies and environmental elements of the agreement with HALG advise Policy and Resources Committee as the responsible authority for the agreement. Environmental implications of the feasibility study by MACE on the future of the Town Hall.
- Street Trees.
- Shrewsbury Cup.

CBD2023/24.59 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To confirm the date of the next meeting on Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 6 pm.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at approx. 7.37pm.

Signed

Date