

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.50 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Pauline Helliar-Symons (Chairman), Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Chris Bowring, Jenny Cheng, Andy Croy, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Emma Hobbs, Gregor Murray and Malcolm Richards

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance
Andy Glencross, Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Francesca Hobson, Flood Risk Manager

61. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Guy Grandison.

Emma Hobbs attended the meeting as a substitute.

62. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 56 – Food Waste Collection Service – Paragraph 4 be amended to read: “The new service reduced the amount of greenhouse gas produced by rotting food and saved up to £100 per tonne by diverting residual waste”.

Paul Fishwick sought clarification on the commitment to inform Members when food waste collection was being expanded to flats in their areas. It was confirmed that communication with Members would be updated.

63. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

64. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mel Davies asked the Chairman the following question:

I would like to thank the Executive Member for the Climate Emergency for issuing the first iteration of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. The plan is a start but doesn't contain many of the fundamental attributes of a viable Management Plan. In particular, I would like to ask the Chairman if she thinks the following items should be added to the plan:

1. A top level set of requirements and a flow down of requirements into the various project branches.
2. A project scope, meaning a single section detailing precisely what is and what is not inside the project boundary.
3. A description of a project Risk Register and how it will be managed. (This should then contribute to the Council risk register)

4. A hierarchical diagram to show how this plan fits with all other Council plans and policies as well as Central Government plans and Policies.
5. A stakeholder list.
6. A top level project roadmap or Gantt Chart
7. A list of definitions and acronyms.
8. A description of how the project will measure progress
9. A consolidated list of referenced work.
10. A definite start date and end date.

These are some of the defining attributes of a successful project but they are not defined clearly in the current plan.

Answer

At a Council meeting on 18th July 2019, Wokingham Borough Council agreed a Motion declaring a climate emergency. The declaration set out the Council's commitment to play as full a role as possible in achieving a carbon-neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030 and to report progress to Council within six months, setting out an initial plan of action.

As a working document this plan reports our progress and lays out the initial steps of our journey to working towards achieving a net zero carbon Borough. It was not the intention to develop a comprehensive project or 'management' plan.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan has: established the Borough's climate footprint from where we will measure all future activity, announced a budget of £50 million for carbon reduction projects over the next three years and established eight priority areas of focus for Council actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions over the coming years.

These include tackling carbon dioxide emissions from transport, reducing energy use in domestic properties, generating renewable energy, planting more trees and encouraging behaviour change.

The Council consulted with Wokingham Borough businesses and specialist consultants all of whom gave positive feedback on our plans. The Government funded Greater South East Energy Hub fed back that the plan demonstrates that Wokingham Borough Council is a leading Local Authority in this field and suggested that the plan should be shared with other local authorities as an example of good practice.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan is a high-level programme of activities and work streams to begin our journey towards a zero-carbon future. The extent of these actions will require the appropriate project and programme management frameworks to ensure effective delivery and corresponding monitoring. We have set up working groups for each of these priority areas which will support the delivery of the action plan.

An annual Climate Emergency Progress Report will be developed and brought to Council for approval in July 2020 and annually thereafter. This report will provide more detail on our projects and the anticipated carbon savings that we hope they will achieve.

With a programme that stretches out until 2030 we will set up more manageable timeframes of work to support delivery of the action plan, whilst being able to respond to both policy and resourcing changes at a national and potentially international level that we cannot, at this point, second guess.

Supplementary Question

I will be interested to see how the Action Plan develops. In the meantime, is there any way that members of the public, such as myself, could sit on any of these Committees or Working Groups?

Supplementary Answer

I will ask Gregor Murray, who is the Executive Member for Climate Emergency, for an answer to that point.

Gregor Murray

Sitting above the Climate Emergency Action Plan is a governance structure. This includes the cross-party working group and a forum where businesses, charities, academics and community leaders can help to shape the agenda.

At the moment there is no plan to include input from residents in terms of attending meetings. We have spent the last six months writing the Action Plan and we are now working on driving it forwards. In terms of future engagement, all options are open.

65. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

66. DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY INITIAL ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 13 to 64, which gave details of the Council's initial Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Action Plan set out the initial steps that the Council would take on the journey to achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

The report stated that the Council had passed a Motion declaring a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 18 July 2019. Work had been carried out to establish a baseline of carbon emissions for the Borough. Wokingham Borough's carbon footprint was 580.9 ktCO_{2e} (based on 2017 data). This calculation did not include areas outside the Council's influence such as carbon emissions from motorways and rail travel.

The Council had identified eight key priority areas to pursue as follows:

- Reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions from transport;
- Reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions from domestic and business property (the Green Bank project);
- Generating more renewable energy;
- Creating a Local Plan which specifies Net Zero construction and infrastructure;
- Increasing the levels of Carbon Sequestration by greening the environment;
- Engaging with young people and supporting sustainable schools;
- Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill;
- Encouraging behaviour change across the Borough.

The initial Action Plan had been developed using ideas from local residents, Town and Parish Councils, businesses, schools and Council Officers. The report stated that the Council had committed £50m over the next three years (subject to Council Budget approval) for implementation of the initiatives in the Action Plan.

Following approval of the initial Action Plan by the Council an annual progress report would be submitted to Council, commencing in July 2020. The progress report would include a fully costed action plan with carbon saving quotas against individual projects.

It was proposed by Sarah Kerr and seconded by Paul Fishwick that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee setting out options for effective scrutiny of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, one option being the establishment of a separate Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was agreed.

The Committee considered the initial Climate Emergency Action Plan and Members made the following points:

What steps would be taken to replace gas appliances in residents' homes? Would the proposed solar farms be able to generate enough alternative energy? Gregor Murray stated that the proposed Green Bank would support residents in behaviour change including investment on the replacement of gas boilers with energy efficient electric boilers. Solar panels on the roofs of properties would also help to reduce emissions from domestic gas.

Paul Fishwick stated that, as this was the "initial" Climate Emergency Action Plan, the recommendation in the report should be amended to reflect that status. Gregor Murray accepted this point and undertook to amend the recommendation to Council to refer to the "initial" Climate Emergency Action Plan.

In relation to the charts and table on Pages 26/27 of the Agenda, what modelling had been carried out to identify the predicted and target carbon emissions? Gregor Murray stated that work was under way to establish a full carbon budget which would be included in the progress report to Council in July 2020.

How much reforestation would be required in order to fill the gap between the "business as usual" carbon emissions illustrated on Page 26 of the Agenda and the target of carbon neutral by 2030? Gregor Murray confirmed that the Council was working with the Woodland Trust to identify what was achievable over the next ten years. A key factor would be to plant the right trees in the right locations.

In relation to solar farms, did the Council own the land under consideration? Gregor Murray stated that WBC was the biggest landowner in the Borough. The Council owned a number of farms which had been tenanted but were now under consideration for this project. Other sites were also under consideration.

In relation to the scope of the Climate Emergency project, could the work include the development of an Air Quality Action Plan, addressing CO₂ and other pollutants? Gregor Murray stated that the principal focus of the Climate Emergency project. However, other linked issues such as air quality and reducing the amount of single-use plastics should also be considered.

In relation to the Climate Emergency budget figures, set out on Page 42 of the Agenda, some items appeared to have been in the budget for a number of years. In relation to the proposed £13m investment in future road building/enhancement, which new roads would result in a reduction of carbon emissions? Gregor Murray stated that the investment related to new technologies and systems which would deliver a reduction in emissions. The aim was to reduce car usage whilst, at the same time deliver smoother running for vehicles that did use the road network.

In relation to the proposed Coppid Beech Park and Ride, was the £2.7m LEP funding confirmed or was the project still awaiting the green light? If the scheme went ahead, what carbon reductions would be achieved? Gregor Murray stated that the funding had not yet been confirmed. Calculations on the carbon impact would be carried out when the scheme was approved.

In relation to enhancements to the public transport network, it would be difficult to deliver new bus lanes due to the layout of the old market towns. Gregor Murray agreed that the current road network would make it difficult to introduce new/enhanced bus lanes. Discussions were ongoing with Reading Buses to identify new ideas for making bus travel more attractive.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the initial Climate Emergency Action Plan be noted;
- 2) Gregor Murray and the Officers be thanked for their efforts to date in developing the action plan;
- 3) a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee, setting out options for effective scrutiny of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, one option being the establishment of a separate Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Note: Andy Croy stated that, in his opinion, the initial Climate Emergency Action Plan presented to the Committee was not credible and he could not support it in its current form.

67. ESTATE INFRASTRUCTURE - TASK & FINISH GROUP

The Committee considered the report of the Adoption of Estate Infrastructure Task and Finish Group. The report, set out at Agenda pages 65 to 102, stated that the Task and Finish Group had aimed to produce recommendations to the Executive resulting in the adoption of high quality estate infrastructure (roads and open space) and positive outcomes for residents across the Borough.

The report stated that the Task and Finish Group had sought evidence from a range of stakeholders including residents, Town and Parish Councils, housing developers, Thames Water and Council Officers. The feedback had indicated that Council Officers already delivered excellent work which ensured that high quality infrastructure was delivered in the majority of cases. However, there was always scope for improvement and the Task and Finish Group made recommendations in a number of areas, as follows:

1. That the Council considers measures to increase public awareness about the adoption of new estate infrastructure, for example through the provision of general advice and Frequently Asked Questions on the New Residents section of the Council website.
2. That the Council considers measures to improve and expand the current interactive maps on its website, for example by including more details on S38 roads and roads not due to be adopted.
3. That the Council considers measures to provide more regular briefings for Town and Parish Councils, especially in relation to new housing developments in their areas and the rights and responsibilities of different stakeholders.
4. That WBC Officers provide regular updates to the Borough Parish Liaison Forum on the process for adopting new estate infrastructure and the impact of new development arising out of the Local Plan Update.
5. That the Council considers the resources available for managing the adoption process in non-SDL areas in order to ensure a consistency of outcomes for residents across the Borough.
6. That the Council reviews the process for developing and agreeing S106 agreements relating to the adoption of open space, specifically to:
 - ensure that agreements are more detailed, specific and rigorous;
 - explore the potential for including financial penalty clauses linked to key milestones, with any penalties being added to agreed commuted sums;
 - encourage high quality design for new play facilities.
7. That Officers consider potential improvements to secure earlier engagement from Highways at the initial planning or pre-application stages of the process.
8. That the Council works with developers to build on the proactive work of Officers in improving the level of tree survival rates on new housing developments.
9. That the residents and Town and Parish Councils who responded to the Call for Evidence (Annex B) receive feedback and responses to the issues raised.
10. That the Council consider measures to ensure the recruitment and retention of key staff working on the adoption process, with appropriate succession planning.
11. That WBC Members receive annual training on the adoption process for new roads and open space linked to updates on the emerging Local Plan.
12. That an annual update on the adoption process be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Task and Finish Group report would be submitted to the Executive for consideration. Any recommendations that were implemented would then be monitored by the Committee with a report back in 2020/21.

It was proposed by Pauline Helliard-Symons that Recommendation 1 be amended by adding the following words:

“It also underlines the onus on homeowners to take expert legal advice to ensure that they are aware of the risks and responsibilities involved.”

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the amended words should be added to Recommendation 1 in the report.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the report of the Estate Infrastructure Task and Finish Group be noted;
- 2) the Task and Finish Group Members be thanked for their efforts in producing the report;
- 3) the report, as amended, be submitted to the Council’s Executive at its meeting on 26 March 2020.

68. COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING - Q2 2019/20

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 103 to 124, which gave details of performance monitoring for Quarter 2 of the 2019/20 Municipal Year (July-September).

The report stated that, for Quarter 2, 65% of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had achieved the assigned targets and were reported as Green. 6% of KPIs were marginally off target (Amber) and 29% were significantly off-target.

The report gave details of the 37 KPIs being used to measure service delivery and quality. The KPIs had been reviewed for 2019/20 in order to provide a smaller, more targeted number of measures. For each KPI a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) target had been assigned which took into account historic trend information and benchmarking to compare WBC performance with national trends.

The report also gave details of the 10 Red KPIs and the improvement measures being implemented, as follows:

Adults Services (5 Red KPIs)

- KPI AS4a - Safeguarding timeliness – concerns completed within 2 working days
- KPI AS4b - Safeguarding timeliness – enquiries completed within 28 days
- KPI AS6 - Proportion of people receiving long term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months
- KPI VP2a – Delayed transfers of care (delayed days)
- KPI VP2b – Delayed transfers of care (delayed days) Social Care Only

Children’s Services (4 Red KPIs)

- KPI Ch2 - Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plan Assessments completed within 20 weeks of referral

- KPI EA2 – Percentage of children who attend a Wokingham state-funded school (primary, secondary or special) which is Ofsted rated Good or better
- KPI VP6i – Percentage of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years
- KPI VP8 – Percentage of child protection visits completed on time (within 10 days of the previous visit or start of the Child Protection Plan)

Locality and Customer Services (1 Red KPI)

- KPI CE10 – Percentage of calls answered

Members considered the performance data in the report and made the following points:

KPI CE1 – Revenue Budget Monitoring Forecast Position and **KPI CE2** – Capital Budget Monitoring Forecast Position.

Comment - when overspends and underspends occur, the Committee would like to receive greater detail on causation and action plans put in place.

KPI T1-6 – Percentage of Highway Infrastructure Schemes on track for project delivery.

Comment – the report should provide greater clarity on the criteria for RAG status together with more detail on the roads subject to Amber and Red status.

KPI CE10 – Percentage of Calls Answered.

Comment – Members recalled the earlier WBC target of answering calls with 10 rings and requested comparative information to current performance. This included trend data on the time taken to answer calls (including recorded messages on the system).

KPI Adults Services – 5 Red KPIs

Comment - the Committee requested more information on the underlying staffing issues referred to in the narrative for the Red indicators.

KPI EA2 – Percentage of children who attend a Wokingham Borough state-funded school (Primary, Secondary or Special) which is Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding.

Comment – the Committee requested more specific criteria for the RAG rating.

KPI Ch2 – Percentage of Education, Health and Care Plan Assessments completed within 20 weeks of referral.

Comment – the Committee noted that Q2 performance was 12.9% with a target of 100%. Was this a SMART target? Should the Amber range be 95% to 99%?

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring report be noted;

- 2) the service narrative relating to the Committee's queries on Q1 KPIs be noted;
- 3) further information on the Committee's Q2 queries and comments be circulated to Members.

69. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES 2020/21

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 125 to 134, which asked Members to give initial consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2020/21.

The report stated that effective work programming was a Member-led process aimed at prioritising and shortlisting issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Council Plan and major policy and service changes. Effective work programming aimed to:

- Reflect local needs and concerns;
- Prioritise issues for scrutiny which had most impact;
- Involved local residents and stakeholders;
- Be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

The report outlined the suggested process for developing the 2020/21 Work Programmes. The involved consultation with Executive Members, WBC Officers, partner agencies, Town and Parish Councils, residents and community groups. Public engagement would take place through a media release, the Council's website and social media.

The report highlighted recent progress in the operation of Overview and Scrutiny, for example in the delivery of in depth Scrutiny reviews relating to Grounds Maintenance and the adoption of new roads and open spaces. In depth Budget Scrutiny had also taken place in 2019/20 for the first time. Building on these positive steps, the report recommended that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee carry out one or more in depth reviews during 2020/21.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the process for developing 2020/21 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes, set out in the report, be approved;
- 2) suggestions for inclusion in the 2020/21 Work Programmes be submitted to Neil Carr in Democratic Services;
- 3) the final 2020/21 Work Programmes be approved at the Committee's meeting on 25 March 2020;
- 4) each Overview and Scrutiny Committee carry out one or more in-depth reviews during 2020/21.

70. CONSIDERATION OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION FORWARD PROGRAMMES

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme and the Individual Executive Member Decision Forward Programme, as set out on Agenda pages 135 to 146.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Programmes be noted.

71. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES 2019-20

The Committee considered its 2019/20 forward Work Programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out on Agenda pages 147 to 156.

In the ensuing discussion Members noted that an additional report would be submitted to the Committee's February 2020 meeting on options for Scrutiny of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes be noted.

72. UPDATE REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OR NOMINATED MEMBER OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Committee considered updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and/or Members in relation to recent meetings of the Committees.

RESOLVED: That the updates be noted.