

Environment Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 MARCH 2020 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Bob Jones MBE (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Derek Brown OBE, Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Brian Mathew, Cllr Tom Rounds and Cllr Stewart Palmen (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Atiqul Hoque, Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Robert Yuill

82 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr John Smale, Cllr Nick Murry and Cllr Steve Oldrieve.

Cllr Oldrieve was substituted by Cllr Stewart Palmen.

83 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 November 2019 were approved.

84 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Tony Jackson declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 8 – Interim Management Arrangements for the Contracted Leisure Centres, as he was a member of a local People for Places gym. Cllr Jackson remained in the meeting a spoke on the item.

85 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman provided updates on the following:

- **Western Gateway Rail Strategy**
The Chairman referred the Committee to the announcement attached to the agenda papers and indicated that a full report would be provided on the matter at the next Environment Select Committee on 6 May 2020.
- **Better Deal for bus users**
The Chairman encouraged the Committee members to read the Briefing Note that was circulated to all members on 26 February, about supporting bus services in Wiltshire.

He reported that the Government have allocated £671,171 of funding to Wiltshire Council, to improve bus services in the county, however, before this funding is provided to the Council, Wiltshire needs to give the Government a brief outline of how it intends to spend this money.

Members were asked to inform Passenger Transport, by 27 March 2020, of any requests that they have received for bus services in their area.

The committee, at its next meeting on 6 May 2020, would consider the report sent to Government, outlining how Wiltshire intends to spend the money.

86 **Public Participation**

The Chairman explained the rules of public participation and reported that a statement had been received from David Fisher, absent from the meeting, about air pollution experienced in Royal Wootton Bassett, due to hydrogen sulphide gas escaping to the atmosphere from Crapper & Sons Landfill site.

The Chairman thanked Mr Fisher for his contribution and outlined that the Environment Agency licence and monitor landfill sites.

87 **Wiltshire's Housing Board: Annual Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Housing and Commercial Development, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the activities of the Council's Housing Board between December 2018 and November 2019, prior to the Annual Report being considered by the Cabinet on 24 March 2020.

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Housing, Climate Change and Military-Civilian Integration explained that throughout the period of the Annual report, the Board has engaged in a

range of activities to shape the service offered to residents and their families, increased service quality via appropriate monitoring mechanisms, encourage resident engagement and protected the reputation of the council as a landlord by ensuring a robust Business Plan is implemented.

The report set out the areas focused on by the Board during the year, with the primary focus of the Board being (i) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan; (ii) Maintained momentum toward delivering 1 thousand new homes in the future; (iii) the agreement of Small Improvements Bids to deliver works which had been specifically requested by HRA residents; and (iv) the introduction of 3 themed sub-committees to enable more involvement in policy development.

Cllr Clewer and Director of Housing and Commercial Development responded to a number of issues and comments from the Committee, in particular, the following issues and comments were raised:

- The standard of some affordable homes provided by private developers not meeting affordable homes criteria.
- The prohibition of gas boilers in new homes from 2025 in a bid to tackle emissions.
- The provision of affordable housing to be managed by the Council.
- Councillors identifying potential sites for affordable homes.
- Level of performance against Key Performance Indicators and how this compares with other Local Authorities.
- Implications for the Council of rent reductions during 2019/2020.
- Housing Board meeting dates.
- Consideration of the Housing Board Business Plan by the Cabinet.
- Right to Buy process.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for attending the meeting and providing responses to the issues raised.

Resolved:

- 1. To endorse the Housing Board Annual Report 2018-2019;**
- 2. That the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Housing, Climate Change and Military-Civilian Integration consider other forms of heat technology, when moving away from providing boilers in HRA homes from 2025;;**
- 3. That Key Performance Indicators from the Housing Board are received at the Committees next meeting under Chairman's Announcements.**

88 Implementation of the Waste Contracts

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Highways and Waste, which provided an update on the progress of changes to the Recycling Service.

Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste introduced the update and explained that since July 2018, Hills Municipal Collections Limited have been delivering services under a contract with the council for the collection of waste and recycling and contracts for the management of materials collected. During this period, the Council have been working with Hills to plan service improvements, which include the kerbside recycling collection service.

The Committee noted the changes to the Service and how more materials could be recycled in the blue lidded bin. Residents were being informed of the changes by letter. The collected materials would be sorted at a new materials recovery facility built near Calne which would enable the materials to be sorted to a high quality standard for delivery to reprocessors for recycling. By making it easier for people to sort their waste, it was hoped that the amount of waste recycled would increase.

Cllr Wayman and the Director of Highways and Waste responded to a number of issues and comments from the Committee, in particular, the following issues and comments were raised:

- The markets used for the processing of recycled plastic materials.
- Future recycling methods including chemical recycling, and the need to lobby Central Government about the recycling of certain plastics.
- Materials to be placed in the black lidded box.
- Current recycling rates and expectations for future improvements.

Resolved:

- 1. To endorse the work that Waste and Environment are doing in progressing the new recycling collection service.**
- 2. To visit the MRF in Calne at a date to be agreed; and**
- 3. Review the progress of the recycling service improving Wiltshire's recycling rate, once the new service has been operating for 12 months.**

89 Updates from task groups and representatives on programme boards

The Committee received an update from Cllr Wright, Chairman of the Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group about the Task Groups recent activity since the last meeting of the Select Committee. In Particular, Cllr Wright highlighted that the Task Group continued to gather evidence and intended to bring formal recommendations to the Select Committee for endorsement in May or June 2020.

The Committee were informed that Cllr Pip Ridout, Chairman of the Housing Aids and Adaptations Task Group, was unable to attend this meeting, however, the Task Groups final report was expected in May 2020.

Resolved:

- 1. Notes the Task Group Updates report.**
- 2. Endorses the Housing Aids and Adaptations Task Group's recommendation, that the Council require that the M4(2) standard be applied for all affordable housing, with the ability to negotiate M4(3) where a need is identified.**

90 Forward Work Programme

The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the Forward Work Programme and asked for confirmation about how to progress a number of items detailed below:

- A Better Deal for Bus Users

Resolved:

- 1. To note the Committee's Forward plan**
- 2. To note that the 'A Better Deal for Bus Users' would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 6 May 2020.**

91 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

92 Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next scheduled meeting as 6 May 2020.

93 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in minute Number 95 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

94 **Interim Management Arrangements for the Contracted Leisure Centres**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhood Services about interim proposals for the management of the Council's leisure centres.

Resolved:

- 1. To endorse the proposal as presented.**
- 2. To be engaged at the appropriate time in the process of agreeing the final leisure facility provision for the county and future management options.**

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.45 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Stuart Figini of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718221, e-mail stuart.figini@wiltshire.gov.uk

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