

Environment Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2021 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Bob Jones MBE (Vice-Chair), Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Mel Jacob, Cllr Dr Brian Mathew, Cllr Charles McGrath, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Bill Parks, Cllr Rich Rogers, Cllr Iain Wallis, Cllr James Sheppard and Cllr Derek Walters

Also Present:

Cllr Graham Wright, Cllr Iain Blair Pilling, Cllr Sven Hocking, Cllr Nick Botterill

59 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Jerry Kunkler (Chairman) and Cllr Nick Murry.

60 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

The minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 7 September 2021 were approved and signed.

61 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

62 Chairman's Announcements

The Vice-Chairman announced that in October 2021, Full Council approved the following changes to this Committee's membership:

- Cllr Paul Sample JP was removed from the Committee's membership and replaced by Cllr Derek Walters

The Vice-Chairman thanked Cllr Sample for his contribution to this committee's work and welcomed Cllr Walters to the Committee.

Recent meetings

The Vice Chairman commented on meetings he had attended with the Chairman since the last Environment Select Committee meeting in September 2021. Due to the range of the committee's remit, there have been a number of

meetings with the Executive to discuss the forward work plan, details of which are included in the forward work plan at agenda item 9.

63 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

64 **Leisure In-Sourcing**

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Head of Service for Community Development, Louise Cary, which provided an update on the leisure facilities in-sourcing.

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Libraries, Governance, FM and Operational Assets, introduced the presentation made by the Head of Service for Community Development.

The Head of Service confirmed that the 10 Leisure facilities managed by Places Leisure were successfully brought in-house on 01 October 2021 and outlined the following during the presentation:

- The background to the in-sourcing
- Key principles
- Current status of the transition
- HR update
- Leisure update
- ICT update
- Procurement/legal and Comms update

The Head of Service and Cllr Blair-Pilling responded to a number of questions and comments from the Select Committee which included the following areas:

- It was clarified that it was too early to say at this stage how profitable the in-sourcing has been and any impact on footfall, with the main priority on managing the transition. Data was coming in, but it would take a longer period of time to work through that information. It could be presented at a later date.
- Some customers had experienced a price increase but there is now a broader range of concessionary memberships available. There would be clearer data on how changes to prices and membership options have affected people going forwards.
- It was noted that leisure in-sourcing was an opportunity to consider public holiday opening.
- It was too early to know if in-sourcing has had an impact on membership.
- It was clarified that swim tag service is not currently available as the current priority was alignment across the sites. Further digital review of the service would be undertaken.
- Upgrades to facilities would be looked at to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

- In-sourcing would enable the Council to improve the health and wellbeing of communities.
- The subject of a new leisure centre in Trowbridge was raised.

Cllr Blair- Pilling noted that so far the project has been a success and thanked Places Leisure, Louise Cary and Sam Fox for their work.

Resolved:

That the Committee,

1. Notes the update on the Leisure facilities in-sourcing.
2. Requests an update be brought to a future select committee that includes financial information and membership trends.
3. Asks officers to review operating leisure facilities on public holidays and reports back to the committee.

65 **Library Services**

The Select Committee received a presentation from David Redfern, Head of Service Communities about the library services post-pandemic.

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Libraries, Governance, FM and Operational Assets introduced the presentation.

The Head of Service outlined the Library Service's response to the pandemic which included details on:

- The re-opening of the service, with the aim of achieving a normal service by April 2022.
- The relocation of Market Lavington Library following an innovative partnership with the Parish Council.
- Responses to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport about returning to a normal service provision.
- Comments about performance trends between April and Sept 2019 and April and Sept 2021.

The Head of Service, Libraries Specialist Manager, Rebecca Bolton, and Cllr Blair-Pilling responded to a number of questions and comments from the Select Committee which included the following areas:

- The possibility of contacting individuals about renewing their library cards instead of letting them go out of date.
- Tributes paid to Warminster Library for its outstanding work during the covid crisis.
- The lack of volunteers across the board though effort has been made to fill the vacancies.

- Possibility of mobile library routes being reviewed to ensure that they reach everywhere they need to and whether there could be a shift to electric vehicles.
- It was noted library models should be tailored to the community that they serve, which could include mobile libraries, improving transport to libraries and the, development of online provision.
- The need to consider what already exists within communities, such as phone box libraries, possibility to collect data on this.

Resolved:

That the committee,

1. Notes the update on the Library Services.
2. Notes that a further update will be brought to the select committee in 2022, as per the forward work plan.

66 **Global Warming & Climate Emergency Task Group Update**

The Select Committee received a report from the Senior Scrutiny Officer, Simon Bennett, which provided an update of the activities of the Global Warming & Climate Emergency Task Group since May 2021.

The Vice Chairman welcomed Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of the Task Group, who introduced the report. The report included details on changes to the name and terms of reference of the Task Group, the Task Group's response to the draft Climate Strategy 2022-2027 and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan 2021-2024 and the draft forward work plan.

Cllr Wright responded to questions and comments from the Select Committee which included the following areas:

- Current outcome with EV charging not as impressive as the plan. Should take inspiration from Scotland with a park ride that has 50 chargers and a free bus into town. Should look to make Salisbury an ideal tourist destination for electric vehicles.
- Possibility to look at other options as well as electric vehicles, issues with obsolescence's in some technology already in place were pointed out.
- Noted importance of seeing how the council's own budget would be used to deal with the climate crisis.
- Attention was drawn to council owned farms with a query on what the plans were regarding this so that the people renting that land could be informed.

Resolved:

That the Committee,

1. Notes the update on the Task Group activity provided.

2. Endorses the task group's new terms of reference, as set out at paragraph 9.
3. Endorses changing the task group's name to the Climate Emergency Task Group.
4. Notes the task group's draft forward work plan.
5. Within its future work plans looks at longer term technical innovation (particularly vehicles), the alignment of council's budgets to addressing the climate emergency and the longer term future of the council's farms.

67 **Forward Work Programme**

The Select Committee considered its Forward Work Programme. It was noted that the council's senior restructure meant that parts of the plan may need to be updated accordingly. It was then noted that Jessica Gibbons, mentioned in the Forward Work Programme, has now been replaced by Adrian Hampton in the role of Director Neighbourhood and Community Services.

Resolved:

1. To approve the Forward Work Programme, subject to updates to the Director positions and inclusion of the additional items agreed by Committee at today's meeting

68 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

69 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Environment Select Committee will take place at 2.30pm on 12 January 2022.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Leo Penry of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718221, e-mail Leonora.penry@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line ((01225) 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk