

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 13 January 2021

PRESENT:

Councillor Winter, in the Chair.

Councillor Drean, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allen, Mrs Bridgeman, Buchan, Sam Davey, Riley, Stevens and Wheeler.

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene), Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Adviser), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Adviser) and Paul Webber (Planning Officer).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.30 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

17. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the code of conduct Councillor Buchan declared a personal interest (minute 22 refers) as she was a Council representative on Plymouth Energy Community Limited.

18. Minutes

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 are confirmed as a correct record.

The Chair advised that the minutes of the meetings held in November and December 2020 would be available at the meeting scheduled for 10 March 2021.

19. Chair's Urgent Business

The Chair advised following consideration by Cabinet of the Trade Cooperation Agreement and the impact on fishing, the Committee would hold a meeting next month to review the impact of this agreement on the local fishing industry. The meeting would be held on 12 February 2021.

In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Chair brought forward the above item for urgent consideration because of the need to advise Members).

20. Policy Update

Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor) provided the latest national picture in respect of policy announcements and legislation. The report highlighted the following key areas -

- legislation going through Parliament;
- Acts;
- Private Members Bills;

There was an update to the policy brief which included -

- (a) the Trade Cooperation Agreement (TCA) established zero tariffs or quotas on trade between the UK and EU, where goods met the relevant rules of origin; this meant that as the UK left the Single Market and Customs Union, UK businesses and consumers would not have to face the economically damaging consequences of tariffs on 1 January 2021 that would have resulted from a no-deal;
- (b) on 30 December 2020, an agreement was entered into between the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community and the UK and Northern Ireland; the UK had become responsible, as an independent sovereign state, for jointly managing about 100 shared fish stocks with the EU; this was unprecedented and unique internationally; additionally the UK would be negotiating access directly with Norway and the Faroes and had signed continuity agreements with both countries.

Kevin McKenzie (Policy and Intelligence Advisor) undertook to circulate an up to date policy briefing to Committee Members.

The Committee noted the reported.

21. **Plymouth Plan Climate Change Review**

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure), Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) and Paul Webber (Planning Officer) presented the Plymouth Plan climate change review.

The report introduced the proposed changes to the Plymouth Plan arising from the resolution of the City Council on 16 December 2019, to 'undertake an early review of the Plymouth Plan with city partners, in order to ensure that the plan responded to the climate emergency and the commitments set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan'.

The review of the Plymouth Plan was undertaken during 2020 and included a policy by policy assessment, informed by stakeholder and community consultation, to ensure that the Plymouth Plan was aligned to the City Council's pledge to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030, a declaration that was agreed unanimously by City Council on 18 March 2019.

The review process had recommended changes to 23 sections/policies of the Plymouth Plan to bring it into alignment with the climate emergency declaration and Climate Action Plan 2021.

The following questions were raised by members of the Committee –

- (a) section 4 – Healthy City (changes to Policy HEA1): whether this section needed to include the natural green and blue spaces, as these were not explicit within this this section;
- (b) section 2 – Philosophy (changes to support text for Theme 2): whether further information could be provided relating to the Fab City Network;
- (c) section 5 – Growing City (changes to Policy GR09) (point 4): sought clarification regarding ‘the City would continue to minimise the amount of municipal waste that was landfilled’;
- (d) section 5 – Growing City (changes to Policy GR07) (point 6): the reasoning behind replacing the word facilitate to encourage ‘seeking solutions that reduce the need to travel, and ‘encourage’ the move towards sustainable modes of travel.

Paul Barnard (Strategic Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) undertook to provide information on the Fab City Network to Councillor Wheeler.

For the reasons set out in the report, the Committee agreed to support and endorse the proposed changes to the Plymouth Plan to be formally adopted as part of the City Council’s Policy Framework.

22. **Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021**

Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene), Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) and Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) presented the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan set out the strategic direction for the City Council and its partners in relation to climate change for Plymouth. It was a demonstration of the City Council’s commitment to lead the city towards net zero carbon by 2030. The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 was a dynamic, living document that was prepared annually. The Plan maintained the five key areas for action established by the first plan to ensure that it was fit for purpose as actions were ramped up through the three strategic phases of the journey to zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Initially, the response to the climate emergency required quick and decisive action to reverse the ongoing increases in carbon emissions. This period of activity was identified as the ‘emergency response phase’. There were to further stages identified in the journey towards net zero carbon.

The 'transitional phase' would focus on the delivery of more substantial carbon reduction projects, a reshaping of policy and a realignment of resources to meet the 2030 net zero carbon challenge. The final phase, known as the 'acceleration phase', will drive a significant shift towards net zero carbon living, working and travelling, ramping up still further decarbonisation actions and initiatives.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021 was intended to be the last of the current 'emergency phase'. It outlined over 80 realistic, achievable and deliverable actions the City Council was committed to delivering during 2021, in order to make tangible progress in this period of urgent response. In 2020, the City Council, in partnership with a number of external partners, helped to establish the Plymouth Net Zero Partnership, a resilient governance structure that would support joint working between key public and private sector partners to drive the actions needed to achieve net zero by 2030. Detailed case studies provided by partners in the Plymouth Net Zero Partnership had been included in this second Climate Emergency Action Plan to illustrate the growing momentum behind climate emergency work across Plymouth.

The following questions were raised by Committee Members –

- (a) whether the following could be included -
 - graphs and visual aids to demonstrate the progress of the actions and also cost savings;
 - measures against savings in both pounds and carbon;
 - figures to demonstrate the advantages of the Energy from Waste facility in providing energy to the Dockyard, providing power to the war ships and eradiating landfill in the city;
 - figures on the energy produced by the solar farm in order to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the scheme;
- (b) with regard to waste, whether further clarity could be provided relating to the reasons for the substantial increase in waste since 2015, the limitations on the Council, the national picture around the legislation from Government and the future direction of the Plan;
- (c) whether there was a co-ordinated approach with the other authorities using the incinerator (Devon County and Torbay Councils) in changing behaviours around waste, so as not to impact Plymouth and the work it was undertaking around behavioural changes to reduce, re-use and recycle waste;
- (d) sought clarification as to whether the hydrogen technology summit being held in the city, later in the year, was the first in the country and whether the use of hydrogen by the haulage sector and bus companies was occurring in other parts of the country, and if so, could best practice be shared with the Council;

- (e) whether the Council was in discussions with the haulage sector regarding the use of hydrogen;
- (f) with regard to the district heating schemes, whether consideration had been given for the use of the spare heat produced by the incinerator to be used for the benefit of local people and housing;
- (g) with regard to mobility, whether future iterations of the plan could include school travel (open streets, regulations to reduce the number of cars used to drop children off) and supporting taxi companies/drivers to switch to electric taxis;
- (h) whether consideration had been given for the electric charging points to be used by individuals/visitors with mobility scooters;
- (i) sought clarification on the provisions of the Local Electricity Bill and the Council's view on the Bill; in particular local authorities being able to register as energy generators, what the Council could do currently and how the Bill could change this;
- (j) sought clarification on how the new plastic recycling bins would work on land and water.

Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) undertook to -

- (k) discuss with the South West Devon Waste Partnership the actions being undertaken by Devon County Council and Torbay Council to change behaviours to reduce the waste being sent to the incinerator, in order to align with Plymouth's Climate Emergency Plan 2021 to reduce, re-use and recycle within the waste hierarchy;
- (l) to provide a briefing note to Councillor Wheeler on the use of the spare heat generated from the incinerator to provide local benefits for residents, housing and new housing developments;
- (m) to provide a response to Councillor Buchan regarding the provisions of the Local Electricity Bill and any opportunities arising from the Bill for the city.

Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) undertook to brief Councillor Wheeler regarding the two cycle lanes proposed for St Budeaux.

For the reasons set out in the report, the Committee agreed to support and endorse the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2021.

23. Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021

Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene), Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) and Paul Barnard (Service Director for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure) presented the Corporate Carbon Reduction Action Plan 2021.

The proposed Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021 was submitted for the Committee to consider prior to the City Council meeting to be held on 25 January 2021 which was in accordance with the commitment made by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene, at the Cabinet meeting on 15 January 2020 (minute 40 refers).

The City Council agreed the first Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan in December 2019. This marked a key milestone towards achieving a net zero carbon city by 2030. This plan was the subject to detailed review by this Committee at its meeting on 21 October 2020 (minute 7 refers). The Plan was a dynamic, living document that would be reviewed and updated yearly and would evolve during the three phases of the Climate Change Action Plan Strategic Approach. The commitment was to produce annually a new action plan for each of the 11 years of the Climate Emergency period (2019-2030).

The Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan 2021 maintained the five key areas for action established by the first plan to ensure that it was fit for purpose as actions were ramped up through the three strategic phases of the journey to zero carbon emissions by 2030. This second Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan contained 24 actions, all of which were deliverable within existing budgets and through existing staff resources by December 2021. Many of the proposed actions would deliver measurable carbon reductions from the specific activities planned and these would be monitored going forward. Others, whilst not directly measurable, nevertheless would still contribute to reducing overall corporate carbon reduction impacts of the City Council estate and the delivery of its services and functions.

The following questions were raised by Committee Members –

- (a) what issues remained to be undertaken and were they based around behavioural changes;
- (b) whether the plan would be shared with the Council's key partners, in order to share best practice;
- (c) whether the City Council's investments in carbon intensive industries, as part of the staff pension fund, would be reviewed.

For reasons set out in the report the Committee agreed to support and endorse the Corporate Carbon Reduction Action Plan 2021.

24. **Work Programme**

The following items had been included on the agenda for the meeting scheduled for 10 March 2021 –

- Mayflower 400 progress update;
- The Box progress update;
- the impact of Covid on public transport;
- Resurgam: Cultural Recovery Plan;
- Corporate Plan.

The Committee noted its work programme for 2020/21.

25. **Tracking Decisions**

The Committee noted the progress of its tracking decisions.