

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

15th March 2022

Present: Councillor Andy Stafford in the Chair

Councillors Altaf, B. Amos, Collins (Vice-Chair), Cronin, Griffiths, Laurenson, Norfolk, Roberts and Udall

Officers: Thalia Booth, Allotments Officer
Sandra Green, Head of City Services
Lloyd Griffiths, Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities
Claire Neville Environmental Sustainability Officer
David Sutton, Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy

Apologies Councillor Cleary

43 Appointment of Substitutes

None.

44 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillor Griffiths – Update on the Delivery and Management of Allotments (Minute No. 50) – As an allotment holder in the city.

45 Public Participation

Patrick Allfrey spoke about ongoing issues related to Windsor Avenue Allotment site. He was concerned that there has been no progress with reinstating the recreational area. The surface material used for the replacement access road is unsafe and unsuitable. Furthermore, the new entrance gates are not as good as the previous ones and the water pipes are inadequate. The Chair thanked Mr Allfrey and advised him that Officers will provide him with a response to the points raised.

46 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

47 Act on Energy Update

The Committee received a presentation from Rachel Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Act on Energy.

Councillor Collins spoke prior to the presentation and explained the background to the invitation to Rachel Jones to address the Committee.

Rachel Jones made her presentation. In summary, Act on Energy aims to eliminate fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions by working with local communities and partners across both the public and private sectors. She explained their strategic aims, how they work with local authorities and the support that they can provide for householders locally.

Following the presentation, there was an opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Rachel Jones and emphasised the role that the Council can play in promoting the work undertaken by Act on Energy and signposting local residents.

48 Wild about Worcester

The Committee received a presentation from Paul Snookes of Worcester Environmental Group on the creation of a wildlife corridor around Worcester, using existing rights of way to connect green spaces, with the aim of improving mental health and wellbeing for local residents.

In the ensuing discussion, Committee Members expressed support for this scheme.

Reference was made to expanding the route to incorporate the west side of the river. Local Members will discuss this further with the Group.

The Chair explained that he has asked Officer to present a paper to a future meeting, identifying how the Council can support this project.

49 Cleaner and More Pleasant City: Anti-Litter Campaign Proposal

The Committee considered a report on a new collaborative strategy to encourage the use of litter bins, in pursuance of a Notice of Motion agreed by the Council at its meeting on 21 September 2021. The Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy presented the report and highlighted the main points.

In summary, the proposals include a "Love Worcester" litter picking competition, making litter-picking equipment available for Community Groups and individuals, engaging with local schools and encouraging Worcester businesses to take action on litter. The report also made reference to some suggestions which have not been pursued.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made a number of suggestions to promote the proposals, including providing stickers which businesses can display to show support for Love Worcester, listing businesses which support Love Worcester on the Council website, using social media platforms to encourage businesses and individuals to share photos and stories, involving Parish Councils, celebrity endorsement and civic recognition of citizens who are active in reducing litter. Officers will consider all of these.

RESOLVED: That the Committee support the proposals set out in this paper to help reduce the prevalence of litter in Worcester.

50 Update on the Delivery and Management of Allotments

The Committee received a report on work undertaken on Allotment Management since November 2021. The Head of City Services presented the report and summarised the main points, including the appointment of a new dedicated Allotment Officer and the issue of a new tenancy agreement which will come into force on 1st July 2022.

In the ensuing discussion, it was clarified that the Allotments Forum has not been disestablished by the Council, but it no longer has a role in the Council's management structure of allotments.

In response to a question about the potential to develop new allotment sites, the Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities stated that Officers will give consideration to this and discuss with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the contents of this report, and in particular the work undertaken on Allotment Management since November 2021.

51 Proposed Committee Performance Scorecard 2022/23

The Committee considered the proposed content of the Environment Performance Scorecard for 2022/23. The Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities presented the report and summarised the main points, including new projects and indicators, and current projects that have been removed. He made reference to the Bereavement Services Facilities Review and explained that, due to commercial sensitivity, this will be taken forward through Member briefings rather than at this Committee.

Officers responded to questions and comments from Committee Members.

In answer to a question about the indicator for carbon emissions, and whether this is consistent with the Council's ambitions following the declaration of a climate emergency, the Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy explained that there is a substantial amount of background information to this issue and a written response will be provided.

Members also raised the 60% satisfaction target for cemeteries and crematorium and the proposed indicator for carbon emissions.

The Chair acknowledged these points and made reference to the fact that targets for new indicators have yet to be confirmed. He proposed that the Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities be authorised to review and finalise the scorecard in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair and Members agreed to proceed on this basis.

RESOLVED: That the Committee authorise the Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities to agree the proposed Scorecard for 2022/23 in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

52 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 8.50p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
7th June 2022