



Minutes of the meeting of the **Public Facing Environment Panel** held in Committee Rooms, East Pallant House on Monday 4 March 2024 at 9.30 am

Members Present: Mr J Brown (Chairman), Mr F Hobbs, Mr S Johnson and Mr T Young

Members not present: Mr M Chilton and Mr C Todhunter

In attendance by invitation:

Officers present all items: Ms S Osman (Environment Officer), Mr A Frost (Director of Planning and Environment), Mr S Ballard (Senior Environmental Protection Officer), Mr T Day (Environmental Strategy Manager), Dr Andrea Smith (Climate Change Officer), Ms A Stevens (Divisional Manager for Environmental Protection), Miss M de Silva Puttick (Democratic Services Officer), A Alempour (Democratic Services Officer) and Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place)

8 **Chairman's Announcements**

Apologies were received from Cllr Chilton and Cllr Todhunter.

9 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Hobbs declared that he is the Chair of Great Sussex Way.

Cllr Johnson declared that he is on the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Board and a member of Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council.

10 **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the meeting on 14 December 2023 were unanimously approved with one amendment:

Ms Klepacz said that there is a risk of coastal flooding shared by local authorities across the country and that if nothing is done, one thousand homes will be at risk, with a further six hundred buildings **at risk** in the next one hundred years.

Minutes from the meeting on 29 January 2024 were unanimously approved.

11 **Energy Procurement**

Cllr Brown introduced the item by saying that the deadline for signing a new contract with the Council's current energy procurers (LASER) was 31 March 2024. The council was keen to ensure its energy procurement resulted in actual greenhouse gas emission reductions. Officers had been looking into an alternative green electricity tariff, but the financial cost could not be quantified and there was uncertainty over the quality-of-service delivery and issues to be resolved with the procurement process. Therefore, this option was not recommended at this point. The recommendation was to enter a one-year contract with LASER with the option of a further year, during which time officers would continue to explore the options.

Mrs Hotchkiss had no further comments to add but confirmed that the report will be going to Cabinet the next working day. The recommendation was unanimously approved by the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Environment Panel agreed to recommend to Cabinet to:

(a) Resolve to continue as a participating authority in a tripartite contract with the LASER Energy Buying Group and enters into a 'purchase in advance' contract for a minimum of 1 and maximum of 2 years with effect from 1 October 2024, with the inclusion of the data and reporting bureau service.

(b) Delegate authority to the Divisional Manager for Property and Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property and Regeneration to extend the contract into the second year, with effect from 1 October 2025, if required.

(c) Note that a further report will be brought to Cabinet from officers on completion of a full assessment of the options to procure energy in a way that is likely to lead to greenhouse gas emission reductions from CDC's energy use.

12 **A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis Scheme - Stage 1 Consultation**

Cllr Brown introduced the item, that this was a stage 1 consultation on an active travel scheme and if pursued, the council will receive a detailed consultation to respond to. He asked how much of the scheme is lit already.

Cllr Johnson asked how the consultation was devised.

Cllr Young voiced concerns about bike lights and sensitive lighting. He considered that if lighting was necessary, it would increase the cost of the scheme and impact the environment.

Mr Ballard confirmed that the consultation had been designed by officers. He explained that WSCC will have regard to LTN120, but thought any lighting was to address safety and security issues.

Cllr Hobbs stated that the scheme should be made as easy to use as possible as it will improve connectivity.

Mr Ballard agreed to let WSCC know that we feel a balance is needed between lighting, safety and biodiversity.

RESOLVED

That Environment Panel supports WSCC's A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis Corridor Scheme.

13 **Climate Emergency Action Plan Going Forward - Consultation Approval**

Cllr Brown introduced the item. He stated that it is important to acknowledge that not all projects can be delivered by Chichester District Council. Residents will be asked to rank their concerns by priority and the final design of the consultation document will be agreed after Cabinet. It was noted that the council was not meeting the current targets and some of the projects included in the consultation, may not go ahead if funding cannot be obtained.

Mr Day stated that the plan was developed alongside Divisional Managers from all services in the council. He stressed that prioritisation is important and that we should try to explain to the public the costs and carbon saving to give some context. It is also important that for the key projects we gear up for further funding opportunities should they come forward.

Cllr Young commented on net zero emissions and carbon reduction projections, particularly that the most radical policies now will look moderate in the future. He also stated that we need to be preparing local businesses for the future as governments are to prepare for carbon tax and reward schemes.

Cllr Brown stated that it is important to remember that this is a consultation and not a referendum; where the intention is to test the waters amongst communities, and that the focus needs to be on reducing carbon emissions as opposed to adapting to them.

Cllr Hobbs commented that the real challenge is to take people with us as there is an impact on people's lives from all climate actions so it is important to keep the trust of the public. The cost of the consultation at £15,000 is a good step in the right direction but we need to demonstrate what value we get from that investment. We also need to have a clear idea of what the outcomes will be from any resources we employ, and we must prepare local communities for the change Governments will have to force on us.

Cllr Johnson stated the importance of balance, leadership and presentation amongst the community and that the process of reducing carbon emissions goes hand in hand with mitigation.

Ms Osman stated that it is important to work with and lead parish councils regarding changing behaviour in communities. All projects will come forward to Cabinet with a business case for its consideration.

RESOLVED: The Environment Panel agreed to recommend to Cabinet to:

(a) approve the consultation content as outlined in Appendix 1; and

(b) approve the consultation process and budget Option 2 - £15,000 as outlined in Appendix 2

14 **Three Harbours Strategy Consultation Response**

Cllr Brown introduced the item and stated that the focus should be on where the Council can offer support. He asked whether Pagham had been assessed regarding extending the Climate Emergency Action Plan inland, and what the role of local government is in the process.

Cllr Johnson commented that the strategy incorporates multiple initiatives including adaptation.

Mr Day stated that the strategy has been prepared by a partnership of agencies. Planning agents are liaising with landowners and coordinating engagement within local communities regarding the arising challenges. The wide partnership brings in relevant bodies and the appropriate arrangements.

Ms Stevens stated that the Chichester Harbour Investment and Adaptation Plan focuses on coastal issues, and that it is more of an action plan that tackles specific problems as they arise, as opposed to a strategy. Chichester Harbour is already in unfavourable condition, however a similar habitat project will need to be developed in regard to Pagham once its habitat status is known.

RESOLVED: The Panel agreed to:

Recommend to Cabinet that the draft consultation response in Appendix 2 is submitted as the Council's response, subject to any comments made by Panel members.

15 **Late Items**

There were no Late Items.

16 **Environment Panel Workplan**

The Panel noted the workplan.

17 **Next Meeting**

The Panel noted the date of the next meeting as Monday 22 April 2024 at 9.30am on Zoom.

The meeting ended at 10.52 am

CHAIRMAN

Date: