

Bristol City Council Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee



25 July 2024 at 5.00 pm

Members present:-

Councillors: Martin Fodor (Chair), Ellie King (Vice-Chair), James Crawford, Kye Dudd, Abi Finch, Tim Kent, Henry Michallat, Izzy Russell and Kirsty Tait

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

None.

3 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

4 Chair's Announcements

The Chair highlighted the following points:

1. A Forward Plan had been published, highlighting details of key decisions to be taken by this policy committee. The Forward Plan would be updated regularly to include as much information as possible about decisions to be taken across the 2024/25 council year.



2. In relation to the public forum, some questions had been submitted which should more appropriately have been submitted to other policy committees. As a courtesy, and mindful of the fact that the committee governance system and revised public forum arrangements were bedding in, responses had been supplied to all questions received on this occasion.

5 Public Forum

The Committee noted that the following public questions had been received:

1. Annette Catherine: Net Zero/Clean Air
2. Danica Priest: Yew Tree Farm
3. Suzanne Audrey: Tree removal
4. Suzanne Audrey: Loss of established trees
5. Suzanne Audrey: Replacement trees
6. Helen Hughes: Climate change
7. Helen Hughes: Reliance on superstores
8. Helen Hughes: Plastic grass and paving

The Committee noted that the following public statements had been received:

1. Jenny Harrison: Climate change – moving towards a plant-based food system
2. Catherine Withers: Yew Tree Farm

In relation to question 2 (Yew Tree Farm), Danica Priest advised that she had video evidence of bird nests being destroyed as part of the work undertaken to clear scrub at Yew Tree Farm. Whilst noting that this matter did not fall directly within the remit of this policy committee, the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration undertook to ask officers to follow up on and look into this particular matter.

In relation to questions 3, 4 and 5 (tree removal, loss of established trees, replacement trees), Suzanne Audrey raised a supplementary question about whether officer resources had been diverted to support the City Leap programme at the expense of officer resource available to support work on eco/biodiversity matters. In response, the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration advised that this was not the case, and that appropriate levels of officer resource were allocated to eco/biodiversity and tree related work.

6 Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee: Annual Business Report 2024/25

The Committee considered the annual business report (agenda item 6).

The Chair commented that there were no decisions to be taken on this report, which was for the Committee's information.



The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note the membership of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 2. To note the appointment of Councillor Martin Fodor as the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 3. To note the appointment of Councillor Ellie King as the Vice-Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 4. To note the terms of reference of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee.**
- 5. To note the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee's meeting dates for 2024/2025.**

7 Electricity Supplies 2025

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 7) which sought approval to procure and award contracts for the Council's electricity supplies from April 2025 to March 2029.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision involved spend of more than £500k and was likely to have a significant impact on 2 or more wards.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that:

- The Council's current electricity supply contracts would expire at the end of March 2025. New electricity supply contracts would be required from April 2025 to avoid expensive 'deemed' supply rates that would be incurred if the Council continued to use electricity beyond the end date of the current contracts.
- The Council's electricity supply arrangements had been subject to a number of extensions and short-term contracts since the energy crisis from late 2021. The intention now was to stabilise the Council's contractual position and enter into longer-term supply arrangements.
- Officers were recommending approval of Option 3b as set out in the report, i.e. a tender for a new sleeving arrangement based on a new 'split pool' model; the whole contract value for this option was £78m, including a Bristol City Council cost of £33m.

2. It was noted that under this proposal, the Council would seek to set up a much broader sleeving arrangement, adding generators not owned by the Council into the pool. This additional electricity would power the remainder of the Council's buildings, traffic lights and lamp posts, and other public sector buildings in the city. The Chair commented that future reports were likely to be brought to the Committee about how other generators in the community could be supported.

3. In response to questions, it was noted that whilst Option 3b would cost the Council an extra £1m in comparison with Option 3a, officers were recommending this option as it would allow additional non-Bristol City Council generation and additional non-Bristol City Council demand to be included in generation and supply 'baskets'. This option was seen as building the foundation for a wider expansion of zero-carbon generation in and around Bristol; it would though be the most complex option to tender and



contract for, and would rely on securing additional demand to build a pool large enough to attract bidders.

4. It was noted that whilst Option 3b relied on securing additional demand and sufficient interest from bidders, it was also the most ambitious option. Whilst this remained a risk, it was noted that officers had confidence in terms of attracting bidder interest; a pre-tender industry day was also being planned ahead of the formal procurement process.

5. It was noted that there was an error in the 'financial implications' section of the report where an inaccurate figure was included for Option 2 (the correct figure being £32m, not £30.493m).

6. An issue was raised about plans to replace the city's gas powered cremators. It was noted that options for the replacement of the cremators with electrically powered cremators were being considered, including discussions with City Leap. It was also noted that this would be a matter for the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee to determine.

The Chair then moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Cllr King seconded this motion.

Members generally indicated their support for the report recommendations, noting that the budget envelope for the proposal, from the Council's perspective was up to £33m. It was also agreed that it would be appropriate for a report to be brought back to the Committee in a year's time evaluating the implementation of Option 3b.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- 1. To approve the adoption of Option 3b (wider pool) as the basis for tendering for new electricity supply contracts.**
- 2. To authorise the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee, to procure and award contracts to put in place the approved option within the maximum contract value and budget envelopes outlined in the report.**
- 3. To authorise the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration to invoke any subsequent extensions/variations specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum contract value and budget envelopes outlined in the report.**
- 4. To note that further approval will be sought to enter into specific Power Purchase Agreements for the supply of locally generated renewable energy bought by BCC from local generators. This will include new renewable energy generation being developed by Bristol City Leap as well as new and existing community energy systems.**



8 Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plan - Options paper

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 8) which sought a decision on whether to continue with the preparation, with partners, of the Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plans to support the achievement of the Council's and city's climate objectives. A decision was also sought on options for the Committee's involvement in the process.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that of the options presented in the report, the officer recommendation was that the Committee should approve Option 4, i.e. continue work on the Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plan and undertake informal briefing and engagement with some or all of the committee members on the details of the plans before bringing back to Committee on 26 September 2024.
2. The Chair commented that progressing with Option 4 would enable further development of the body of previous work, as set out in the report, and highlighted the range of partners involved in the Transition Team that had been working to develop the Bristol Climate Action Plan and which would continue, if the Committee approved the continuation of the project, to create a Bristol Climate Investment Plan.
3. In response to a question, it was noted that it was too early to speculate on how the project could potentially link in with the aims of, and investment opportunities that might be available through the government's newly launched Great British Energy power company. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero had, however, been invited to Bristol to view the partnership work that was being taken forward around this agenda.
4. It was noted that the Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plan would be a strategic-level document.
5. There was a discussion about the progress being made in relation to reaching the Council's target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. It was noted that City Leap would play a key role in this through expanding the city's heat network. Achieving the target would also depend on a range of other factors/enabling conditions, including sufficient money being available, national policy, and the public engagement and wider democratic support required for measures that would help deliver this goal. It was also noted that the rate of progress needed to accelerate, not just in Bristol but also nationally if targets were to be met. It was suggested that it would be important to continue to track the progress of each intervention, with annual updates on overall progress.
6. It was suggested that it would also be useful for the Committee to receive an update on progress in relation to the Council's own target of being carbon neutral for its own direct emissions by 2025.

The Chair then moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

Cllr King seconded this motion.



The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To approve option 4: Continue work on the Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plan and undertake informal briefing and engagement with some or all of the committee members on the details of the plans before bringing back to Committee on 26 September 2024.

9 2024/25 Period 2 Finance forecast report

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 9) which presented the financial forecast at the end of Period 2, 2024/25.

The Chair commented that there were no decisions to be taken on this report, which was for the Committee's information.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that whilst the current forecast in relation to those budgets aligned to the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee was projected to be in line with budget at the end of Period 2, there was an overall forecast of a £3.8 million overspend for the Growth and Regeneration directorate as a whole. This directorate-wide overspend was primarily driven by the costs of providing temporary accommodation for those experiencing homelessness. It was suggested that, moving forwards, it would be important for the Committee to be kept apprised of the wider Growth and Regeneration directorate budgetary position.

2. In response to a question, it was noted that whereas waste and recycling strategy delivery fell within the remit of this Committee, matters relating to the Bristol Waste business plan were matters for consideration by the Shareholder and the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note the contents of the report on the Period 2 finance forecast for Environment and Sustainability.

Meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CHAIR _____

