

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee



26 September 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

10 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

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

A Member expressed disappointment that the Policy Committee was not being webcast as they felt it was contrary to transparency. It was clarified that this was due to resourcing and only Strategy and Resource Policy Committee was able to support webcasting, though this was due to be reviewed. It was agreed to make further enquiries on the issue.

11 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

No apologies were received.

12 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.



13 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee held on 25th July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

The Chair asked to confirm that the supplementary questions raised by Members of the Public had been addressed. The Executive Director confirmed this and added that a report regarding Yew Tree Farm would be submitted to a future Public Health and Communities Policy Committee.

14 Chair's Announcements

No announcements were made.

15 Public Forum

The Committee noted that the following public questions had been received with written responses provided.

1. Freya Cunningham Plant based diet and Bristol City Council
2. Cllr Townsend Keeping Bristol Cool Framework
3. Cllr Townsend Street Tree Planting

In relation to question 1 the Chair noted the written response which stated that Officers had been asked to review the Plant Based Council's commitments and guidance and provide a report back. He added that while there was little catering provided by the Council itself, a contract for the food served in City Hall would be under review in 2024/25. Updates would be provided with progress made.

As a supplementary question Freya Cunningham queried the timeline to address concerns. It was unknown how long the guidance review would take, but the contract review was expected over 9-12 months.

Written responses to questions 2 and 3 has been provided to Cllr Townsend.

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

1. James Jones Plant based diet and Bristol City Council
2. Goeff and Myra Farmer Recycling Collections
3. Ian Froggatt, Woodland Trust Bristol Tree Strategy
4. Mark CD Ashdown, Bristol Tree Forum Bristol Tree Strategy



5. Savita Willmott, National History Consortium Bristol Tree Strategy
6. Alex Stone, Forest of Avon Trust Bristol Tree Strategy

James Jones and Mark Ashdown presented their statements to the Committee in person.

16 Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plan

The Committee considered the Bristol One City Climate Action and Investment Plan (agenda item 7). The report sought approval to submit the Bristol One City Climate Commitments, Action Plan and Investment Plan to the Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission initiative for their endorsement; to delegate to Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration authority to deal with any feedback from the Mission Programme, and; to seek approval for continued participation in the Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission initiative. This was a Key decision as it impacted more than 2 wards.

The Chair welcomed the report and thanked the team for their work.

The Sustainability City and Climate Changes Service Manager presented the report. Members were invited to raise comments and questions. The following key points were raised:

1. Members thanked Officers for the report. It was noted that while the work proposed would result in progress it would still remain short of target, and it was queried if additional ideas or work was being considered. It was confirmed that no further viable plans had been suggested.
2. The Bristol City Council target for 2025 established following the announcement of the Climate Emergency in 2018 was discussed. This target was put in place to accelerate progress, which had taken place although the target itself was unlikely to be achieved. Bristol City Council had seen the largest reduction of any Local Authority. The planned next step relied on the impact of City Leap.

The Chair moved the recommendations as set out in the report. Cllr King seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. To approve the submission version of the Bristol One City Climate Commitments, Action Plan and Investment Plan to support the achievement of the council's and city's climate objectives.
2. To agree submission of these documents to the Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission initiative for their endorsement.
3. To delegate to Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration authority, in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to amend the documents and take other necessary steps to respond to the feedback, in order to secure the endorsement above.
4. To endorse the council's continued participation in the Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission initiative and to delegate to Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration authority, in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to take steps as necessary to secure benefits for Bristol from participation in the initiative.



17 Green Gas

The Committee considered the Green Gas report (agenda item 8). The report sought approval for the use of 'green gas' as a carbon offsetting mechanism; to approve the extent of green gas usage across the council estate, and; to agree the procurement mechanism to be used to secure supplies of green gas. This was a Key decision as it involved over £500k spend/save.

The Chair drew attention to the amendments made to the report following publication, including the wording of the recommendation.

The Head of City Leap Client and Energy Service and the Programme Manager Environmental Performance presented the report. Members were invited to raise comments and questions. The following key points were raised:

1. Members supported the approach to prioritise procurement of unbundled green gas derived from Waste. The Vice Chair expressed concern about the provision to target bundled certificates should this approach fail. Concerns over the hazards of fuel crops were outlined. The Vice Chair also suggested that understanding the outcome of the soft market testing before approving the recommendation would have been beneficial.
2. The decision making around the process should green gas fail to be procured was clarified; the proposal was to return to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee before proceeding. Officers confirmed that there were no timescale commitments that required decisions to be made at speed, so this process could potentially be amended.
3. It was noted that the contract was set to end in 2028. The Chair confirmed that significant cross Committee discussions were in the process of taking place (including with City Leap and the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee) in order to ensure that housing considerations would be taken into account before the new contract was sought.
4. The importance of ensuring that costs were kept manageable was emphasised, noting the potential for costs of offsetting CO2 to increase. It was important to ensure that this approach remained the best value to meet the problem.

The Vice Chair reiterated concern regarding the decision for bundled certificates being delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair should the preferred approach fail to be secured. It was suggested that the report and recommendation be amended to reflect this.

It was agreed to adjourn the meeting to allow discussion of potential amendments.

The Chair moved the recommendations as set out in the report. Cllr Finch seconded this motion.

The meeting was adjourned.



Once reconvened the Chair proposed the following amendment to the report:

Update to paragraph 14:

14. The recommended approach would be to procure unbundled green gas certificates with certification that it does not come from fuel crops but from waste, if affordable and sufficient volumes are available. If deemed unviable, a report will return to the Environment and Sustainability committee with options for the committee to consider on how to progress.

Updated Recommendation 1:

Approves the expansion of the use of green gas to meet the gas demand of all BCC sites included within the 2025 carbon neutrality target as a decarbonisation measure in line with the procurement approach set out in this report.

Contractual:

1. Authorises the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to vary existing gas supply contracts or to procure and award contracts for the dedicated supply of green gas, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes outlined in this report.

Cllr King seconded the amendment. The Committee voted and the amendment was PASSED unanimously.

It was agreed that the Committee would be briefed on the Decarbonisation Strategy.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

To approve the expansion of the use of green gas to meet the gas demand of all BCC sites included within the 2025 carbon neutrality target as a decarbonisation measure in line with the procurement approach set out in this report.

18 Bristol Tree and Woodland Strategy

The Committee considered the Bristol Tree and Woodland Strategy (agenda item 9). The report sought the Council's endorsement of the Bristol Tree and Woodland Strategy which was approved by the One City Environment Board in February 2024. This was a Non-Key decision.

The Parks Development Manager presented the report. Members were invited to raise comments and questions. The following key points were raised:

1. The significance of the impact of Ash Die Back disease was highlighted. Robust risk management was key to approaching this issue.
2. The cost of tree pits varied greatly depending on size, placement and species, but would typically range from around £500-£1500.



3. The interface with utilities as a barrier to tree pits and street planting in general was discussed, and a good level of detail of this was provided in the Public Forum response provided.
4. It was confirmed that data from the Keeping Bristol Cool Framework was incorporated into decision making.
5. It was noted that a petition around preventing the felling of trees in Bristol City Centre had been created. Solutions to maintaining central urban tree cover were discussed; the 'Stockholm system' was identified as an approach.
6. A Member suggested discussing and encouraging tree planting with landlords, eg. Universities. This was noted by Officers, although with recognition of barriers that may be in place.
7. A Member noted a concern regarding the stance taken on food consumption on p34 of the report. It was stated that this was an option to consider rather than intended to be prescriptive. It was suggested that a wider consideration of this would be needed before asserting a stance.

The Chair particularly welcomed the strategy following discussions over a number of years which started in scrutiny and led to council policy being developed.

The Chair moved the recommendations as set out in the report. Cllr Kent seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

1. To endorse the Bristol Tree and Woodland Strategy and provide its commitment to take actions forward in the strategy, which are subject to resources.

19 Waste Collection Re-route Information Paper

The Committee considered the report (agenda item 11) which provided a summary of the collection re-route.

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

The Waste Strategic Client Manager presented the report.

The key points raised as part of the discussion of this item include:

1. The report had been brought to Committee to ensure the information was noted and discussed publicly; Members welcomed this.
2. Members noted that some residents within their wards had made repeated complaints over missed collections and understood this to be an ongoing issue. It was confirmed that data showed that improvements had been made, although with more work to be done. Discussions with Bristol Waste were ongoing.
3. Improvements to the website were anticipated.



4. Assisted collections were discussed, with the importance of ensuring collections for vulnerable residents emphasised.
5. It was clarified that the data on missed collections was sourced from Bristol Waste. Issues which may not have been reflected in the data include collections dropped due to presentation. Officers agreed to raise this with Bristol Waste.

The Committee **RESOLVED:** To note the information paper.

20 Finance Update Report

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 11) which presented the financial forecast at the end of Period 4, 2024/25.

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

The Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration presented the report.

The key points raised as part of the discussion of this item include:

1. £300k variance was noted. A Member queried whether this could be diverted to funding tree pits (as previously discussed). While the decision around how budget within the Growth and Regeneration Directorate could not be made in the Environment and Sustainability Committee itself the suggestion was noted for further consideration.
2. A Member noted inflation in the waste budget. This was due to wages and had been raised with the client. The pressures in the Bristol Waste Budget were outlined on p322.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note the contents of the report on the Period 4 finance forecast for Environment and Sustainability.

Meeting ended at 8pm.

