

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
10 MARCH 2020
7.30 - 9.35 PM**



Present:

Councillors Virgo (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Brossard, Gbadebo, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Porter and Temperton
Tracey Wright, Primary Schools Parent Governor Representative
Mark Glanville, Secondary Schools Parent Governor Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Angell and Tullett

Also Present:

Councillor McKenzie

1. Minutes

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 19 February 2020 would be presented to the next meeting of the Commission.

2. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

3. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

4. Public Participation

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

5. Work Programme Update

The Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels provided a verbal update on the progress of the work programme:

Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

- The burials review part one was completed.
- The next Panel review would be food waste and initial meetings to progress the residential parking review were scheduled.
- All reviews were on schedule.

Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

- The care leavers' review report was awaiting some costings before it was published but was drafted.

- The county lines review was scoped and the review was in process and on target.

Wellbeing and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

- The Vice Chairman of the Panel requested an additional meeting for the Healthy Eating, Activity and Exercise review to enable the Panel to interview key witnesses.
- All other Panel activity was on track.

6. Climate Change Review

The Chairman introduced the meeting, set the scene and gave thanks to the Democratic and Registration Services Intern for his hard work in organising and running the Climate Change Marketplace event held earlier in the day. It was explained that the Executive Director: Delivery was writing a climate change strategy for Executive consideration later in the year and that the O&S Commission would revisit the issue in August 2020.

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission considered the evidence pack and took part in a workshop to consider the possible areas of focus for the new Climate Change Strategy and to inform itself of the requirements to have climate change mitigation as part of the considerations when scrutinising council decisions and commissioning its own reviews.

The Executive Director: Delivery introduced the workshop session and gave a presentation to the Commission. In addition to the presentation he advised that:

- He was leading on the issue of climate change for the organisation and was being assisted by the Head of recreation
- It was fundamental to understand how the council used its resources to contribute to climate change measures.
- Climate change was a big topic, that seemed to be too huge to embrace. The Council would need to be focussed on things that were doable.
- The purpose of the workshop was to get the Commission ready for its role to oversee the use of council resources in line with the council plan, and to ensure resources were used effectively.
- The workshop would get the Commission ready for this conversation, would contribute to the development of the climate change strategy and would consider how we could engender the community response.
- We need to do more than we are doing at the moment to reduce global warming.
- The Climate Change Act to decarbonise the UK sits with the Secretary of State rather than Local Authorities. There was no transfer of resources and Local Authorities would need to use existing resources rather than use new ones.
- Bracknell forest had a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions between 2005 to 2017. This was driven by structural changes such as an increase in the use of lower emission vehicles, little has been done by individuals.
- More needs to be done by individuals as the impact of making structural changes is coming to an end.
- Last summer a motion was passed at Council for the Borough to become carbon neutral by 2050, but the question now was how would the Council get to that 2050 target. That question needed to be front and centre of the Councils thinking and doing.
- When making decisions on what to do to impact climate change, the public health implications over a person's life course should be considered.

- Bracknell had the highest number of hospital admissions for alcoholic liver disease. There was a high rate of liver cancers in women aged between 35 and 55.
- Glass bottle collection levels pointed to a high level of cancer when the data was looked at.
- The Public Protection Partnership (PPP) looked at air quality and how to mitigate air quality issues.
- The number of deaths that could be attributed to poor air quality was strong and demonstrated the link between health and the environment.
- Since 2013 the Council had its own strategy with a wide variety of projects undertaken. The action plan had some successes that ticked all the big tick boxes. Some required behavioural change.
- The challenge had been how to identify and quantify the impact of the actions and how this was measured.
- The next iteration was to define a baseline from which to measure our progress and measure what the community does to contribute.
- The strategy also needed to address the wider community. What are we doing to encourage wider community to contribute to the 2050 carbon target? This was harder to baseline. Government data was looking at an individual level but locally we would need to identify what we were responsible for and what we needed to champion.
- He had been working with Honda to use their experience to develop an electric fleet. Who else could the Local Authority engage with? How do we advocate for businesses?
- Microsoft Teams promoted home working and reduced carbon emissions from travelling to work.
- Consultants struggled to baseline how to measure the impact of carbon reduction measures and the respective carbon savings, and how to do this would be the challenge moving forwards.
- There was a national policy to mitigate food waste. How do we lobby all food producing business in Bracknell to recycle their food waste to make sure it is being processed appropriately? If food waste was a country it would be the third biggest polluter on the planet.
- Bracknell Forest was implementing its own food waste strategy.
- When the Overview and Scrutiny Commission commissioned reviews and looked at the Council Performance Overview Reports (CPORs) they should always look at the mandatories to ensure each activity is benchmarked against them and ensure public health and climate change implications were considered. Each review should consider if and how the public were affected by the review and what the climate change impact was.
- In conclusion, there would be a two-pronged approach to the Council's Climate change strategy.
 1. Develop an action plan to reduce carbon emissions that are under the Councils' control
 2. Develop an action plan to influence and lead community action against climate change

The Commission discussed the presentation and had an open discussion about climate change and what factors locally, they felt contributed to it. They discussed what they felt could be affected both by the Council and the community.

The Commission broke into two workshop groups and were asked to consider two questions.

The Chairman invited members of the public to join the groups and contribute. When thinking about climate change:

1. What was important to Bracknell Forest residents?
2. What community actions and initiatives were there that needed to be done?

The findings were:

Workshop notes – Group A

What was important to the Bracknell Forest residents?

- 1) Reduce air pollution
 - Consider how lorries and care use our roads and where they park
 - Consider pedestrianising shopping areas around the Borough
 - Ban 'wet' wood. Can we put colour into 'wet' wood to target those who use it?
- 2) Create more green spaces and protect them better
 - Plant more trees
 - Maintain less grassy areas to cut down on the need to mow them
 - 're-wild' areas
 - Ensure a mixture of grass/trees/wild areas around the Borough
- 3) Planning
 - What incentives can we give to developers locally to encourage the building of greener housing
 - Consider whether we could ask developers to include more cycle paths included in new developments
 - Consider if we can create a cycle scheme around the borough?
 - Can we ask developers/house builders where they are sourcing their wood?
 - BFBC Business Champion could talk to businesses about providing a fleet of bicycles/electric bicycles to encourage their staff to cycle rather than drive to work
 - Lobby government to change planning requirements and insist on 'greener' house building
 - Can we stipulate new houses should be 'passive' which have low emissions and recycle heat, etc
 - Can we use new homes bonus to focus on 'green' houses
- 4) Recycling
 - We need to increase recycling
 - We need to reduce waste
 - Can we build our own recycling facilities locally?
- 5) Procurement
 - All suppliers/contractors have measurables and a sustainability strategy which would provide a baseline for their carbon footprint, including Scope 3 measurements, which members and officers could benchmark against in the future. This could be used in future tenders.

What community actions and initiatives could the council encourage?

- 1) Marketing
 - How do we get 'buy in' from the community?
 - Parish Council Clerks share information about what they're doing on climate change so can we gather this information centrally?

- Could the Council host an annual 'green summit'? Bring in schools and other partners.
- Show measurements – how to do this?
- Can we put visuals around the Borough to say what we're doing? i.e. a big sign saying how much emissions have been lowered in one street each year
- Hold visual 'action days' i.e. stop lorries coming down a road or close Crowthorne High Street for a weekend to show residents how much emissions are created by road usage. Could also have a 'recycling' day or 'how to make your house greener day'.
- Stop cutting grass in middle of roundabouts and encourage wildflowers

2) Education

- Change culture
- Consideration of vulnerable needs' group

3) Reward systems

- What can we add to discount card if you use 'greener' products?
- Use number plate recognition and consider charging car users with cars which use more gas than others a higher price to park in car parks
- Explore technologies to help penalise and reward
- Dynamic road pricing scheme

Workshop notes – Group B

What was important to the Bracknell Forest residents?

Prioritised responses

- 1) Saving money and impact on environment, more broadly reducing waste
 - Warm homes and energy bill minimisation.
 - Residents want to retain their lifestyle – they will resist change but will change if nothing 'bad' happens as a result of it.
 - There is a growing will and desire nationally to stop/reduce waste
 - Whatever is done needs to be an easy and understandable way to actually 'do' whatever it is. Keep it simple to encourage engagement and compliance.
 - Glass is an obvious gap in the borough – recycle
- 2) Parents are concerned about their children's 'future' and have a desire to protect them and do what is necessary to do so.
- 3) Travel
 - Residents want and need to travel around cheaply, easily and safely- personal/Public/Fit (cycle)

What community actions and initiatives could the Council encourage?

- 1) Saving money and impact on environment, more broadly reducing waste
 - Food packaging
 - Education
 - Glass is a gap – refunds
 - Plastic single use packaging – reduce
 - All - Develop appropriate partnerships; communication and message reinforcement

Warm homes and energy bill minimisation

- Utilise Instagroup grant – publicise
- Planning pressure - lobbying
- Renewals – use more
- Each home carbon neutral

2) Protecting children's futures

- Education – primary schools; schools' competitions; refuse trucks to schools and stopping cars idling at schools)
- Climate change information and guidance for children should start much earlier in primary schools.

Other ideas suggested:

- Use the Invest to save scheme
- Generate energy ourselves
- Install water fountains in the Borough

The Executive Director: Delivery was pleased to take the findings from the meeting to inform the Climate Change strategy which would be provided to the Executive in July 2020.

It was **AGREED** that

- (i) the findings would be provided to the Executive Director: Delivery for consideration and inclusion in the Climate Change Strategy which would be submitted to July Council.
- (ii) a follow up meeting would be held to review the findings from the workshop.

CHAIRMAN