

CABINET

THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2021

PRESENT: Councillors David Cannon, Andrew Johnson (Chairman), David Coppinger, Samantha Rayner, Stuart Carroll (Vice-Chairman), David Hilton, Gerry Clark, Donna Stimson and Ross McWilliams

Also in attendance: Councillors Bateson, Larcombe, Tisi, W Da Costa, Bhangra, Hassler, Shelim, Werner, Del Campo, Baldwin, Davey, Davies, Singh and Barbara Richardson (RBWM Property Company)

Officers: Duncan Sharkey, Kevin McDaniel, Hilary Hall, Adele Taylor, Andrew Valance, Nikki Craig, Emma Duncan, Louisa Dean, Adrian Waite and David Cook.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests declared.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021 were approved.

APPOINTMENTS

None

FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet considered the contents of the Forward Plan for the next four months and noted the changes made since last published, including:

- Standards and Quality of Education – removed from Forward Plan.
- Provision of Legal Services – moved to April 2021.
- Housing Strategy – moved to April 2021.
- Affordable Housing Windsor – Added to April 2021.
- Community Facilities Review – Added to April 2021.
- Maidenhead Vision Charter – Added to April 2021.
- Maidenhead Town Hall – Added to April 2021.

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

c) INTERIM SUSTAINABILITY POSITION STATEMENT

Cabinet considered the report regarding the adoption of the Interim Position Statement to be published as guidance and afforded weight as a material consideration in the planning process.

The Lead Member for Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside informed Cabinet that she was presenting this joint report with the Lead Member for Planning and Maidenhead. A Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document is planned, however, the changes to national and local climate policy are material considerations which should be considered in the handling of planning applications. To help meet the Climate Change Strategy it is considered prudent and necessary to adopt an interim position statement which would clarify the Council's approach to these matters.

The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in February 2019. Paragraphs 7 and 8 set out that sustainability and measures to address climate change through mitigation, adaptation and moving to a low carbon economy are at the heart of the planning system.

When the Royal Borough declared a climate emergency we said we would be carbon neutral by 2050. When the Climate Strategy was adopted this set out how the Borough would address the Climate Emergency across four key themes: Circular Economy, Energy, Natural Environment and Transport. The Strategy sets a trajectory which seeks a 50% reduction in emissions by 2025.

The intention of the statement is not to introduce new policy but to clarify how the Borough will interpret existing policy and material considerations, as such it's weight would be limited to that of a material consideration. In due course there is an intention to prepare, consult on and adopt a detailed sustainability SPD which would sit alongside the emerging Borough Local Plan. As this will take time it was considered prudent to propose this paper.

The Lead Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead said that at Council he mentioned that changing the black bin collection schedule was one of the first big steps towards achieving our climate change agenda. As Lead Member for Planning he was delighted to see this paper being brought forward as it was another step forward and brought clarity for our developers in meeting carbon neutral.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot said that this was an important step to bringing the climate strategy forward. Housing development can impact our carbon footprint so it was important to bring this down. The spreadsheet provided developers a lot of information that they needed to focus on when putting plans forward.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health said that the merits of the paper for planning consideration had been mentioned. He was pleased to see the council looking to make behaviour change. He had been discussing with NHS colleagues who were supportive of the changes in bin collections and incentivising behaviour changes towards recycling and a more healthier approach to how we view the world. When thinking about the environment we can also take a public health approach and he would continue to work with his cabinet colleagues. He also mentioned that the view of our younger residents was important and this is important for his later paper.

The Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure said that he wished to thank his fellow Lead Members for the progress being made with the strategy. There was a lot of work to do and it was important not to be complacent. The Lead Member was dedicated to her work and that was appreciated. With his portfolio charging points for vehicles were being introduced to meet the pace of development. More energy efficient vehicles, energy efficient batteries and energy efficient charging points will be coming forward over the next few years. Its important that developers and the borough take advantage of opportunities. This is an important piece of work in helping to regulate development to bring down carbon footprint and yield tangible results.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident and Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management and Windsor informed that she supported the paper as it showed how the Royal Borough had come so far in a short period of time.

Cllr W Da Costa addressed Cabinet and informed that he was the vice-chairman of the climate change panel. He asked if this document would apply to next weeks planning meeting. He was informed that planning applications could only be judged on existing adopted policy and that if approved this report would only be implemented after the call in period had elapsed.

Cllr Da Costa continued by saying that although the document had many good points there were also many weaknesses that could have been addressed if it had been shared by the cross party working group, especially as the two co vice chairman had not been consulted. There were thousands of existing buildings in the borough that can not be changed quickly so it was important that we introduce the highest standards now. He proposed that there should be renewable energy sources from day one and zero carbon should apply to all new buildings. Climate change will bring more rainfall and more this means potentially more landslides. We are going to face 40 degree heat regularly, are new buildings designed for this. Buildings now need to be future proof. He also suggested that members on planning panels should be trained in how to interpret the new policies so they can be applied with consistency. The Lead Member responded by saying that this was an important interim document and that a full SPD would be introduced. The Head of Planning also informed that we had to work within existing legislation and our planning policy framework.

Cllr Davies informed that she was pleased to see the paper being brought forward but asked if there was more information that could be given on the criteria that would be used for sustainability and planning applications. The Head of Planning informed that when there was a viability issue with an application such as large developments with regards to affordable housing, there needed to be evidence given, financial assessments and an independent review. A proportionate review would be used for this policy. There would be transparent evidence within the planning system.

Cllr Singh mentioned that he supported this paper. In his ward there was a large application and asked if this policy would be relevant to that application that had just been submitted. He was informed that as the application had already been submitted and accepted it would follow existing policies.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health said that this was a positive document but we have to adhere to the law and our policy framework. We should be advocating changes at a Government level. He praised the Lead Member for her work and had progressed well over the last 18 months.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:

- I. Adopt the Interim Position Statement to be published as guidance and afforded weight as a material consideration in the planning process.**

A) DATCHET DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – REGULATION 14 ADOPTION

Cabinet considered the report that sought approval for the adoption of the Datchet Design Guide, incorporating the recommended changes.

The Lead Member for Planning, Environmental Services and Maidenhead informed Cabinet that the borough had a history of helping residents and parish councils taking ownership of their neighbourhoods via neighbourhood plans and design guides. This design guide had been developed by consultants working with the borough and the Datchet Design Group. It would help secure high quality design within Datchet and not to restrict growth. Following the consultation a number of changes had been made, none were substantial. This showed what can be achieved and he looked forward to presenting their neighbourhood plan.

The Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking said that this was a wonderful example what a community can do working with the parish council and borough. It was a fantastic document that he recommended.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:

I. Approves the adoption of the final Datchet Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document with recommended changes.

B) ESTABLISH A RBWM YOUTH COUNCIL

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed development of an RBWM Youth Council.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health informed Cabinet that we currently have a number of youth groups in the borough which engage on important issues for young people via a range of forums, we need to give these a say and more substance in representation to do with the council. He said it was proposed that initially the council would be made up of the following existing forums: the Girls Policy Forum, Kickback, Youth Ambassadors, the Esteem Project and the SEN Life Skills Group. The Youth Council would give clear, transparent and meaningful engagement of young people across the Council, building on what already works.

There were currently number of Youth Council's across the UK and the LGA encourages their establishment. The majority of surrounding boroughs have a youth council or parliament. These give young people an opportunity to engage with national and local politics.

The Lead Member referred Cabinet to paragraph 2.11 of the report that showed young people will learn personal development skills such as, learning new skill. confidence building. team working, to name just a few that were included. These were important in development and starting a career.

The Lead Member said that earlier today the link to the equalities impact assessment had been circulated. This had been produced on time but misses from the report. There was nothing but positive impacts for young people.

He had worked with our Youth Ambassadors and read out a letter they had sent him that said they were excited that the paper was being considered, they think a youth council would be beneficial and help Cabinet to hear the voice of young people. It will help engagement with young people, to see their views influencing decisions rather than decisions being made for them. They want to make a difference and for their voices to be heard.

The Lead Member thanked them for the letter and it showed why the paper should be approved. He thanked officers for their support, especially Elaine Keating.

The Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement informed that he was once the chair of a previous youth council and it had been an enjoyable experience working with young people on this paper. It was important that they have a work programme that they were interested in and can provide positive outcomes. This needs to be driven by young people and be able to influence the council. He reiterated the skills that can be gained by being part of any youth council.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident and Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management and Windsor said that she endorsed the paper, the Girls Forum had been an excellent example. This would help broaden democracy and hopefully we will see future councillors.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot said that he had invited students from Charters School to join the Ascot Neighbourhood Group and he was pleased they had as they made a great considered contribution that challenged and was of value. He congratulated the two Lead Members for this paper.

Cllr Tisi said that she was pleased to have met the youth ambassadors who had written the letter read out earlier and was impressed with what they had to say. A young person may not be interested in party politics but they were interested in a number of important issues. One of the girls had said consultation was often seen as an afterthought they wanted to influence things that was important to them. It was important that this paper puts them at the heart of decision making and not just as an afterthought. She said all young people should be considered such as those with special education needs. It was also important that if we were to involve them with our meetings them a better standard of meeting behaviour was important.

The Lead Member summed up by saying a thank you for the support of this paper and how it was important that we listen to young people's views. It was essential that this Youth Council had diversity and unity.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Agrees to the establishment of a Youth Council to represent all young people within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.**
- ii) Requests officers in Children Services and Democratic Services to develop a framework to support, mentor and guide elected Youth Council members about the functioning and workings of the Council and to work with Lead Members.**
- iii) Agrees to form a Working Group to provide a framework for the governance and participation of the Youth Council in the Council's policy development and implementation of policy. This will include working with the chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Panels to ensure the Youth Council's views are represented and considered.**

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....