

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT:- Councillors Matthew Courtliff (in the Chair); Steve Allsopp, Jim Grant, Steve Heyes, Janine Howarth, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro and Caryl Sydney-Smith

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Vera Tomlinson.

14. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

15. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2020, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

16. Public Question Time

Mr Roy Worman submitted public questions regarding (a) the financing of the Council's LED replacement programme, and (b) the Council's solar farms. Written responses were tabled at the meeting.

Mr Worman asked supplemental questions regarding (a) savings arising from the LED replacement programme, (b) benefits arising from the LED replacement programme. The Chair responded at the meeting.

17. LED Street Lighting Installation

The Council's Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure, and NEV Programme Lead submitted a report setting out progress of the Council's LED Street Lighting installation programme that will help reduce the Council's carbon footprint and achieve significant savings in electricity consumption.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services and Director of Operations, Chief Operating Officer and Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure, and NEV Programme Lead introduced the report and responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of:

- Progress made to date in the LED Street Lighting installation programme.
- The anticipated savings, both financial and environmental, arising from the programme.
- The ability to vary lighting levels in different areas of the Borough and to turn individual lights off following completion of the project.
- The ability of the system to control when lights were turned on and off and to reduce the current 1% of lights operating outside of programmed times and to highlight centrally when lights needed replacement in real time.
- The savings that would accrue from the need to replace light bulbs less frequently due the longer life of the replacement bulbs.

- The on-going installation programme and issues highlighted by it, such as the need for some replacement columns.
- How unadopted roads might be upgraded as they did not currently fall within the replacement programme. It was noted that these could be added to the programme once the road infrastructure was brought to the appropriate standard for adoption.
- Following the completion of the project lighting in unadopted roads could be fitted with nodes to allow an upgrade following a roads adoption but that it wouldn't form part of the current contract.
- The installation and maintenance of street lighting in unadopted roads by the developer; it would be anticipated that street lighting would form part of any adoption package subject to them meeting transport requirement standards.

Resolved – (1) That the report and progress of the LED Street Lighting programme be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services and officers be thanked for their attendance.

18. Solar Update

The Council's Energy and Climate Change Manager submitted a report setting out progress of the Council's progress and performance of our solar schemes that generate clean, green energy within the Borough.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Energy and Climate Change Manager introduced the report and responded to Members' questions and comments in respect of:

- The three solar farms under the Borough's ownership as well as the Wroughton Airfield solar farm.
- The 12 Megawatt capacity of the Council's three solar farms which produced approximately three times the energy of a typical coal power station (although the solar farms peaked in spring and summer).
- During the day the Council's solar farms could power 60,000 of 90,000 homes within the Borough.
- The use of energy generated by the Council's solar farms at the Barnfield site, this would increase as the Council increasingly moved to an electric fleet of vehicles.
- The financial benefit of using the electricity generated by solar farms whilst also receiving a feed-in tariff for the energy generation, this would increase as vehicles replaced those using fossil fuels.
- The progress of the solar farms financially and technically against their original business plans with an anticipated lifespan of twenty-five to thirty years, at which time depending on technical advances and a business plan they might be replaced.
- Reductions in Feed-in Tariffs and the effect this had on the cost recovery of fitting new solar panels and number of years you can claim the payment. It was noted that to some degree this was reflective of the reduction in installation costs.
- New electric car chargers that could identify when it was cheaper to use solar energy or that from the grid when accounting for feed-in tariffs. This technology and battery storage was being examined by the Council for future use, both commercially, and for residential use.

- The capacity of the current electric grid system given increasingly efficient appliances and smart technology for energy use at periods of low demand.
- The potential for alternative usage for and/or recycling of large vehicle batteries in the future.
- The private investment in battery technology at waterside.
- Future investment models for the installation, generation and storage of solar power.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and officers be thanked for their attendance and presentation.

19.

Work Programme

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal Officer setting out the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

The Committee received an update on the current status of the Council's Cycling Strategy (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) which had been scheduled to be considered at the meeting. The draft document was undergoing amendment. It was anticipated that it would be available for consideration by the Committee early in the new Municipal Year.

The Chair reported that there had been further meetings of the Parking Grass Verges Task Group. The Chair confirmed that the Task Group would endeavour to conclude its work during the current Municipal Year.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That items concerning (i) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, (ii) Carbon Reduction Strategy, and (iii) the adoption of unadopted roads be added for consideration in the 2021/22 Work Programme.

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