



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Monday 4th October 2021**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham.**

Present: Councillors

J.	Goodman	(Chairman)
S.	Hicks	
M.	Lager	
C.	Livermore	
S.	Rajeev	
M.	Weeks	

Also in attendance: Cllr

P.	Barlow	
H.	Andrews	(Assistant Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K. Atwill who was travelling abroad, Councillor A. Kilmartin who had a previous meeting and Councillor C. Lager due to family commitments.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

17. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 12th July 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

18. INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were declared.

19. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No member of the press or public were present.

20. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's Report on matters arising was received.

The Clerk explained that an email had been received from Braintree District Council about the Welcome Back Fund and the provision of four planters to be placed in the town with the sole purpose to enable social distancing.

Members agreed to take up the offer to accept the planters and that the Office should decide on appropriate locations.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

21. COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE & BUDGET REPORT

The committee income and expenditure report for the period 1st April to 31st August 2021 was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

22. OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee meeting held 11th August 2021 were received.

Members commented on the Minutes and that a letter had been drafted to Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of Braintree District Council regarding trees at Lidl. It was hoped that an early meeting of the Town Council's Gimsons Review Group could be held but it was noted that tree protection work had been completed and whilst the town park railings had been removed, they were reportedly being kept in storage.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

23. WITHAM TREE GROUP MINUTES

The minutes from Witham Tree Group of 14th July 2021 and 17th August 2021 were received.

RESOLVED That the minutes be received and noted.

24. CLIMATE AUDIT PANEL MINUTES

The Minutes from the Climate Audit Panel meetings of 25th June 2021 and 13th September 2021 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

25. CLIMATE AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT

Recommendations of the Climate Audit Panel were received.

- a) That the Environment Committee explores how to work with developers for the creation of wildflower meadows on new estates.

Members supported the proposals and there were plans for a number of wildflower meadows on the River Walk. It was considered that developers could be asked to consider inclusion on new estates.

- b) That the Environment Committee considers the inclusion and installation of segregated recycling bins as part of the street furniture review.

Members agreed that this was a sensible recommendation and would be taken forward.

- c) That the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group work in partnership with the Climate Audit Panel to produce a draft Witham Cycleway Strategy in consideration of the District Cycling Strategy.

Members agreed that this project would be taken forward with further discussion and deliberation.

RESOLVED That the recommendations be taken forward.

26. HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION SCHEME

An update on the Highways Devolution scheme was received.

Members were advised that over twenty different jobs reported by both Members and residents had been completed this year with £6,000 spent so far, which included funding for appropriate training courses and equipment.

The Essex Association of Local Councils had asked for feedback on the scheme and the Town Clerk had detailed its limitations.

The Clerk asked for details of proposed work to be sent to her with photographs and then she would establish whether the task met the criteria.

The suggestion was made that the weeds along the passageways on Templars Estate needed to be removed but for liaison first with the Residents' Association to ensure they were in agreement.

RESOLVED That the update be received and noted.

27. RESIDENT ENQUIRY

Correspondence was received from a resident regarding sight lines at Blue Mills Road junction with Maldon Road and planning implications regarding structures in the garden of the adjacent house.

Members discussed the contents of the unsigned letter and agreed that anonymous letters should not be considered. It was agreed that the Policy and Resources Committee should formalise a policy that unsigned letters should not be considered.

RESOLVED That the correspondence be received and noted.

RESOLVED That the Policy and Resources Committee be asked to consider a policy not to consider unsigned letters.

28. DRAFT BUDGET AND CORPORATE STRATEGY

Members were asked to consider a draft budget and Environment Business Plan for 2022/2023 ahead of the corporate strategy meeting of 2nd December 2021.

Members considered 2021/2022 budget and Business Plan.

Members agreed that ideas within the current Business Plan should be taken forward to the December meeting with current objectives which can be realised completed.

It was suggested that bridges on the River Walk needed to be replaced as they were over 50 years old with signs of falling apart. Members agreed that they were no longer an appropriate design and unsuitable for mobility scooters and could be replaced by a simple structure on the same level. It was suggested that the Business Plan should consider options to replace bridges and the financial implications.

RESOLVED That the current Business Plan be taken forward to the December meeting but to include the replacement of bridges.¹

29. STATION ADOPTION

The Clerk explained that this was the third year of the railway station adoption scheme in liaison with the Community Rail Officer. The Open Spaces Team plant, station staff water and volunteers dead head plants and weed. The Clerk explained that additional volunteers were required.

Councillors Rajeev and Weeks volunteered to keep an eye on the planters particularly during the summer months.

It was agreed that once the winter planting had been completed a media release would be prepared.

RESOLVED That the update be received and Councillors Rajeev and Weeks offer of assistance be accepted.

30. SNOW CLEARANCE POLICY

The amended Snow Clearance Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the amended Snow Clearance Policy be received and approved.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.36 p.m.

Councillor J. Goodman
Chairman

HA/GK/6.10.2021

- 1. The inspection of bridges are already included in the Committee's Path & Cycleway Renewal Programme, where a 'Stage 3 Report' was considered by Full Council on 28th June 2021. Resolution was passed to proceed to a Stage 4 report under the Council's Uniform Project Management Process. Recommendation (3) of the Stage 3 Report authorised the Town Clerk with the following mandate:*

(Authority) be given to the Town Clerk to instruct a Structural Engineer & Concrete Specialist to perform a separate survey of the bridge inventory immediately.

The report designated Full Council as the 'Project Board' with authority for this capital expenditure item no longer residing with the Environment Committee. Section 5.3 of the Council's adopted Scheme of Delegation refers all matters of principal capital expenditure to Full Council only. The footpath, cycleways and bridges programme will be removed from the Environment Committee's section of the new Corporate Strategy 2022/2023.