

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CABINET

Monday 13th July 2020

Present: Councillor Shabir Pandor (Chair)
Councillor Viv Kendrick
Councillor Musarrat Khan
Councillor Naheed Mather
Councillor Peter McBride
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Cathy Scott
Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Rob Walker

Observers: Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Alison Munro
Councillor Anthony Smith
Councillor Lesley Warner

216 Membership of Cabinet

All Members of Cabinet were present.

217 Minutes of Previous Meeting - 26 May 2020

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

218 Interests

No interests were declared.

219 Admission of the Public

It was noted that Agenda Item 14 would be considered in exempt session (Minute No. 229 refers).

220 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

221 Questions by Members of the Public (Written Questions)

Cabinet received the following questions from Members of the Public:

Question from Richard Stow

“In regards to Agenda Item 12 - The proposal states at para 3.1 ... “Community Forestry is the process of widening and deepening our communities’ involvement

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with and connection to the planning, planting and management of trees and woodlands”

This has not been my experience of seeking to engage with WRF and thus, I expect the community at large have had no contact at all, apart from specific organisations YWT, RHC, CVTS and a few business sponsors of tree planting.

I look forward to WRF having a much more engaging and inclusive relationship with the whole community going forward, especially disadvantaged and marginalised communities. I know there have been small engagements in planting schemes, which need to be much greater, and longer term, e.g Mersey Forest support 10 community forest management groups, there being no WRF equivalent. This has been raised before.

I waited a year for a response to proposals to Northern Forest, still unresolved, and no response from WRF. Mersey Forest and HEYwoods were the most responsive.

As a community forestry campaigner and innovator I am constantly surprised that too late, I hear of projects, such as Castle Hill Wildwood, but never ahead of the game. Again if this is my experience, I doubt current community engagement.

There must be a host of possible related developments ongoing that are not community engaged, even to the likes of me. Leeds Road nursery? Is there a plan related to this proposal? Are we invited to be involved? What else?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Greener Kirklees (Councillor Mather).

Question from Richard Stow

“I note reference in the current Government Tree Strategy consultation, ahead of the Environment Act 2020, to eliminating plastics from tree planting. Brilliant. Noting conventional forestry insistent on tree planting guards, virtually always plastic, routinely littering the landscape and only partially recovered, rarely recycled, so plastic waste.

Currently Northern Forest is committed to 50 million plastic tree guards over 25 years. As the proposed national leader in delivering reforestation, WRF and partners need to seriously and urgently ramp up procurement of non-plastic tree guards, now, before the upcoming planting season, as an absolute priority.

If there is a shortage of such non plastic tree guards, or a need for sustainable product development, then this should be initiated with immediate effect. Is there a product? A new local sustainable product springboard.

The WRF report reference to sustainability, actually seems to be addressing financial sustainability, thus giving a poor impression of environmental credibility - 2.47 The sustainability of the WRF’s element of the “Trees for Climate” programme will be determined by the success of the full 5 year capital programme being signed

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off by the Treasury as part of the wider Nature For Climate fund announced in the March budget.”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Greener Kirklees (Councillor Mather).

Question from Richard Stow

“The report only shows interest in project management. I have for several years sought to engage with Northern Forest and WRF, in this aspect noting that the delivery of planting by NF and WRF far exceeds the scope for volunteer planting, I have identified a likely need for at least 200 forestry workers, maybe double, plus support services and admin, ongoing for a newly emerging regional forest economy. I haven’t seen this recognised anywhere else. 10% volunteer 90% forest contractor.

Our detailed business case was presented in - Response to: Council Owned Tree and Woodland Management Policy and; White Rose Forest, 11.2 Northern Forest Community Forestry Scope. Kirklees Council Scrutiny Meeting - 12 December 2019

With the likelihood of high unemployment post Covid, and existing local unresolved long term deprivation areas, the programme needs to address the opportunity to develop the whole forest and timber sector economy, including new sustainability opportunities, such as plastic free tree guards, and much more. There is huge scope for sustainable innovation, with innovator access to resources, probably more beneficial than actual financial support. We can discuss? A role for WYCA.

All of this is very timely opportunity, for social enterprise forestry and sustainable economic regeneration, central to Green Economic recovery. As I have drawn attention before, possibly the immediate opportunity, is to develop social enterprise contract forestry, out of the South Yorkshire Forest, which manages maybe 500ha of forested former mine land, managed by TCV and Doncaster Council, building on the experience and significant resource, adding further timber value if there is scope, and capacity building towards NF delivery.

The opportunity in South Yorkshire, is to address the continuing need for economic regeneration of mining communities with social enterprise contract forestry industries, as also across the whole NF, in former mining areas, from Lancashire to the Selby Coalfield, then from a base, serving neighbouring economic development needs, with urban forestry development, serving towns and inner cities. I have tried to engage variously on this, but it needs the support and influence of Kirklees and/or NF/WRF. Unfortunately, my experience is that influence is everything – not what you know but who you know.

Thus the report reference at para 2.37 to forestry skills pool, is very limited in its scope and only about management. There will be a need for 200+ forestry workers.”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Greener Kirklees (Councillor Mather).

Question from Richard Stow

“As a long experienced, both practical, and business innovator, environmental scientist, engineer, I have to say that the UK and regionally we underachieve massively on our human resources, by not enabling innovation. My experience is that influence is everything – not what you know but who you know.

The Northern Forest and Trees for Climate are a brilliant springboard opportunity for sustainable innovation, feeding the emerging green recovery. The opportunity is to enable access to resources and opportunity to pilot and showcase. Even more useful than cash. Innovation opportunity delivering reforestation projects.

The opportunity needs to be very openly accessible, and modestly supported with facilities and a good showcase social hub. As an example, the Huddersfield Piazza arts projects and Climate Hub in March 2020, were good examples of how this could materialise, but longer term, maybe in an urban woodland/park setting/Leeds Rd nursery?

Kirklees Council Climate Emergency Working Party Final Report September 2019, We reported to Council thus:

We propose Kirklees Council enable and stimulate a regional lead in developing the forest and timber sector that will emerge with the Northern Forest. Sustainable forestry, forestry and timber technology innovation, saw milling, novel forest products, furniture, joinery, wood fibre technology, bioplastics and wood derived bio chemicals. Etc.

We propose establishing an Open access Eco Innovation Hub, based at a redundant site, self help, business support, social, cafe, workshops, Innovation Showcase. Broadly to encourage social enterprise, eco innovation, a space linked to Community Forestry, as a self help resource centre.”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Greener Kirklees (Councillor Mather).

Question from Heather Peacock

“In January I saw an article on Examiner live. It was about areas of green and woodland earmarked for business and industry. These sights are Lindley moor east, Cleckheaton, Leeds Road, Mirfield and also a site at Colne Bridge Road.

This interested me as it’s an air quality management area. It has elevated levels of Nitrogen Dioxide. This is dangerous for residents and people in the area. In this area the ancient woodland at Cooper Bridge and the Upper quarry nature reserve is threatened with destruction. So this land advertised for industrial development is important as it’s mainly woodland.

This little green area is so important to the area to help reduce the terrible air pollution nearby. I see green areas being sold off for industry. I realise jobs in our area are crucial. I see so many industrial units by me in Milnsbridge up for rent.

I ask has enough been done to source industrial areas that are already established rather than encouraging destruction of our green areas?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride).

222 Questions by Elected Members (Oral Questions)

Question from Councillor Cooper

"How do we keep MPs in Kirklees informed of the action that we are taking to tackle the Covid 19 crisis?"

A response was provided by the Leader of the Council.

Question from Councillor Lawson

"What plans are there to bring the Planning Sub Committees back into operation?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride).

Question from Councillor Munro

"How many shops and businesses have remained permanently closed in Huddersfield Town Centre following the easing of lockdown restrictions?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration (Councillor McBride).

Question from Councillor Warner

"In regards to Agenda Item 11, the proposal that is coming from our area regarding the pilot funding for mental health provision is for a counsellor to work with students over the summer holidays for a three month period. Please can Cabinet look favourably upon this proposal?"

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Democracy (Councillor Scott).

223 Kirklees Children and Young People's Partnership Plan

Cabinet received a report which provided an update on the relaunched Children and Young People's Partnership and sought endorsement of the Children and Young People's Plan. The report advised that the plan set out the partnership's agreed priorities which enabled the Council and its partners to focus upon achieving a shared ambition, and provided a framework for partners to collaborate, share expertise, and work across the system to bring about positive changes that improve children's outcomes.

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Cabinet noted that the Children and Young People's Partnership had been relaunched in 2019, replacing a formal Committee, and providing a model which aspired to bring together collective insight, expertise and resources to achieve the best start in life for young people and focus upon priority areas of work by providing strategic leadership.

The report advised that, whilst there was no longer a statutory requirement for a Children and Young People's Plan to be produced, there was consensus amongst the partnership that such a plan would provide clarity and focus and a plan had therefore been developed which set out nine agreed priorities and would help close gaps in children's inequalities and life chances.

RESOLVED - That the Children and Young People's Plan be endorsed and submitted to Council with a recommendation of approval.

224 Small Affordable Housing Sites Programme update - Disposal of Land at Nabcroft Lane, Huddersfield

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which (i) provided a further update on the Small Affordable Housing Sites Programme and (ii) sought approval to dispose of a site at Nabcroft Lane, Huddersfield, varying the terms of the previous Cabinet authority granted on 9 August 2018, to enable the disposal of the site at less than market value.

The report advised that, on 26 May 2020, Cabinet delegated authority for the disposal of three sites at Mirfield and Hightown to Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust at less than market value following the grant of permission for 20 affordable bungalows and that these were scheduled to be the first units to be constructed in the programme.

Cabinet were also advised that Unity Housing, which was part of the Council's preferred partner Accent Development Consortium, had applied for planning permission for 19 affordable homes at Nabcroft Lane and that site evaluations had identified cost and development challenges due to (i) physical challenges of the sites including site levels and (ii) increased costs due to additional drainage requirements and attenuation required. Due to these circumstances, Cabinet were asked to consider the options of either withdrawing the site from the programme and seeking disposal on the open market, or disposing of the sites at less than market value. The latter option was recommended within the report due to the benefits that would be delivered, which were set out in para 2.11 of the considered report.

The report advised that, subject to approval, the disposal of the site at Nabcroft Lane in two parcels would be progressed, and that it was expected that site work could commence in October 2020 in order to enable the drawdown of Homes England funding.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the programme update, as set out in the report, and the proposed investment of the Preferred Partner and Homes England in enabling the acquisition and development of the second phase site at Nabcroft Lane, Huddersfield, be noted.

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- 2) That approval be given to the disposal of land at Nabcroft Lane, Huddersfield, as detailed within the considered report.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Economy and Infrastructure) to negotiate and agree terms and dispose of land at Nabcroft Lane.
- 4) That authority be delegated to the Service Director (Legal, Governance and Commissioning) to enter such agreements on negotiated and agreed terms for disposal.
- 5) That it be noted that these resolutions will enable the delivery of the second phase of the SAHS programme as previously authorised, and contribute to the delivery of the Council's housing strategy, and Housing Growth Plan.

225 Kirklees Local Economic Recovery Plan

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Lawson).

Cabinet received a report which set out the Kirklees Economic Recovery Plan, in response to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report advised that the plan had been developed in parallel with, and would inform the development of, the West Yorkshire Recovery Plan, and detailed how the Council and its key public, private and voluntary sector partners could support the economic recovery.

Cabinet were advised that the primary purpose of the document was to set out how the Council and stakeholders, could directly support the recovery and how these anchor institutions, including Kirklees College and the University of Huddersfield, have a vital role to play in leading recovery efforts through investment, procurement and recruitment decisions, and use of key property and other assets. The report indicated that the plan, which covered the 2020-2023 period, had a strong focus upon supporting people, including vulnerable residents, amongst other priorities relating to job creation, economic recovery, tackling the digital divide and developing the role of the voluntary and community sector. The plan, which was attached at Appendix 1 of the considered report set out detail of the proposed initiatives.

It was noted that, subject to approval, the plan would be issued for a six week period of public consultation, following which appropriate amendments would be made.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the content of the report and draft Economic Recovery Plan be noted and that approval be given to the draft plan for the purposes of public consultation.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Economy and Infrastructure) to implement the consultation programme and finalise the Economic Recovery Plan in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Economy and Infrastructure) and the Service Director (Finance), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Asset Strategy, to establish the Economic Recovery Fund and pursue external funding to support delivery of the plan.

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- 4) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Economy and Infrastructure), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to establish appropriate monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the Economic Recovery Plan and to prepare regular reports to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- 5) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Economy and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, for the delivery of the key projects as outlined in the Economic Recovery Plan, where this authority is not already in place, and to commence any related procurement exercises.

226 Colne Valley Place Partnership - Mental Health Initiatives - Summer 2020

(Under the provision of Council Procedure Rule 36(1) Cabinet received a representation from Councillor A Smith).

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which requested that funding of £27,600 be allocated from the Place Partnership Mental Health themed budget to fund support and help for families living in the Colne Valley Place Partnership area, over the summer 2020 period.

The report advised that the proposal comprised of two elements; (i) Timestep Community Dance Exercise and Wellbeing Provision - £8,400 and (ii) The Ladder Group – Counselling provision based at United Church Healing Ministries - £19,200.

Cabinet were advised that, subject to approval, school hub co-ordinators would work with mental health and well-being leads at schools within the place partnership area in order to identify the children and young people who would benefit from it, and that a subsequent evaluation exercise would inform the development of medium to long term proposals to build mental health and well-being capacity within the area, working alongside local services, partners and communities.

RESOLVED - That approval be given to the following funding from the Place Partnership Mental Health Theme allocation for children and young people in the Colne Valley Place Partnership during summer 2020; (i) £8,400 for the provision of Timestep Community Dance Provision (Luke's Lads/Butterflies) and (ii) £19,200 for the provision of The Ladder Group counselling provision based at United Church Healing Ministries, Milnsbridge, amounting to a total of £27,600.

227 White Rose Forest Plan and the Trees for Climate Programme

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which sought confirmation that the Council would take the role as the accountable body for the White Rose Forest and would take on a leadership role across the geography of the White Rose Forest joint venture to deliver the White Rose Forest Plan as a way of tackling the climate emergency and supporting a 'green' economic recovery.

Cabinet noted that the White Rose Forest Plan would (i) set broad targets for increasing tree and woodland cover up to 2050 in the Leeds city region and (ii) provide a delivery pathway for landowners and White Rose Forest partners to design, deliver and maintain new community woodland, using a variety of funding streams. The report advised that, once the plan has been agreed by the Leeds City

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Region, local authorities and partners, a new governance structure to deliver it would require a revised Joint Venture Agreement and that the Council would need to oversee this process. It was noted that funding was currently being sought to cover the costs of the revising the Agreement.

The report advised that the Government had announced a £640m Nature for Climate Programme to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland by 2025 and that work was underway to develop a community forest led strand of this fund, creating 6000 hectares of new woodland in England's community forest areas, including 1500 hectares in the White Rose Forest. Cabinet noted that, should the community forest strand be successful, DEFRA had invited Cheshire West and Chester Council to make an application to be the accountable body for the Trees for Climate programme, who would then contract Kirklees Council to deliver the programme in line with the White Rose Forest plan across the geography of the joint venture.

(Cabinet gave consideration to the exempt information at Agenda Item 14 (Minute No. 229 refers) prior to the determination of this Agenda Item).

RESOLVED -

- 1) That authority be granted to Kirklees Council as the accountable body for the White Rose Forest, for the four key decisions in respect to the 'Trees for Climate' grant and revising the joint venture agreement, namely;
 - (i) an authority for the Council to enter into grant agreements to receive both revenue and capital funding from Cheshire West and Chester (as the accountable body for 'Trees for Climate' programme) re White Rose Forest Project – both in Kirklees Council's capacity as the accountable body for the White Rose Forest and also as a grant recipient
 - (ii) an authority for the Council to enter into grant agreements, in its capacity as accountable body, with the other parties to the White Rose Forest (from time to time) re both revenue and capital funding
 - (iii) an authority for the Council to enter into grant agreements, in its capacity as accountable body, with third party landowners who are not party to the White Rose Forest joint venture agreement
 - (iv) an authority for the Council to vary the existing joint venture project agreement/enter a new joint venture project agreement for the White Rose Forest Project upon completion of the White Rose Forest Plan expected December 2020.
- 2) That authority be granted for the Council to take a leadership role across the geography of the White Rose Forest joint venture to deliver the White Rose Forest Plan as a way of tackling the emergency climate and support a 'green' economic recovery.

228

Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

229

White Rose Forest Plan and the Trees for Climate Programme

(Exempt information relating to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely that the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness in the Council's decision making).

Cabinet gave consideration to the exempt information prior to the determination of Agenda Item 12 (Minute No. 227 refers).