



Lichfield City Council

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Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs BA (Hons), CiLCA

27 March 2024

To: Members of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee

Councillors R Harvey-Coggins (Chair), and Councillors J Blackman, A Hughes, A Lax, A Rushton and E Strain.

Dear Councillor

Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee to be held in the Moulton Room, Guildhall at **6.00pm on Wednesday 3 April 2024** for the transaction of the following business. Any Councillor unable to attend should forward their apologies to the Town Clerk.

Yours sincerely

Tony Briggs
Town Clerk

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**
- 3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 17 January 2024 (copy attached) [*minutes adopted by council on 22 January 2024*] and any matters arising from those minutes.

- 4. UPDATES TO COMMITTEE PRIORITIES**

Following discussions, certain priorities have been agreed. Updates on these priorities are provided below:

- 1. Herb Garden Areas in LCC Open Spaces**

Following circulation to all members, LCC open space at Leomansley View was the favoured location for the first herb bed. The Town Clerk met on site with the Open Spaces Officer and LDC's Grounds Maintenance Supervisor on 29 February.

Concerns were raised by LDC representatives as to the current use of the open space, for ball games, dog exercise etc, and the impact of that use on the proposed herb beds and vice versa. It was suggested that if members did wish to proceed, a series of small planters could be placed on the edge of the open space, planted and then monitored. There was concern about the location of the open space – requiring residents to cross the road to reach it – and the possibility of vandalism as occurred with the planting of the

bund at Nether Stowe, with all plants removed within 14 days of planting. The provision, maintenance, watering etc would be an additional cost to LCC (with the service being provided by LDC's grounds maintenance team). The cost of installation would depend on the scale of the proposal.

During discussions, two alternatives were suggested:

A). Rather than providing the herbs/planters in a set location and assuming community use, invite community groups to bid for LCC funding to provide such planters/herbs in their own areas, or more ambitious designs such as that in Coton-in-the-Elms which doubles as a sensory garden. This would ensure the provision is demand-led rather than speculative, and the community group would take responsibility for maintenance/watering. The Coton-in-the-Elms project was itself community led, created by a local resident for his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

B). Plant the herbs at Dovehouse Community Gardens (and/or other allotment sites) where they could be tended by volunteers and protected from some of the risks of being located in an exposed open space (vandalism, pet urine etc). Local residents could be made aware of the provision and invited to 'pick their own' in consort with Dovehouse/allotment site representatives (subject to their agreement).

2. Water Fountains/Refill Points.

An update from the Chair to be provided at the meeting following her meeting with 'City to Sea'.

3. Bicycle Repair Stations

The Town Clerk has been in discussion with various bodies regarding this provision over the past several weeks. As requested, enquiries were made as to locating the station adjacent to St Mary's – this was rejected by St Mary's representatives.

The possibility of locating the station on SCC land adjacent to HSBC was investigated, but costs proved prohibitive, SCC stating that if it were to be installed in the adopted highway it would require a 'Stopping-Up' order. Further research revealed likely costs of such an order to be at least £15,000.

Enquiries then returned to the possibility of using LCC land for the provision, notably the area adjacent to Speaker's Corner on Pool Walk. As the land is in the Conservation Area, the Town Clerk consulted LDC's Conservation Officer.



Discussions with LDC's Conservation Officer revealed a preference for an alternative but nearby location, this time on land owned by LDC:



Discussions continued with LDC officers and permission is now in place for a cycle repair station to be located in the approximate area marked above. At the time of preparing this report, a quotation was awaited from LDC for the cost of installation. LDC officers are also preparing 'Heads of Terms' for a corresponding licence agreement between LCC and LDC. A verbal update on both elements may be available at the meeting.

There had also been discussion of a similar provision at Lichfield City Station (see Minute 14 (5)), but further investigation by Cllr Strain has revealed that a provision already exists at the station, albeit of lower quality than is proposed, badly maintained and some of the tools missing. I bring this to the attention of the Committee to note that while no doubt durable, the facility is open to vandalism as is clearly demonstrated by this similar and very local provision; the ongoing costs of maintenance of any cycle station installed by LCC will rest with LCC.

From informal discussion, it would appear that of the two sites put forward, City Station is not the preferred location.

The Town Clerk has prepared a report for the City Council's Grants Committee which is due to meet on 8 April. The Grants Committee would consider any request for CIL funding to support this project, with this Committee having previously agreed that such funding would be welcomed (see Minute 14 (5)). The Committee is therefore asked to make a recommendation as to next steps in order that such recommendation can be reported verbally to the Grants Committee and a corresponding CIL allocation considered if appropriate. Members are reminded that the approximate cost of each cycle station is £2,400 and that there will also be installation costs and possible licence costs to be added.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to consider next steps, to include whether it wishes to install a cycle repair station, the location of the station and any request for CIL funding for the project.

4. No Mow May/Wildflower Areas etc

It was agreed that members would consider any other sites they felt appropriate to be added to 'no mow May' and be discussed at this meeting.

The current 'no mow' sites are:

1. Festival Gardens (part)
2. Nether Stowe (part)

Current wildflower areas are located at:

1. Festival Gardens
2. Opposite St Chads/Adjacent Stowe Pool
3. The 'bund' at Nether Stowe
4. Broad Lane - new for 2024 and seeded on 25 March
5. Eastern Avenue – adjacent Sports Club entrance, new for 2024 and currently being progressed.

The provision of wildflower areas is somewhat costly initially and ongoing maintenance/weeding is required, but perennial seeds are used allowing the display to return and strengthen year on year.

4. LCC Carbon Emissions calculations

As discussed at the last meeting, the Town Clerk made enquiries with LDC regarding possible carbon reduction/sequestering ideas. A link was provided to SCC's Adaptation Strategy, which is somewhat broad and overarching for LCC's purposes. Unfortunately, the officer responsible has now left LDC.

The Committee also asked the Town Clerk to approach LDC's Conservation Officer in regard to the possibility of solar panels on listed buildings, notably the Guildhall. The Town Clerk advised that such discussions were held a few years ago, and the response was resoundingly negative. The Town Clerk subsequently contacted the Conservation Officer for an updated view and suggested that the most appropriate (in yield terms) site for the panels on the Guildhall would be on the elevation that overlooks the car park to the rear of Donegal House. An extract from the Conservation Officer's response follows:

The solar panels I appreciate would have less visibility in this location... ..However the panel would be visible and would impact the Guildhall as a Grade II Listed Building, and would also impact the setting of a Grade II building Donegal House. We would also be concerned about the impact to any historic fabric as there would need to be cabling, controller etc.*

I would assess the works as not having a positive impact to the listed building, and I would say that the works would fall within the category of less than substantial harm, so the public benefits would need to outweigh the less than substantial harm. This would need to be justified in the listed building/planning application.

5. OTHER MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

To consider any representations from Committee members regarding any relevant new or emerging items for discussion that are not otherwise included on this agenda.

6. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be decided by the Committee.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

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Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee held in the Moulton Room, Guildhall on Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 5.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors R Harvey-Coggins (Chair), and Councillors J Blackman, A Hughes, A Lax and E Strain.

APOLOGIES: Cllr A Rushton.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

13. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: *That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record [minutes adopted by council on 14 December 2023].*

14. UPDATES TO COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report detailing progress on identified priorities since the previous meeting:

1. School 'Engine Idling' Poster/Bug Hotel Competition

The Town Clerk confirmed a second letter had been sent to schools as requested, but no further requests for posters had been received. It was agreed that members who knew local teachers would contact them to make them aware of the offer. The Town Clerk confirmed that any school representative interested in acquiring a poster or seeking further information could email tony.briggs@lichfield.gov.uk

Cllr A Hughes suggested the Town Clerk contact the Active School Travel Team at Staffordshire County Council to offer the City Council's support to any initiatives they could undertake to encourage Lichfield schools to adopt walking buses and other forms of sustainable travel.

It was agreed that the 'bug hotel' competition be revisited later in 2024.

2. Herb Gardens in LCC Open Spaces

Three potential sites were identified within the agenda papers. Sites at Sheriff's Close and Garrick Close were considered the most appropriate, but it was agreed that committee members would visit each site in readiness for the next meeting, together with consideration of additional potential sites. It was agreed that one site would be progressed initially, and that once a preferred site had been selected, a meeting with LDC Operational Services to establish best location for raised bed/s would be held. Consultation with local residents would then be initiated based upon those discussions and draft plans. The Town Clerk was asked to circulate an email to all LCC Councillors asking them to advise of any sites they felt may be appropriate to put forward for consideration.

3. Green Networking Event – 29 November 2023

It was agreed by all that this was a well-attended and enjoyable event. Cllr E Strain advised that this series of events was now complete, with the organisers working on a database of contacts, information, suggestions etc that would be completed in the coming months. Cllr Strain confirmed he would contact the organisers in regard to timescale for completion of this work. The proposed LDC climate summit event was discussed, with the likelihood that Cllr Strain would attend on behalf of the group. It was agreed by all that there was a strong desire to avoid both repetition and silo working.

4. Water fountains/refill points

Discussion focused on the provision of stickers to local businesses to denote the availability of free water/top up facilities and how these could be procured and distributed. Cllr Blackman suggested he contact the Chamber of Trade to assist with publicising and distribution, and this was agreed by the Committee. The Chair also suggested contact with Transition Lichfield representatives as they had previously been involved in a similar initiative; the Chair stated she would make contact. The Town Clerk confirmed that letters referring to the availability of, or containing, the stickers (according to the preference of the Committee) could be hand delivered to City Centre businesses in due course. The Chair to distribute sticker examples for consideration of the Committee.

5. Bicycle repair Stations

Cllr Strain had provided example installations and these, together with potential locations, were discussed by the Committee. Cllr Lax enquired as to demand for such a repair station, Cllr Strain replying that demand in a city centre location and adjacent to cycle route 54 would likely be significant. The cost was thought to be around £2400 based on quotations and information received to date. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would contact representatives of St Mary's to establish whether they would consent to a repair station on the Breadmarket St elevation of the building, and also contact Network Rail regarding the possibility of locating a repair station adjacent to city station/s. The possibility of siting along Dam St was also discussed. Cllr Lax confirmed this to be SCC owned, with a request needing to be made to SCC if the installation was to be progressed in that location. The possibility of CIL funding once a location had been established was welcomed.

6. Signage with advice regarding appropriate food for ducks

The Town Clerk confirmed that these had been installed along Pool Walk. The Chair stated she would write an accompanying press release.

7. Pollinator Planters – City Centre

It was agreed that this item be combined for future meetings with the provision of herb gardens as set out above.

8. LCC Carbon Emissions Calculations

Cllr Blackman provided some additional detail to accompany the broad figures in the report; the calculations therein being based on the Green House Gas Protocol Framework for ESG Reporting (<https://ghgprotocol.org/>)

Options for carbon reduction and sequestering were discussed, with an agreement that the Town Clerk contact LDC's Ecological Officer in regard to possible assistance they could provide. It was agreed that much of the 'low hanging fruit' had already been completed, with conversion of pathway lights to LED, upgrades to properties etc. The

possibility of solar panels on the Guildhall was raised, the Town Clerk confirmed previous discussions along similar lines were rejected by the then Conservation Officer due to the building's listed status. It was agreed this would be reinvestigated, with the necessary roof surveys to be completed if the addition of panels was now considered acceptable.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted and matters progressed as individually discussed.

15. OTHER MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Chair highlighted 'No Mow May'. The Town Clerk confirmed that arrangements in place for 2023 were due to be replicated for 2024, with Festival Gardens and Nether Stowe once again being left, in part, unmown over the spring and summer, together with the necessary maintenance of the various LCC managed wildflower beds in the City. It was agreed that members would consider any other sites they felt appropriate to be added to 'no mow May' and this would be discussed at the next meeting.

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed by email; the Town Clerk to circulate suggested dates approximately two months from the date of this meeting.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 5.55pm**