



Lichfield City Council

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Town Clerk: Anthony Briggs BA (Hons), CILCA

10 February 2025

To: Members of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee

Councillors J Blackman (Chair), K Farrelly, R Harvey-Coggins, 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 in the Moulton Room at 6.00pm on Monday 17 February 2025** for the transaction of the following business.

Any Councillor unable to attend should forward their apologies to the Deputy Town Clerk.
(sarah.thomas@lichfield.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

Sarah Thomas
Deputy 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 21 October 2024 (copy attached) [*minutes adopted by council on 16 December 2024*] and any matters arising from those minutes.

4. UPDATES TO COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Following discussions, certain priorities have been agreed and/or possible avenues of work raised. Updates on these are provided below:

1. Bicycle Repair Station.

The Bicycle repair station has been installed since 2 August 2024 but unfortunately over the Christmas period was subject to vandalism . The Open Spaces Officer has been able to determine that only the bicycle pump has been damaged. A replacement has been ordered at a cost of £384 inc VAT(£336 for pump +£48 carriage)

Councillor E Strain previously commented that members of the public thought the station was locked as the door was stiff. The Deputy Town Clerk can confirm that a sign has now been fitted to the door and that the handle is magnetic which may have caused some resistance.

2. Habitat Havens

At the last meeting of the CCBBD Committee, Members spoke to LDC Officers regarding the creation of Habitat Havens and are now asked to consider the next steps to action this. Previous suggestions have included engaging with local schools to create 'Bug Hotels' and identifying LCC sites on which to create Habitat Havens.

LDC has already created a number of Habitat Havens such as Short Butts Park in Lichfield, locations and maps can be found on the [LDC website](#).

Members are asked to note that LCC has been at the forefront of wild flowering and no mow areas working with Lichfield Green Space Mowing Panel at LDC in collaboration with SCC and other Parish Councils. LCC no mow sites are at Netherstowe and Festival Gardens, and wild flowering has already been established on Festival Gardens, St Chads, Eastern Avenue and Broad Lane. In addition Tulips and Daffodils have been planted on Newlyn Mound which is also on Broad Lane. Additional sites for planting are actively being sought.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to consider next steps and actions to pursue.

3. Carbon Sequestering and Collaboration with Woodlands Trust

Members are reminded that at the previous meeting it was agreed they would provide an update on how they wished to work with the Woodlands Trust. For completeness, the range of resources available to local Councils by the Woodland Trust and possible key actions is included again at **ENCLOSURE 1**, (circulated by email) together with the Open Spaces Officers survey of existing trees on LCC sites.

Further details of all LCC sites and online mapping can be found on the [LCC website](#).

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to discuss how they wish to work with the Woodlands Trust and consider next steps and actions to pursue.

[Deputy Town Clerks Note. It may be appropriate for suggestions emerging from items 2 & 3 to be collated and put before LDC Operational Services by the DTC who can then report back to the Committee at the next meeting]

4. Solar Panels on LCC Buildings

Members are asked to note the Deputy Town Clerks update report at **AGENDA APPENDIX 1** and the comments of the structural engineers' report circulated by email at **ENCLOSURE 2**.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to consider **whether or not** it wishes to continue to pursue the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Guildhall and the associated costs, including further investigations by a structural engineer.

5. Carbon Literacy Certification

Councillor A Rushton has now completed the Carbon Literacy course and is asked to update the Committee regarding the content and how the Council may obtain Carbon Literacy Certification.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to discuss Councillor A Rushton's update and consider the next steps.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL GOVERNANCE (ESG) POLICY

At the request of the Chair, Councillor J Blackman, Members are asked to consider an appropriate ESG policy for Lichfield City Council and its suppliers.

The Deputy Town Clerk has made enquiries with LDC regarding their ESG policy so that LCC may be aligned. However, LDC Officers confirm that they do not currently have a specific ESG policy or ask their suppliers to provide one as part of the procurement process. Details of LDC current policies have been circulated via email at **ENCLOSURE 3**. The LDC Governance Policy can be found at [LDC Governance Policy](#)

Members are asked to note that LDC currently employs two specialised Officers for such purposes, has many more resources at their disposal than LCC and is yet to implement an ESG Policy. Members may consider it appropriate for the Deputy Town Clerk to remain in contact with LDC Officers and utilise their resources as they become available.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to consider next steps and actions to pursue.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF STAFFORDSHIRE BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT NETWORK. (SBEN)

Members are asked the appropriateness of LCC joining SBEN whose services aim to raise awareness, train employees, and provide tools to implement environmental initiatives. Members are asked to note that LDC are already Members and that there is no charge to join. A copy of SBEN latest newsletter has been circulated by email at **ENCLOSURE 4**.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to consider **whether or not** it wishes to join Staffordshire Business and Environment Network and if so that delegated authority be given to the Deputy Town Clerk to progress.

7. SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION OF ACTION PLAN AND UPDATES

In order to keep track of the complex and ongoing agenda items it is suggested that an Action Plan be created as per the example at **AGENDA APPENDIX 2**. In addition that updating the action plan forms a standing Agenda item at future meetings.

RECOMMENDED: That an action plan be created for all ongoing projects and that updates be a standing Agenda item at future meetings

8. 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.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be decided by the Committee.

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee held via Zoom, on Monday 21 October 2024 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors J Blackman (Chair) and Councillors, K. Farrelly, R Harvey-Coggins, A Rushton, and E Strain.

Lichfield District Council Officers, James Porter, and Alex Lane.

APOLOGIES: Councillor A. Lax.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION.

Councillor J Blackman declared an interest in agenda item 4.2 (Minute 7.2) as his businesses are heavily involved in carbon sequestering.

6. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING.

RESOLVED: *That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record [minutes adopted by council on 24 July 2024].*

7. UPDATES TO COMMITTEE PRIORITIES.

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

1. Bicycle Repair Stations.

The location – adjacent to Speakers Corner – was agreed by the Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee at its meeting of 26 June. The station was delivered in late July and installed on 2 August.

Councillor E Strain requested that a sign or handle be put on the door of the cycle station to indicate it was not locked as he had received representations that users had found the tools difficult to access.

2. Carbon Sequestering.

Members discussed with District Council Officers James Porter and Alex Lane various projects which the District Council are working on.

These included.

- a) Green Streets – an initiative to identify streets in need of greening and the planting of more trees which could incorporate nesting boxes and bug hotels.
- b) A pilot scheme to introduce a variety of grasses in both Beacon Park, Lichfield, and Redwood Park, Burntwood to encourage greater biodiversity.
- c) A consultation to turn a portion of the Golf course in Beacon park over to wild flowering.

LDC Officers also took the time to explain to Members how Biodiversity Units are calculated, the legal requirements of selling them and the threshold required to register with natural England and DEFRA.

RESOLVED: *That the District Council Officers comments be noted and Members decide how to progress further and if any projects could be worked on collaboratively with LDC. Members to provide a further update at the next meeting.*

3. Collaboration with Woodlands Trust.

Members considered the range of resources and possible actions suggested by the Woodlands Trust as detailed at **AGENDA APPENDIX 1**

Councillor J Blackman suggested LCC issue a press release to incentivise more planting in the local community to increase biodiversity and to look at a long-term strategy with the Woodlands Trust to identify suitable sites to plant more trees.

Councillor E Strain asked if any additionally could be added to the 'wetlands' around the City such as streams and brooks.

RESOLVED: That as per the one of the Woodlands Trust suggestions the CCBD committee look at ways to incentivise more planting in the community. Members to discuss how they wish to work with the Woodlands Trust and provide a further update at the next meeting.

4. Solar Panels on LCC Buildings.

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerks report at **AGENDA APPENDIX 2** and felt this would be a good opportunity for the Council to reduce its carbon footprint but recognised that more detailed information was required. Councillor R Harvey-Coggins noted the cost implications and the wider impact on the Councils' overall finances.

RESOLVED: That the Deputy Town Clerk conduct further feasibility studies to gain a better understanding of costs involved, notably those of a structural engineer and the addition of batteries to the system.

5. Carbon Literacy Certification.

Members noted the course requirements at **AGENDA APPENDIX 3** and nominated Councillors K Farrelly and A Rushton to attend the course on 8 & 15 January 2025.

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

[Deputy Town Clerks note, both Councillors have subsequently been booked on the course as requested.]

8. OTHER MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE.

Councillor J Blackman suggested that the City Council website include a habitat management plan detailing future projects with timescales. The Deputy Town Clerk commented that this would be possible once the CCBD had determined an action plan.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be held on Wednesday 12 February at 6.00pm in the Moulton Room, Guildhall

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.06pm**

Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee

17 February 2025: APPENDIX 1

At the meeting of the CCBD Committee on 21 October 2024 Members agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk continue further feasibility studies regarding the installation and cost of solar panels on the Guildhall roof.

Due to the age of the building concerns arose about the integrity of the roof. A structural engineer was therefore engaged at a cost of £540.00 to conduct a preliminary survey. A site visit was carried out on 17 January 2025 and a copy of the engineers' initial report and findings has been circulated by email at **ENCLOSURE 2**.

Members attention is drawn to comments in the report regarding '*Non -Structural Considerations*'. In addition professional advice is that there may be other matters to consider such as the location and installation of a maintenance hatch and the necessary safety rails.

The structural engineer has advised that the cost to carry out a more definitive inspection of the roof, including a detailed examination of the rafters, would cost approximately £750 - £800 plus the addition of scaffolding at approximately £1,500. Members are asked to note that such investigations would require the closure of the main Guildhall for two or three days with associated loss of revenue.

The initial desktop exercise carried out by Kembla estimated a cost of £23,600 for the installation of thirty-eight solar panels, and two inverters. Based on current usage figures it is predicted that this would provide payback in 5.7 years. Further enquiries regarding additional costs are in the region of £7,000 for a battery and £1,000 for annual inspection and maintenance. Costs that cannot yet be determined are architect fees, listed building consent, electrical installation, and other measures required which have not yet been costed.

Discussions with LCC insurers indicate that premiums may rise significantly, and Members are reminded of Zurich's reservations in underwriting the insurance for the Guildhall should solar panels be installed saying that. *"Similar to most insurance companies, we are not the keenest given their link to fire risks but alas we do insure them in the right conditions. However, the Business Interruption line of cover will have a solar panel exclusion placed upon it, meaning that if a material damage claim occurs as a result of the solar panels, then any additional expenditure / loss of revenue / loss of rent covers will not activate."*

It is of note that a separate proposal by Curborough Community Association to install solar panels on the hall has recently been pursued. However, following a structural engineers report on the building the project has been left in abeyance.

The Deputy Town Clerk has been researching various funding opportunities for this project.

A CIL application for £50,000 has been made to the District Council. It should be noted that this application was made shortly before the deadline and with the minimal amount of information. However, it was considered an opportunity to receive feedback for any future bids. Members attention is drawn to the [Cabinet report](#) and comments dated [11 February 2025](#) regarding the application, noting the requirement for match funding. Applicants will be formally notified of a decision on 19 February 2025.

Further research has been undertaken regarding the possibility of grant funding from Historic England; however the project would seemingly not fulfil the criteria as these grants are for restoration projects and buildings which are on the at-risk register. There is a potential for funding to be taken from LCC Capital Reserves, however ongoing discussions regarding the Reserves and demands upon it are being led by the Audit Committee.

Members should note that although HLF funding may be possible there is likely to be a significant application from the SJB next year and should therefore be wary of internally competing for the same resource.

As highlighted above Members are asked to now consider the next steps and if they wish to instruct a structural engineer to carry out further investigations at an approximate cost of £2,300. No budget has been allocated for these costs, however, could be financed from General Funds.

If the project is to be pursued, then to comply with financial regulations three quotations will be required.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee to consider **whether or not** it wishes to continue to pursue the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Guildhall and the associated costs, including further investigations by a structural engineer and a corresponding recommendation to Council .

Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee

17 February 2025 APPENDIX 2

Version 1 Updated 10.2.25

ACTION	ACTIONED BY	COMMENTS	TIMESCALE
Habitat Havens	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members attention is drawn to current LDC initiatives which can be found at LDC website Members to consider next steps and actions to pursue. 	As soon as possible.
Collaboration with Woodlands Trust and Carbon Sequestering	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of Woodland Trust Initiatives and number of LCC trees circulated via email at ENC 1. Members to discuss how they wish to work with the Woodlands Trust and consider next steps and actions to pursue. 	As soon as possible.
Solar Panels on LCC Guildhall	Deputy Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members to discuss the Deputy Town Clerks report at AGENDA APPENDIX 1. Members to consider whether or not they wish to continue to pursue the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Guildhall and the associated costs, including further investigations by a structural engineer. Plus any Recommendation to Council. 	As soon as possible.
Carbon Literacy Certification	Cllr A Rushton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Councillor A Rushton update the Committee on the content of the recently attended Carbon Literacy course. The Committee to consider the next steps. 	As soon as possible.
ESG Policy	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of LDC current policies circulated via email at Enc 3 and at LDC Governance Policy Members to consider next steps and actions to pursue. 	As soon as possible.
Membership Of Staffordshire Business And Environment Network. (SBEN)	Deputy Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members to consider whether or not they wish to join Staffordshire Business and Environment Network. 	As soon as possible.