

12 JANUARY 2017

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel held in Committee Room 1, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 12 January 2017

- * Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)
- * Cllr Ms L C Ford (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * P J Armstrong
- * Ms R Bellows
- * G R Blunden
- * Mrs F Carpenter

Councillors:

- A T Glass
- J M Olliff-Cooper
- * D M S Poole
- * Mrs B J Thorne

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Mrs S V Beeton (Environment Portfolio Holder)
Mrs S M Bennison

Councillors:

E J Heron (Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder)

Officers Attending:

C Elliott, C Read, R Bisset, Miss J Debnam, S Jones and C Noble (Project Integra)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Glass.

35 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by any member in connection with an agenda item.

37 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

38 CEMETERIES REGULATIONS

The Panel was advised that the task and finish group that was reviewing the Cemeteries Regulations had met and, subsequent to that, revised draft Regulations had been prepared and would be circulated to them in the following few days. There would be a number of changes to the existing Regulations and an innovative approach was being taken. A report would be submitted to the March meeting of the Panel.

39 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS

Cllr E Heron advised Members that work on the evaluation of the responses to the consultation on the Local Plan review was going well and a series of member briefings would be arranged in the Spring. The Panel would be kept advised of progress.

With respect to the Environment Portfolio, Members were advised that a severe weather warning, for snow, had been received. Arrangements were being put in place to ensure the roads were well salted and it was expected that the Council's services would continue to operate normally.

The construction of replacement beach huts at Milford on Sea was progressing to target and within budget. The shells were now in place and little work had so far been lost to bad weather over the winter. It was hoped that the huts would be opened, on schedule, on 13 April, in time for Easter.

The construction of the replacement toilet blocks at New Milton and Bath Road, Lymington had also started.

Work was starting in preparation for the annual Spring Clean, which this year would start on the weekend of 4 and 5 March under the brand of "Great British Spring Clean". Community clean up events could be held at any time after that, perhaps waiting for warmer weather to encourage participation.

40 PROJECT INTEGRA - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE

The Panel received a detailed presentation from Chris Noble, Head of Project Integra, on their performance over the last year.

Issues that would be affecting Project Integra into the future included the EU's recycling target of 50% by 2020. National performance was currently static at around 44%, while Project Integra's performance was below the national average. The future implications of the vote to leave the EU were still unknown. While Defra remained committed to meeting the target they had stepped back from pro-active waste management over the last 5 years, and there was a further 40% budget cut planned over the next 4 years. The main focus currently was on a project to achieve greater consistency, between authorities, on the materials that they collected for recycling; the containers used; and the collection system. Europe was working towards a circular economy, with a 65% recycling rate and standardised reporting. Work was in progress with manufacturers and producers to achieve this. Other issues to take into account included changing consumption trends, for example away from paper towards electronic media; changes in markets and processors and rising household numbers. There was a continuing emphasis on maintaining the quality of the materials sent for reprocessing.

Chris Noble reported on progress against the aims set out in Project Integra's Action Plan for 2015-18. Contamination rates of the dry recyclable materials collected had increased in 2016 and the sources and patterns of contamination were being researched, to the level of detail of the days and the rounds most affected. This supplemented the routine monitoring that was carried out at the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and Materials Analysis Facility (MAF).

Publicity and communications patterns were changing. This was the first year without Recycle for Hampshire, with the emphasis now being on individual partners. The Web site had however been revamped and there was increasing use of social media. There was now also standardisation of the training given to collection crews.

There were a number of strands of work under the waste prevention action. Bulky waste continued to be directed towards reuse whenever possible. There were now also Food Waste Champions who were promoting messages to reduce food wastage, for example by visiting community groups. Their initiatives included publishing recipes for left-overs on the waste and recycling web pages on Hantsnet. Project Integra had also signed up to the Courthauld Commitment 2025, which sought to reduce the waste and greenhouse gas emissions associated with food and drink by at least one-fifth per person in ten years and improve water stewardship, with cumulative savings of around £20 billion.

Other actions included continued working with Defra to seek recognition that Incinerator Bottom Ash was being recycled into aggregate for road construction, reducing the need to use mineral aggregate. The recycling of bottom ash did not currently count towards the County's recycling performance.

The glass processing contract was also due for renewal and was being reviewed to seek the best possible returns.

The Hampshire Waste Project was being run under the auspices of the HIOWLA Chief Executives to review the "whole system cost approach" to waste. This jointly funded project had engaged consultants to develop a model that would evaluate the effect of potential changes and thereby identify a preferred option. There was also a survey of community opinion. There had already been some results and further work was continuing to establish whether, in the forthcoming scheduled refit of the Alton Materials Recycling Facility, the opportunity should be taken to accommodate a different range of recyclable materials. There was a limited window of opportunity to take this type of decision as the cost of a refit was significant. Opportunities for improved glass recycling were being explored as not all authorities yet offering kerbside collection. In addition, there was work aimed at promoting behaviour change in the local population to improve both the quality and quantity of recyclable materials collected. Sampling of black sack waste had established that 27.5% of the content was potentially recyclable.

The Ipsos Mori survey had established that overall satisfaction on performance in Hampshire was above the national average, while satisfaction with the range of materials collected and information on what could be recycled was below the national average.

The feasibility work to date suggested that there was a positive business case for collecting a wider and more consistent range of recyclable materials when linked to a good quality communications campaign aimed at promoting behaviour change. With good management and collaboration between authorities this was achievable.

HIOWLA was recommending the development of a final business case for refitting the 2 MRFs in 2018, to develop a framework for improved glass collection and the development of a joint communications and behaviour change strategy.

Locally, the garden waste collection scheme would continue to be promoted to improve uptake and therefore efficiency. The Council did however remain committed to promoting home composting, which was the more environmentally friendly option.

In answer to questions members were advised that ferrous and non-ferrous metals were recovered from the bottom ash from the incinerator, but precious metals were not separated. It was therefore increasingly important that waste electrical goods, which contained these precious metals, were properly recycled to allow the materials to be re-used.

Plastic bottles were currently recycled in east London to make more bottles. The plastics were no longer exported for processing.

Biodegradable plastics, while they had a role, may not offer comprehensive solutions as they could take longer than averagely compostable materials to break down. There were also problems if biodegradable and non-biodegradable plastics were mixed.

The Panel thanked Chris Noble for attending their meeting.

41 PLANNING POLICY UPDATE

The Panel was advised that work to analyse the responses received to the consultation on possible proposals for inclusion in the District Local Plan Review was progressing well, including discussions with the landowners of potentially allocated land. This process was now coming to an end and it was expected that Members would be briefed on the developing proposals in the spring, leading to the publication of the submission draft in the summer of this year. It was hoped that the Examination of the Plan Review would be held in 2018, which would meet the Government's requirements.

One issue that would need to be resolved was whether the Council was prepared to remove any land from Green Belt designation to allow it to be developed. The Council had commissioned research to establish how well the existing Green Belt continued to fulfil Green Belt purposes. The Government would however require the quantum of housing requirements to be met, regardless of any restrictions on certain areas that would be imposed by Green Belt designation.

42 BUILDING CONTROL - EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS

The Panel was advised that a significant problem had recently been identified with the option that had been explored for the establishment of a partnership for the provision of Building Control services. Work would continue to identify a way forward and Members would be advised of progress.

43 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a Planning Fees Task and Finish Group be established to review opportunities and to evaluate the non-statutory fees charged under the auspices of the Planning Development Control Committee. The membership of such Group to include Cllrs Rippon-Swaine, Carpenter and Bennison, plus 3 other Members, preferably with knowledge of the planning system.
- (b) That the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 to the minutes be approved to guide the Panel's activities over the coming months.

CHAIRMAN

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WORK PROGRAMME

March 2017
HECA Biannual report. (RL)
Planning Policy Update (CJE/LE)
Coastal Funding Task and Finish Group – oral update on progress (SC)
Cemetery Regulations – progress report (CR/SJ)
Traffic Management Service (post HCC decisions on funding etc) (CJE)
Highways Maintenance Agreement with the County Council (CR)
Building Control – Alternative delivery models (CJE/DG/JB)
Progress report of service Reviews (RD)
June 2017
Tree Management Strategy – Review of operation (SJ)
Bring Bank Review – report of Task and Finish Group
Not possible to timetable yet
Report of Kerbside Glass Collection Group on text messaging alerts and promotion (CR)
Appoint Task and Finish Working Group to work on the Council’s waste Management Strategy (CR)
Project Integra – Review of materials/plastics collected for Recycling (CR)
Implications of Regulations for Litter Picking on roads (CR)
Appoint task and finish group to look at fuel/emission efficient vehicles for the Council’s fleet. (CR)
Flytipping – report on policy for complaints/ enforcement and priority assigned to it (CR)
Nuisance – Policy on investigations and enforcement (joint with Community Panel) (CG/CR)
Environmental Health – review of delivery of the environmental health functions (GO/JM)
Waste and recycling – developing strategy in line with the Project Integra review (CR/RB)
Enforcement Activity (Streetscene) – identifying opportunities for joining up enforcement activities of visible officers.(CR)

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