

14 SEPTEMBER 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, 14 September 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 M Bennison
Mrs A J Hoare

Councillors:

E J Heron

Officers Attending:

Mrs F Churchill, S Cook, Miss J Debnam, Mrs R Drummond, Mrs R Higgins, Mrs J McClay, Miss G O'Rourke and C Read

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Glass.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 9 March and 15 May 2017 be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Carpenter and E J Heron – Minute 6

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

6 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS

Cllrs Carpenter and E J Heron disclosed non-pecuniary interests as Hampshire County Councillors, whose proposals for budget savings were raised under the Portfolio Holder's report. They each concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent them from remaining in the meeting to take part in the debate.

Cllr E J Heron, the Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder advised Members that he would shortly be taking a decision to increase the charges for using the Council's car parks with effect from 1 January 2018. This was first increase since 2012, even though the Council had faced significant increases to its own costs, including a £100,000 increase in the business rates payable. It was proposed that the cost of the Short Stay Clock charge for the quarterly clock would be increased from £25 to £35, to recover the additional administrative costs associated with issuing each clock. It was important that the costs to the Council were recovered more fully, to prevent general council taxpayers subsidising car owners. The cost of parking tickets would also be increased from 80 pence to £1 for up to 1 hour; £2 for up to 2 hours (currently £1.50 in town centre and £1.80 in amenity car parks) with the charge for over 2 hours to increase from £2.30 to £2.50, keeping the 4 hour exception at Lymington Quay. The additional money raised would partly meet the Council's increased costs, and partly be invested in the appearance of the car parks, recognising how important they were to visitors' image of the District.

In addition, the Portfolio Holder was intending to continue the support previously given to village and town centres by waiving car park charges on Small Business Saturday and 1 other day in the run up to Christmas nominated by the local Council for their special events. This year it was intended to offer further assistance to businesses by waiving car parking charges on the weekend immediately before Christmas.

The Portfolio Holder advised the Panel that the Government had just published its consultation on proposals for the standardised calculation of housing need for an area. At present around 200 homes were built each year, against the currently assessed housing need to 600 per annum. Under the proposed scheme the calculated need would be 965 per annum, with the effect that the current local plan proposals would only meet around 30% of the assessed need. This did not however affect the constraints that applied in this District and it was important that the Council put forward a robust case to defend its proposals, setting out the special nature of the area. In addition to the direct effect on this Council, neighbouring Councils may be similarly affected, which would reduce their ability to co-operate to assist this Council. The full implications of the proposals would have to be assessed and a considered response sent to the Government.

The Portfolio Holder also drew Members' attention to the County Council's recently published proposals for achieving their required additional savings for this year. The proposals included resuming the control of on-street parking, discontinuing the agency agreements with the District Council and, under the Environment Portfolio, proposals to charge for or to close Household Waste Recycling Centres, with the initial proposal of closing half the current sites. The Panel concurred with the Portfolio Holder's suggestion that there should be early engagement with the County Council on the proposals, once the Executive Head Operations had assessed the possible implications for this District.

7 AIR QUALITY PLAN FOR NITROGEN DIOXIDE IN THE UK

The Panel received a detailed presentation on the Council's current and developing responsibilities with respect to air quality in the District. Of particular relevance were the new requirements imposed by the Air Quality Strategy and the UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, both of which had been published in July 2017. The Council's officers were still receiving training on the implications of these new areas of work. As understanding of the implications for this District became clearer Members would be kept advised.

In answer to questions the Panel was advised that the previous Air Quality Management Area at Fawley had been revoked following successful co-operation with the Refinery and the Environment Agency to resolve the issue relating to short term SO₂ emissions. The Air Quality Management Area at Totton was revoked following improvements to nitrogen oxide levels. The cause of the improvement was unclear, although notices had been erected to request drivers to turn off their engines while queueing at the Junction Road crossing. Monitoring continued in these areas and throughout the District. The monitoring along the stretch of the A35 leading to the boundary with Southampton, which had been identified as being a route where air quality would be exceeded, was being increased to establish the actual situation.

Members welcomed joint working with Southampton City Council to resolve air quality issues as activities in the 2 areas were interlinked. One issue should be the installation of electric points along docksides to reduce dependence on diesel generators, which were very polluting. Policies could be included in this District's Local Plan to cover any new port developments; and it was understood that this was an issue being explored by the City Council with ABP. There was funding available to assist local businesses to make improvements where the potential to achieve a significant effect was identified. This must also be seen as an opportunity to develop local businesses, whose viability was essential to the economic future of the area.

It was noted that air quality and the cumulative effects of development both within and outside the District was a significant issue that affected the designation of sites in the developing Local Plan.

It was agreed that the Panel would be updated at their next meeting on 9 November 2017.

8 COASTAL FUNDING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Task and Finish Working Group would be held in early October and a report on progress would be brought to the Panel meeting in November. There had been a very constructive visit from Wes Jones of the Environment Agency who had practical experience in this area of work. It was also hoped that the Coastal Strategic Development Officer from Waverley District Council in Norfolk may be able to visit and advise, as he had already developed projects along the east coast.

In the meantime the Portfolio Holder had made a decision to apply for funding to develop the feasibility study for the recharge of Hurst Spit. The Environment Agency had however decided that works to Hurst Spit should be considered within the wider context of the sea wall along Keyhaven and Pennington and was undertaking their own feasibility study on that basis. They had also introduced the

concept of Programme Delivery Units, with a consortium of contractors to speed up the delivery of projects. The Council was currently working with the most likely contractor on this issue. The Council was starting the process to apply for a Dredging Licence so that the recharge materials could be taken from the Shingle Bank off the Isle of Wight, which had been the source material for the last recharge in 1996. The material from the Shingle Bank was more compatible and accessible (and therefore cheaper) than the alternatives available through the normal sites elsewhere around the Isle of Wight. In addition the Council was working with Poole Borough Council which was exploring potential sources of materials around the Christchurch Bay.

It was agreed that a progress report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

9 DATES OF MEETINGS 2018/19

The following dates of meetings were agreed for 2018/19 (Thursdays at 2.00 p.m.)

14 June 2018
13 September 2018
15 November 2018
10 January 2019
7 March 2019

10 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes be approved to guide the Panel's activities over the coming months.

11 KEY ACTIONS AND SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME - UPDATE REPORT

The Panel noted the progress being made against the key actions and service review programme. Key items had already been the subject of update at this meeting. Further updating reports would be brought to the Panel as necessary.

CHAIRMAN

WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
9 NOVEMBER 2017			
Tree Management Strategy	To review the effectiveness of the new Strategy documents	Officer report	Steve Jones
Textile and WEEE Banks	Review of the potential operation of textile and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment collection points and the Council's recycling Bring Sites	Task and Finish Group	Colin Read
Coastal Funding	To evaluate the Government's new funding system for coast protection works and to look at options. Interim report	Task and Finish Group	Steve Cook.
Planning Policy Update	To be advised of progress in the review of the Local Plan	Officer report	Louise Evans.
Enforcement Activity (street scene)	To update the Panel on changes in enforcement practices and their outcome	Officer report	Rob Lane
Planning fees and Charges	Review of options to ensure charges are appropriate	Task and Finish Group	David Groom
Environmental Health Review	To be advised of changes to the delivery of Environmental Health functions	Officer report	Jo McClay

11 JANUARY 2018

Project Integra Annual Update on Performance	To review performance	Presentation by Project Integra	Colin Read
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ITEMS THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN TIMETABLED.

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
Kerbside Glass Collection	To evaluate the text messaging alerts and promotion	Task and Finish Group	Colin Read
Council's waste Management Strategy	To review	Task and Finish Group	Colin Read
Fuel/Emission Efficient Vehicles	To review options for the Council's Fleet		Colin Read
Fly Tipping	To review the complaints and enforcement policy		Colin Read
Nuisance	To review the Council's policy on investigation and enforcement	Joint task and Finish group with the Community Panel	