

**13 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**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, 13 September 2018

\* Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)

\* Cllr Ms L C Ford (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

\* P J Armstrong  
\* Mrs S M Bennison  
G R Blunden  
Mrs F Carpenter

**Councillors:**

\* A T Glass  
\* Mrs R Matcham  
J M Olliff-Cooper  
\* D M S Poole

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillor:**

Mrs A J Hoare

**Also In Attendance:**

Mr B Slipper – Public Participant

**Officers Attending:**

Miss J Debnam, Mrs L Evans, D Groom and Mrs J McClay

**Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Blunden, Carpenter and Olliff-Cooper.

**17 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made by any Member.

**19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Panel noted the presentation made by Mr Slipper in the public participation period in respect of the Government's current consultation on proposals to bring shale gas extraction into the permitted development regime, and therefore outside normal planning controls. Mr Slipper had expressed his profound concern that the proposal would remove the consideration of such applications from the normal planning process, which was subject to checks and balances and open to the local community to influence the decision. He deplored the proposed loss of democratic accountability and asked that the Council consider the issue and perhaps respond to the Government's consultation.

Members of the Panel did not feel able to form a view on this matter without having further information about the Government's proposals. They considered that this was an important issue that should be considered further. Responses to government consultations were normally submitted by the relevant portfolio holder, and the Panel considered it would be useful to discuss the issues with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure in advance of the close of the consultation on 15 October. If necessary a special meeting of the Panel and the Planning Committee could be arranged following the ordinary meeting of the Committee on 10 October.

Members were reminded that the issue under consideration was whether the Council should respond to the Government's proposals to include shale gas extraction in permitted development rights, and if so the terms of that response. The issue was not the advantages and disadvantages of shale gas extraction.

Members were also reminded that the Forest was subject to extensive areas of international nature conservation designations. If it was considered that a proposal for shale gas extraction would affect the international designation then it must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment and would automatically fall outside of the permitted development regime.

**20 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS**

Cllr Hoare, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Affairs, advised the Panel that the Council would be entering into Primary Authority Partnerships with local food businesses to cover food safety and hygiene. Currently, any business operating across a number of local authority areas was subject to variations in the interpretation and implementation of the legislation, which was costly and time consuming. Under the contract arrangements, one authority would be responsible for advising and regulating the food business. These arrangements were normally most attractive to larger businesses but were becoming increasingly popular with smaller concerns. The Council was also seeking to work in partnership with the County Trading Standards Department to ensure a joined up approach.

Cllr Hoare was pleased to report that the Anti-Littering Group, whose membership included the National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission, had held their first meeting. A new campaign would be launched in the New Year, working with the fast food outlets and also concentrating on educating young people for prevention.

**21 NEW FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE**

The Panel was advised that the consultation on the Local Plan had closed in the middle of August. The Council had received 649 responses, containing 1238 different representations. Of these, 800 had related to new site allocations, mostly those south of Pennington and north of Milford on Sea. The other 16 new allocations had attracted relatively few representations.

Of the statutory consultees, Natural England was generally supportive of the proposals, subject to minor amendments; the Environment Agency had initially raised concerns about flood risk but, having received additional information, was now happy. Hampshire County Council had made a number of comments, none of which raised substantive issues of concern. Test Valley Borough Council and the National Park Authority had supported the proposed Plan, while no other responses had been received from local authorities.

The development industry was, as expected, promoting the building of higher housing numbers and suggesting that the Council's affordable housing targets were not viable. The Council had strong evidence to support its position, and also to resist the inclusion of additional sites, as suggested, which had already been excluded following the initial consultation on options, normally because the land fell within strong Green Belt areas. One suggestion may however have merit as the land had not been thought to be available, but was adjacent to a proposed allocation at Fordingbridge. The suggested allocation of a new area of land south of Totton for housing was contrary to the current policy proposals for the area and would not be supported.

ABP had not raised any objection to the Council's stance, set out in the Plan, with respect to Dibden Bay.

Work was progressing to submit the Plan for Examination at the earliest opportunity. The Plan must be submitted before 25 January 2019 or it would be considered within the context of the newer version of the National Planning Policy Framework. The consultation responses received were such that there was no need for the Council to take additional decisions prior to submission.

It was agreed that a briefing note on the consultation responses would be circulated to members of the Panel.

**22 CLEAN AIR ZONE**

The Panel was advised that the consultation on the Clean Air Zone for Southampton expired at midnight. By Monday earlier in the week over 6,500 responses had been received making over 8000 comments. Of these, 17% had come from residents of the New Forest, which demonstrated that the publicity campaign had been effective in raising public awareness of the proposals. Encouragingly, 16% of the responses had come from businesses.

Southampton City Council was currently analysing the responses and sorting them into themes for evaluation and response. It was currently proposed that the officers of this council and Southampton City Council would meet in early October to look at the responses and consider further action. At that stage it was hoped it would be possible to agree dates for submission to Members at Southampton and this Council, which needed to be timed together.

**23 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**

The Panel was advised that a full briefing on the Council's responsibilities for private sector housing would be presented to their next meeting, by which time the newly appointed Housing Manager within the Environmental Regulation Service would be in post. Members would be briefed on the Council's responsibilities and priorities for the future.

**24 WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme, as attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes, be approved for guide the Panel's work over the coming months.

**25 MEETING DATES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the following dates of meetings for 2019/20 (Thursdays at 2.00 p.m.) be approved:

13 June 2019  
12 September 2019  
9 January 2020  
12 March 2020

CHAIRMAN

## ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2018.

## WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
<b>15 NOVEMBER 2018</b>			
Fuel/Emission Efficient Vehicles	To be updated on options for the Council's Fleet and the establishment of the necessary support infrastructure (Rapid Charging Points)	Officer report	Colin Read
Private Sector Housing	To be briefed on the Council's roles and responsibilities and to be advised of the latest position	Officer Report	Sarah White
Strategy for Coastal Funding	To consider the findings and recommendations of the task and finish group	Task and Finish Group Report	Peter Ferguson
The Council's Recycling Rates	To be advised of the Council's performance with respect to recycling	Officer Report	Chris Noble

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
<b>10 JANUARY 2019</b>			
Environmental Strategy	To consider the draft environmental strategy that will develop an overarching framework for the Council's environmental activities	Officer report	Colin Read

