

14 MARCH 2019

**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 March 2019

\* 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:**

**Councillors:**

Mrs A J Hoare (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services)

**Officers Attending:**

Miss J Debnam, P Ferguson, C Noble, Ms N Plummer and S Cooper

**Apologies:**

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

**37 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**39 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

**40 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS**

Cllr Hoare, the Environment and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder, advised the Panel that, as a result of the recent erosion of the beach at Hordle cliffs notices had been served on the owners of affected beach huts that were considered to be unsafe. The hut owners had 90 days to remove the huts and the site licenses would not be renewed. A stretch of beach had been closed to the public for safety reasons and the Portfolio Holder commended the officers who had been assiduous in making sure that the rope barriers and notices remained intact. It was regrettable that some of the public were being uncooperative on this safety issue and some had also been extremely unpleasant to the officers.

Storm Gareth has caused sufficient erosion of beach material that the entire corner of the sea wall at Hordle Cliff had been exposed. More than 100 tonnes of beach material had been lost in just one night and the Council would need to do some remedial work.

The Council's "Leave only Footprints" campaign would be extended to the beaches, with active promotion between May and October, in particular using some custom made posters for specific locations.

**41 TEXTILE BANKS - ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL TO ENTER INTO THE COUNTY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT**

The Panel received the report of the Textile Bank Task and Finish Group which had evaluated whether the Council should join the County-wide framework for textile banks, which was being hosted by Fareham Borough Council under a framework contract. Since the publication of the report Fareham had selected the provider, and this would be the Salvation Army. This would be a 4 year contract, operating until 2023.

The Panel concurred with the Task and Finish Group's conclusions that the county-wide arrangement offered a number of advantages, including clear branding; better control of the textile banks on the Council's land, improved accountability for keeping the site tidy and materials collected; and greater income to the Council.

The Panel also concurred with the suggested breakdown of use of the receipts from this source with 20% being used to support recycling initiatives; 20% going to the Council's community grants fund; and 60% to a minimum of 2 local charities, to be selected each year, with no charity receiving an award in successive years.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Portfolio Holder be advised that the Panel consider that:

- (i) This Council should enter into the Fareham Borough Council framework contract for textile banks, with effect from 1 April 2019, and that the process necessary to implement the new recycling banks should be implemented immediately;
- (ii) That the income received by the Council should be divided as set out above; and
- (iii) That a report on the performance of the contract be submitted to the Panel after a suitable period of operation.

## 42 NATIONAL WASTE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Panel received a presentation on the recently published National Waste Strategy consultation arrangements and themes for the consultation. The National Waste Strategy could, potentially, have significant implications for this District both directly and through Project Integra, which was the partnership for handling waste in Hampshire. There were 4 consultation strands, each supported by a separate document. The 4 consultation topics were:

- Consistency in household and business recycling
- Reforming packing responsibility in the UK
- Deposit Return Scheme
- Plastic Packaging Tax

The consultation on each of these documents closed at the end of May, with potential implementation dates up to 2023.

It was noted that the first 3 of these documents potentially could have significant implications for this District, while the fourth may have some indirect effects, although it was mainly directed towards manufacturers.

The Panel was advised that the Cabinet was in the process of setting up a Task and Finish Group to advise the Portfolio Holder in the preparation of the Council's response to the proposals.

There were a number of key points of specific interest:

- The recycling targets, reaching 65% recycling by 2035, would be very challenging to meet
- The operation of a deposit return scheme could have a significant effect on the tonnages collected by this Council, depending on the scope of the scheme. The Government had specifically excluded milk bottles from the scheme, but there were 2 potential options for consultation – either confining the scheme to bottles that were under 750 ml; or including all drinks containers, regardless of size.
- It was proposed that plastic packaging material must contain a minimum of 30% recycled material or be subject to taxation. The details of how this would be enforced were currently unknown, particularly in relation to imported products, but were likely to be based on an audit trail for the materials used.
- There was much greater emphasis on the manufacturer taking responsibility for disposal and meeting the cost of its recycling or disposal. At present they only met around 7% of the cost but this was likely to increase to 100%.
- There would in future be a much greater emphasis on a circular economy with more re-use and recycling of goods.

Members welcomed the potential opportunities that the Strategy may offer, particularly as the Government had made an undertaking to meet any additional costs that local authorities may face as a result of introducing additional services. It was hoped that the introduction of greater consistency in the materials collected would reduce public confusion and increase compliance; and it was also noted that the introduction of containers for the collection of food waste may reduce some of the current problems with black bags being opened by animals.

**43 ENERGY EFFICIENT VEHICLES TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Panel received a progress report from the Energy Efficient Vehicles Task and Finish Group together with some initial recommendations regarding the use of electric vehicles in the Council's fleet.

The Task and Finish Group had been researching 2 strands of work. These were the potential to use electric vehicles in the Council's fleet; and also the potential installation of fast charging points for electric vehicles, initially in some of the Council's car parks.

With respect to electric vehicle charging points, the Task and Finish Group had been evaluating the Hampshire-wide procurement contract which had been developed by the County Council. Recommendations on this area of work would be submitted to the Panel in June.

With respect to the use of electric vehicles in the Council's fleet, the Task and Finish Group had concluded that this was a viable option for some areas of operation. As a consequence they were recommending that 2 electric vehicles should be purchased for use by the car park wardens, whose pattern of work was particularly suitable for electric vehicles. In addition, a further 2 small electric vans should be purchased and circulated round the various operational areas to allow proper evaluation of the practicalities of their use. The research by the Task and Finish Group had established that, over the full life time of a vehicle, the electric alternative could achieve significant savings. They must however be purchased as part of the normal procurement process for replacement vehicles. In addition, the vehicle must be the correct tool for the task. There were practical constraints, such as the weight that needed to be carried, consequent range and access to off-street charging for the electric vehicle, that must be taken into account.

With respect to smaller sized vans, the Task and Finish Group had concluded that once the practical parameters of operating electric vehicles had been properly evaluated the default position should be that an electric vehicle was purchased, with a business case necessary to justify an alternative type, such as diesel.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder be advised that this Panel consider that:
- Two vehicles for the use of car park wardens should be replaced with an electric equivalent under the existing replacement programme.
  - Two further smaller electric vehicles should be purchased for testing with different services
  - A vehicle purchasing policy should be drawn up to prioritise the use of electric vehicles unless it is not practicable to do so as established by set criteria; and
- (b) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel, after a suitable period of operation of the electric vehicles, to evaluate their performance.

**44 STRATEGY FOR COASTAL FUNDING**

The Panel was advised that the Coastal Funding Task and Finish Group had undertaken extensive research on options and a draft report had now been prepared which was currently subject to consultation prior to its submission to the Panel, hopefully in June. This should establish a clear way forward for the future.

The Panel was advised that Cllr Carpenter, who chaired the Task and Finish Group, supported the draft report and looked forward to its further consideration in due course.

Under the new funding rules the picture was extremely complex. Priority was given to schemes to prevent further damage where flooding had already occurred, with less recognition of the need for preventative works. The Council also needed to find additional sources of funding to the grants available from Government in order to allow a scheme to progress. This could include seeking investment from private individuals and businesses where they could recognise that investing in coastal protection works would achieve benefits, which could include environmental improvements or protection to the wider area. For this to work it was important that the public was consulted from the earliest stages of any scheme and reasons for their support were established. The local authority itself would also need to borrow funds.

The Panel was advised that trials for the drainage scheme at Barton Cliffs had now started and these trials would help to establish the costing for submission to the Government.

Members of the Panel expressed concern at the possibility of storm events causing damage that seriously prejudiced schemes that the Council had funded and for which it was in a long term commitment to repay borrowing.

The further report would be considered in June.

**45 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.

**46 CLLR MS L C FORD**

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Ford, advised the Panel that this was the last of their meetings that she would be attending as she was not seeking re-election. She thanked the Panel for their hard work over the many years of their association and wished all present every best wish for the future.

**47 CHAIRMAN'S THANKS**

The Chairman thanked the Panel for their hard work during the last 4 years and also the officers for their support for the Panel's activities.

CHAIRMAN

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## ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 14 MARCH 2019.

## WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
<b>13 JUNE 2019</b>			
Fuel/Emission Efficient Vehicles	To receive the recommendations of the task and finish group on the establishment of the necessary support infrastructure for electric vehicles in the Council's car parks	Task and Finish Group Report	Colin Read, Chris Noble/ Rob Lane
Strategy for Coastal Funding	To consider the findings and recommendations of the task and finish group	Task and Finish Group Report	Peter Ferguson

<b>For later consideration</b>			
Textile Bank Task and Finish Group	To review the operation of the contract hosted by Fareham Borough Council for the collection of textiles for recycling, using bins in council-owned car parks.(Likely autumn 2020)	Officer Report	Chris Noble
Environmental Strategy	To consider the draft environmental strategy that will develop an overarching framework for the Council's environmental activities	Officer report	Colin Read

Car Parking in Hythe	To consider the car parking provision within Hythe to see if additional capacity is required once the demand generated by the Lidl Supermarket on St John's Street has been established through further monitoring.	Officer report	David Hurd/Robert Lane
Fuel/Emission Efficient Vehicles	To be updated on the trial of small electric vans within the Council's fleet of vehicles	Officer Report	Colin Read, Chris Noble/ Rob Lane