

13 JUNE 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, 13 June 2019

* Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)

* Cllr Sue Bennison (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

Ann Bellows
* Geoffrey Blunden
Allan Glass
Andrew Gossage

Councillors:

* Stephanie Osborne
* Tony Ring
* Derek Tipp
* Malcolm Wade

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Fran Carpenter
Edward Heron

Councillors:

Martyn Levitt

Also In Attendance

Susie Laan, Anna Mellor, Henry Mellor, David Pascoe, Sarah Pascoe, Fiona Rogers and Rebecca Sykes (in relation to agenda item 6 – Motion from Council)

Officers Attending:

Alan Bethune, Mark Bursey, Steve Cook, Peter Ferguson, Steve Jones, Joanne McClay, Chris Noble, Sheryl Parry, Colin Read, Claire Upton-Brown and Karen Wardle

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bellows and Glass.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 1 and 20 May 2019 be agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS

Cllr E Heron reported that the Local Plan Examination had commenced. He thanked the Planning Department for all their hard work in developing the plan. Challenges had been made at the examination, in particular, in relation to the number of new homes proposed in the District and the protection of the Green Belt. It was anticipated that the results of the Local Plan Examination would be received in 2020.

8 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN

The Panel considered the Annual Performance and Provisional Budget Outturn report for 2018/19. It was noted that this would be the last report aligned to the current Corporate Plan. A new Corporate Plan would be developed during the next year for 2020-2024.

Members asked officers to confirm the 2% figure for waste being sent to landfill. Members also questioned the reason for the increase in the number of abandoned vehicles removed by the Council and whether there were any particular hot spots for abandoned vehicles. It was noted that the cost of scrap metal had decreased, although the demand fluctuates over time. Some roads were more likely to attract abandoned vehicles. Officers worked jointly with the DLVA and other agencies to remove all untaxed and abandoned vehicles.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the performance and achievements as set out in Appendix 1;
- (b) To note the key strategies in progress for 2019/20 set out in Appendix 2;
- (c) To note the provisional General Fund outturn position set out in Appendix 3;
- (d) To note the provisional outturn position of the Housing Revenue Account set out in Appendix 3;
- (e) To note the provisional outturn position of the Housing Revenue Account set out in Appendix 3; and
- (f) That the Annual Performance and Provisional Budget Outturn report 2018/19 be supported.

9 MOTION FROM COUNCIL

Fiona Rogers, representing New Forest Friends of the Earth, Transition Lymington and SAS Plastic Free Lymington addressed the Panel. Fiona Rogers spoke in support of the motion for New Forest District Council to declare a Climate Emergency. She reported that there was strong scientific evidence that the world was warming rapidly and that food, water, shelter and security was at risk. She reported that there were huge challenges involved in declaring a climate emergency but that it would give the Council the opportunity to set a baseline from which the Council could embrace the move to a low carbon society.

Cllr M Wade spoke on the motion he had submitted to Council. 27 UK Council had already committed to declaring a climate emergency. He reported that any rise in temperature would cause ice to melt. Sea ice was melting at about 40% per decade. The New Forest was an area of natural beauty and the Council should use its influence to support the motion to make a difference in the future.

Cllr Carpenter addressed the Panel and spoke in support of the motion. She believed that the Council could do more to address climate change, for example through policy setting, ensuring that new homes were zero carbon.

Officers reported that much work was being done within the Council. Climate change was driven through the planning system and embedded within planning policy. It was suggested that a Task and Finish Group be established to consider the issue in more detail.

Members discussed the motion and concern was expressed amongst some members regarding whether the target for the District Council to be carbon neutral by 2030 was achievable.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a Task and Finish Group be established to consider the climate change motion in more detail;
- (b) That a report of the Task and Finish Group would be presented to the next Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting in September; and
- (c) That the members of the Task and Finish Group would be:
 - Cllr Bennison
 - Cllr Blunden
 - Cllr Osborne
 - Cllr Rippon-Swaine
 - Cllr Tipp
 - Cllr M Wade

10 ASH DIE BACK

The Panel received a presentation on Chalara Ash Dieback. This disease had been in the UK since 1998. The first confirmed case first in the District had been reported in May 2018 on Totton. Cases had since been confirmed in Fordingbridge and Holbury.

The various stages of the disease were explained to the Panel. Ash trees would first begin to show signs of the disease with blackened or withered leaves, followed by the branch tips dying back and diamond shaped lesions appearing. Deadwood in the crown would present a hazard. The latest advice from the Forestry Commission was that trees could become unstable within two years of basal lesions appearing and therefore all diseased trees would require regular monitoring. 98% of ash trees might be lost within the next 5-10 years. The Council had responsibility for assessing the ash trees against a risk matrix from low to very high risk and this needed to be carried out in the summer months when the trees were in leaf. Any diseased tree should be kept in situ for as long as it was considered safe to do so.

2,430 NFDC owned ash trees, with a further 2,940 ash trees were estimated to be within NFDC woodlands. The current Council's tree strategy required two trees planted for each one removed. Officers reported they would like to set up a member Task and Finish Group to consider the review of the Council's existing Tree Strategy, to include a Council-wide Tree Procurement and Specification Strategy, and an Ash Dieback Action Plan.

It was noted that in limited circumstances the Council had discretionary powers under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 to investigate any reports of unstable trees on land not owned or managed by the District Council.

RESOLVED:

That a Tree Strategy Task and Finish Group be established consisting of up to six members.

11 STRATEGY FOR COASTAL FUNDING

The Panel considered the Strategy for Coastal Funding report which introduced a proposed 'Investment Strategy', as part of the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

Three Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Projects had been identified in the New Forest District area, Hurst Spit, Milford on Sea and Barton on sea. These projects were not eligible for full government funding and therefore other funding sources needed to be explored.

The proposed Investment Strategy aimed to facilitate the Council with an agreed process to achieve the necessary 'Partnership Funding' investment for future NFDC FCERM projects. The Strategy was the first step to begin discussions with stakeholders and the community.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work of the Task and Finish Group be acknowledged; and
- (b) That the Task and Finish Group report and proposed Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Investment Strategy (NFDC FCERM Investment Strategy) be recommended to Cabinet.

12 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes be approved.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the date of the next meeting be changed to 19 September 2019.

CHAIRMAN

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
19 SEPTEMBER 2019			
Waste Strategy Consultation Update	To consider the responses from DEFRA regarding the recent Waste Strategy Consultation.	Officer report	Chris Noble
Air Quality Review	To consider a report on how the Council implements an Air Strategy Forum.	Officer report	Joanne McClay
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	Robert Lane
Food Safety Plan	To consider a report on the Food safety Plan for 2019/20 and the performance of the previous plan for 2018/19.	Officer report	Joanne McClay
Trees - Formation of a task and finish group	To review the Council's Tree Strategy.	Officer report	Steve Jones
Climate Change Motion	Report from the Climate Change Task and Finish Group	Officer report	Colin Read
Fuel/Emission Efficient Vehicles	To consider the infrastructure for charging points in car parks.	Task and Finish Group Report	Colin Read, Chris Noble/ Rob Lane

9 JANUARY 2020			
Review of Street Cleansing Activities and Standards	To consider the review of street cleansing activities and standards.	Officer report	Rob Lane
Review of the new arrangements for textile recycling arrangements.	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.	Officer report	Chris Noble
For later consideration			
Environmental Strategy	To consider the draft environmental strategy that will develop an overarching framework for the Council's environmental activities	Officer report	Colin Read
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