

9 JANUARY 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 9 January 2020

- * 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:

Cllr Alison Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services

Officers Attending:

Rebecca Drummond, Louise Evans, Joanne McClay, Chris Noble, Nicola Plummer, Claire Upton-Brown and Karen Wardle

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ring.

28 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2019 by signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

31 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES

The Panel received an update for Cllr Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services. She updated the Panel on the following:

Hordle Cliffs: Some movement had been detected at the lower hordle cliff before Christmas. Access had been restricted to the top level beach huts and a section of the footpath had been closed. The cliffs would be continually monitored, and a cautious approach would be taken to ensure there was no risk to public safety.

Milford Beach Huts: Access to beach huts numbered 104-163 had been restricted due to shingle being washed up from the beach. The shingle would be cleared at the front of the huts when there was a break in the strong windy weather.

Groyne, Milford: A groyne had been destroyed near to the West White House in Milford. There were concerns about the risk of damage to the sea wall as a result. A contractor had investigated this on behalf of the Council and it was proposed that rocks be placed between the groynes to prevent any damage occurring to the sea wall. Various permissions and consents, however, would be required in order to carry out this work.

Electric Vehicles: Four new electric vans had been purchased. Two vehicles would be used by the parking enforcement team and other two as pool cars for us to evaluate where these vehicles can be used successfully.

32 THE CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2024 - 'COMMUNITY MATTERS'

The draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024 was currently being consulted upon. The draft Plan set out the Council's commitments and priorities over the next four years. An Action Plan had also been included which detailed how the Corporate Plan would be monitored and measured in order to achieve the proposed outcomes. The consultation had been promoted via social media, online, as well as informing all Town and Parish Councils. The deadline for responses was 31 January 2020. The consultation results and any revised Plan would be considered by Cabinet in March 2020.

Four consultation responses had been received to date on the Plan, which addressed climate change, support to public transport (lack of), illegal parking and encouraging staff to work from home to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council.

It was noted that although the District Council did not have responsibility for public transport, new planning developments could contribute financially towards transport schemes where a direct link could be established. NFDC officers work with the County Council in order to support improvements to public transport in the district.

Members supported the aims and objectives identified within the draft Corporate Plan and felt it was important to ensure that the targets proposed were met.

Members also suggested that the photos used in the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio should reflect the younger demographic.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024, 'Community Matters' and consultation feedback received to date be noted.

33 MOTION FROM COUNCIL

Cllr Hoare addressed the Panel on the Motion she had submitted to Council on fireworks. She explained that she had received letters from her constituents expressing their frustration regarding the frequent use fireworks and the impact they had. A ban on fireworks was not suggested.

The Panel were advised that fireworks should not be set off between 11 pm - 7 am, except on certain occasions including bonfire night, New Year's Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year. The Council can investigate noise nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, although any action would be very limited due to the transitory nature of fireworks and other agencies may have more specific powers.

Members discussed the motion. Members agreed that the use of fireworks was a sensitive issue and that awareness should be raised. The Panel agreed to recommend the motion to Council for adoption, subject to a change to the wording of bullet point (c) to "request" rather than require the advertising of firework displays in advance. It was also agreed that bullet point (d) be expanded to include Hampshire Fire and Rescue, Hampshire Constabulary and Trading Standards.

The Panel suggested a Task and Finish Group be set up to consider the amended motion. It was suggested that this be one meeting inviting the relevant stakeholders to consider a joint and integrated approach, in particular regarding the promotion of public awareness.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Panel advise the Council that it is supportive of the following amended motion:

We live in a unique part of the world and as such we have unique problems and challenges when trying to protect not just our wildlife and pets, but the ponies, cattle and pigs who freely roam the forest. These are an integral part of our history and culture, the animals are people's stock and livelihood. Fireworks can cause many problems for animals, not just from the noise, but from the debris of spent rockets which land within the forest, countryside and gardens which can cause severe distress or even death, if eaten.

Within the NFDC area there are also many people for whom fireworks are a source of distress, for example, the elderly, ex-service men and women and those who are vulnerable due to mental or physical challenges.

To this end the Council resolves to:

- (a) *Engage with Government and local Members of Parliament to seek greater national regulation with regard to private and organised firework displays.*
- (b) *Actively promote a public awareness campaign within the District about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people, including precautions that can be taken to mitigate this.*

- (c) To **request** ~~require~~ all public firework displays within (and encourage those just outside) the District to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
- (d) To work with the NFNPA, Forestry England and Hampshire County Council (**including HCC Trading Standards and any other relevant services**), Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Constabulary for a joint and integrated approach.
- (ii) That it be recommended to Council that a Task and Finish Group be set up with key stakeholders, as detailed in (d) of the motion to consider a joint and integrated approach.

34 WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Panel received an update on the work of the waste strategy Working Group. The Group had been established in order to carry out a review of the waste strategy as the latest strategy had expired in 2016. It was also noted that the Government had published an Environment Bill in October 2019 following four national consultations which would influence any future strategy. Key issues identified in the Bill included; the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme, a requirement for local authorities to collect a consistent set of materials (food waste was likely to be part of this requirement) and that producers would pay the full net costs of recycling or disposing of waste packaging. Any new Waste Strategy would need to take account of any changes imposed by Government.

The Working Group to date had considered the following topics:

- Current Service
- Project Integra
- Waste Prevention
- Case Studies
- Performance Measures
- Waste Composition
- Organic Waste
- Waste Collection systems
- Site Visits

Members questioned the difficulty of comparing the performance of local authorities against each other. It was recognised that this could be a problem and any statistics could not necessarily be compared like for like. Officers when selecting site visits and looking at case studies had tried to look at some authorities comparable to NFDC, East Devon District Council was an example. It was a coastal authority, of a similar size and demographic to NFDC and was inside an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The service EDDC provided was very different to that of NFDC with a much higher recycling rate. It had a 3 weekly residual waste collection, kerbside sorting with a greater range of materials and these were collected on a weekly basis.

The working group had also visited an anaerobic digestion facility for food waste in Piddlehinton, Dorset. The food waste at this facility also produced electricity.

A public engagement survey was due to be carried out from 15 January 2020 for one month with residents in the District Council area, seeking their views on the current service and what they would like to see in any future service. This was to be a targeted survey of about 1,100 residents and would be demographically representative. A non-targeted online survey would also be available, open to everyone however, this would not be demographically representative. The results would be reported to the working group in March.

The next steps for the working group would be to look at different collection systems. The group would consider the service costs, recycling performance, compliance to future legislation and the results of the public engagement survey.

Cllr Blunden, as a member of the Working Group thanked officers for the work they had done so far to assist them.

Members asked about the current infrastructure in place for waste, in particular the Energy Recovery Facility in Marchwood. It was noted that this facility needed a range of different materials in order for it to work efficiently and that any change to the waste collected may have an impact.

There was a discussion about producers and the cost of packaging. It was acknowledged that packaging was useful for some products in order to increase the shelf life of the product and throwing away damaged or rotten food could have a greater environmental impact than that of plastic packaging.

35 REVIEW OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR TEXTILE RECYCLING

The Panel received the review of the arrangements for textile recycling. NFDC had entered into an agreement with Fareham Borough Council (FBC) in August 2019 with the Salvation Army Trading Company (SATCOL) to supply and service all the textile banks on Council owned land. The benefits of this meant that it was easier to monitor the tonnages of materials collected and the income.

All the old textile banks had been removed. There had been a reduction in the number of banks, from 42 down to 30, however some of the collection banks were larger in size. Income from the banks had been agreed so that 20% went to additional recycling initiatives and communications; 20% to the NFDC community grants fund and 60% to a minimum of two 'local' charities, split equally. To date the collection figures were positive.

Members questioned the merits of only one charity collecting the textiles. This was the charity which had been selected as part of the agreement with Fareham Borough Council. FBC had carried out a tender process in order to award the contract to SATCOL. A Task and Finish Group had also recommended that NFDC should enter into an agreement with FBC. It was therefore felt that a rigorous selection process had been carried out. It was noted that there were some non Council owned sites, for example at supermarkets, which had charity textile banks supporting other charities.

It was also questioned whether there was a future in textile banks with a possible new waste strategy, however officers were confident that there would still be a need for textile banks.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel note the following:

- That officers will continue to monitor operations, material tonnages and income generation of the SATCOL banks; and
- That an application and assessment process be developed so local charities that directly serve the district can apply to be beneficiary of the 60% apportionment.

36 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

An update was provided to the Panel on the progress of the Local Plan. The Local Plan review sets out the planning strategy for the New Forest District Council area, excluding the National Park. Since the previous Local Plan was prepared a change in national planning policies and the way in which the housing need was assessed, had resulted in a very significant increase in the requirement for new house building in the council area, consequently the housing target had moved from a Plan with 200 dwellings a year to one making provision for over 500 dwellings a year. This was a huge challenge.

In November 2018 the Local Plan review began the Examination process. Public hearings had been held in June and July 2019. Following the hearings, the Inspectors' wrote to the Council to confirm that subject to some modifications, the plan could be made sound. Most of the changes the Inspectors considered necessary had already been discussed at the hearing sessions. The consultation period on the modifications began on 13 December 2019 and the deadline for representations was 31 January 2020. The Inspectors would then consider the representations made on the modifications and if necessary, may decide to hold further hearing sessions. Following consideration of all the evidence and representations the Inspectors would present their final report of the Examination to the Council. It will be a matter for the Council to decide whether or not to adopt the Local Plan, as modified.

Members requested that the weblink to the modifications on the Local Plan be circulated to them.

37 WORK PROGRAMME**RESOLVED:**

That the Work Programme be approved with the inclusion of the following items, listed below:

20 March 2020

- Clean Air Strategy
- Behavioural change litter initiative
- Bonfires
- Green Space signage / protocol
- Tree Protection and Development Guidance

11 June 2020

- Food Safety and Health and Safety

For later consideration

- Climate Change Action Plan
- Pre-app Protocol
- Play design guidance

CHAIRMAN