

10 SEPTEMBER 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 10 September 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:

David Hawkins
Edward Heron

Councillors:

Alison Hoare
Christine Ward

Officers Attending:

Steve Cook, David Hurd, Steve Jones, Chris Noble, Colin Read, Daniel Reynafarje, Claire Upton-Brown, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom

Apologies:

There were no apologies for absence.

67 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

69 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

70 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS

Cllr Hoare, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services reported that she had nothing to report as updates on areas within her Portfolio would be provided during the meeting.

Cllr Heron, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure reported to members of the Panel that details of a decision he proposed to take in relation to changes to car parks in Totton had been sent to them.

71 OFF STREET CAR PARKING STRATEGY

The Panel received an update on the progress of the Off Street Car Parking Working Group. The Group to date had considered the following matters:

- Car parking arrangements across the District;
- Technology options available for use in the car parks;
- Car parking clock system;
- Parking tariffs and differences between long and short stay car parks;
- Hierarchy of car parks; and
- Blue badge scheme – currently free to blue badge holders

The Group had been reviewing a range of technological options available for use in NFDC car parks. One option was ANPR, which had been installed for example at Lepe Country Park, managed by HCC. ANPR was expensive and would not be suitable for use in all NFDC car parks. Members noted that whilst ANPR worked well at Lepe Country Park, during busy times the barrier system caused traffic to build up on the road.

An alternative option to ANPR could be provided by Flobird urban intelligence. This would use the existing ticket machines installed in NFDC car parks. Flobird could provide a prepaid card based system to replicate the benefits of the current parking clock system. The card would be used at the machine and a ticket would be issued and be displayed in the car. Additional hardware would need to be purchased and the machines would need to be reprogrammed. Advantages of this included the reuse of the card year on year thereby reducing administration costs. It was anticipated that users would be able to purchase the cards online as well as top up in future years.

The compliance rate was raised by members and it was noted that the enforcement team worked 7 days a week between the hours of 6am-10pm and their presence encouraged payment for parking. In general, however it was felt that there was a good compliance rate of payment for parking.

Members questioned the revenue generated from the car parks and whether it paid for the enforcement and maintenance costs. It was noted that the revenue from the car parks paid for all costs and contributed to the general fund account.

72 MILFORD SEA WALL UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation on the urgent works being carried out at Westover Seawall, Milford-on-Sea.

The Panel heard how the damage to both the western and eastern side had developed between November 2019-February 2020, how the beach had been lowered, resulting in groyne failure, beach huts had become unstable and the sea wall collapsed in two areas in a very short space of time.

It was noted that of the last 50 most powerful storms, 8 had been in the winter of 2019/20. The wave height had increased in recent years and waves were more

powerful and therefore had had a greater impact on the structures along this section of coastline.

The urgent works being carried out to the sea wall were noted to be an interim measure and would reduce the risk of further failure of the sea wall. The works involved the construction of a rock revetment 180m in length from east to west. This had two functions, the first was to add weight to where the beach had disappeared and would support the sea wall. Secondly, voids would be built into the rocks which would take energy out of the waves, reducing the wave over topping onto the sea wall.

Local residents had been engaged in meetings to explain the urgent works. It was proposed that letters would be sent out to local households. Information would also be available along the sea front in Milford as well on the NFDC website.

A long term solution (50 plus years) was required and funding was critical for these works. Two bids had been submitted for funding, firstly for a local levy contribution to the urgent works and secondly for local levy funding for scheme development of the long-term solution. The decision was expected shortly on the outcome of these bids. It was noted, however that further work was required to identify those who would benefit from the work as any successful funding bid was likely to require funding from other sources, particularly those who will benefit from any scheme.

73 PRE-APP PROTOCOL

The Panel considered the current work to review of the planning application advice service and proposed changes to the service. A survey with regular users of the planning service had been carried out in November 2019 and a number of areas had been identified for improvement. These included improved accessibility to quick advice on straightforward matters, deliverable upfront timescales and the cost of the pre-application advice was often high when compared to the planning fees.

It was noted that a revised fee schedule had not been included within the report and that it would be considered by Cabinet. The review had highlighted that the cost of the service was currently high for householders and therefore the fee was expected to reduce. There would be revised charges for larger schemes and it was expected that Planning Performance Agreements would be used which would offer bespoke charges and timescales based on the nature of the scheme.

The aim of the proposed changes to the service was to encourage greater use of the pre application advice service.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel supported the proposed changes to the pre-application service.

74 WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation providing an update on the development of the draft Waste Strategy.

Since the last Panel meeting, a consultant had carried out further modelling work on future collection options and a draft Waste Strategy was being developed. The Strategy took into account national and regional factors.

Four waste collection options had been modelled and were presented to the Panel. Each modelled option proposed either a 2 or 3 weekly residual waste collection with a wheeled bin, a weekly food waste collection service as well of recycling materials (paper / card / glass and plastic).

A draft Waste Strategy was proposed to be considered by Cabinet in November, for public consultation. It was suggested that an additional meeting of the Panel be held in October for the Panel to review the draft Waste Strategy, prior to consideration at Cabinet.

Some Members spoke of the current weekly sack collection system being popular among residents. They felt that wheeled bins would have a negative impact on visual street scene, they were concerned about the build-up of residual waste and of bin hygiene. It was noted that the proposed weekly separate food waste collection service would reduce the likelihood of pests being attracted to residual waste and that a policy would also be put in place to address residents who did not remove their wheeled bin from the street scene. The provision of wheeled bins would offer benefits to the streetscene when compared to bags which often split or were attacked by wildlife and caused litter to disperse on the highway. They also offered greater protection for the workforce due to waste being contained.

Some Members spoke in support of the proposed changes to the current service, noting that it was no longer sustainable and expensive. The District Council had a poor recycling rate which needed to be improved and a fortnightly residual waste collection service was anticipated to increase recycling. The importance of educating residents on any new service was also recognised.

RESOLVED:

That a Special meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel be held on Thursday, 15 October 2020 at 2 pm to consider the draft Waste Strategy.

75 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be approved with the inclusion of the following items for the meeting on 14 January 2021:

- Review of Public Conveniences
- Performance Dashboard
- Update on Fly Tipping

76 DATES OF MEETINGS 2021/2022

RESOLVED:

That the following dates of meetings for 2021/22 (Thursdays at 2.00 pm) be agreed:

- 17 June 2021
- 9 September 2021
- 13 January 2022
- 10 March 2022

CHAIRMAN