

15 OCTOBER 2020

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 15 October 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:**

Diane Andrews  
Keith Craze  
Jack Davies  
Arthur Davis  
Sandra Delemare  
Philip Dowd  
Jacqui England  
David Hawkins

**Councillors:**

Edward Heron  
Alison Hoare  
Martyn Levitt  
Neville Penman  
Caroline Rackham  
Barry Rickman  
David Russell  
Christine Ward

**Officers Attending:**

Phil Dunsdon, Sara Hamilton, David Hurd, Steve Jones, Chris Noble, Nicola Plummer, Colin Read, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom

**Apologies:**

There were no apologies for absence.

**77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Wade declared an interest in agenda item 3, draft Waste Strategy as a member of Hampshire County Council, which was the waste disposal authority for the waste collected in the New Forest District Council area. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and vote on the matter.

**78 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

**79 DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY**

Cllr Wade declared an interest in this item as a member of Hampshire County Council, which was the waste disposal authority for the waste collected in the New Forest District Council area. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and vote on the matter.

Shirley Macey, local resident addressed the Panel in support of the proposals contained within the draft Waste Strategy. She supported the proposal to introduce wheeled bins in the District Council area. She acknowledged the importance of educating residents on any changes to the waste collection service and the need to change habits and behaviours.

The Committee considered the draft Waste Strategy and Engagement Plan. Within the draft Strategy, a number of actions had been identified. The key action being how waste was proposed to be collected. The twin-stream option (Option 4) proposed a fortnightly collection service with residual waste and recycling waste being collected on alternative weeks and this was noted to be the preferred option. Food waste was proposed to be collected as an additional service on a weekly basis, which was in line with the government proposals. The draft Strategy proposed that further work be carried out in order to develop a Business Case, to engage with stakeholders on the twin-stream collection method and the Strategy as a whole.

Members noted that any change to the collection service would consider those properties which would not be suitable for the “core service” (for example – flats). Extensive surveying work would be carried out to identify properties where the core service would not be suitable, and an alternative option would be considered. An assisted service would be provided to any residents unable to move the wheeled bins.

It was questioned why the kerbside sort option (Option 3) was considerably cheaper than the preferred option. It was explained that all proposed options were more expensive than the current system which was due to the proposed introduction of a food waste collection service. The kerbside sort option did appear less expensive, however the modelling work carried out on this option did not take into account the cost to unload the waste. Any waste transfer station would need to have the ability to accommodate the different waste streams and the costs of this collection method would be more expensive than the other proposed options. Hampshire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority had been carrying out some research regarding how it could accommodate additional waste streams and this information was expected to be available later in the year. Members suggested that further detail be included within the draft Waste Strategy to explain these additional costs.

Members noted that the recycling rate needed to be improved. It was felt that waste prevention should be put at the heart of the waste strategy.

The Panel suggested that the Council should explore the ways in which residents could identify their own collection containers in areas where they are presented for collection immediately next to containers from neighbouring households.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the draft Waste Strategy and Engagement Plan be supported; and

- ii) That the comments raised above be noted.

**80 CALL-IN REQUEST - CHANGES TO SHORT AND LONG STAY SPACES IN WINSOR ROAD, CIVIC CENTRE AND WESTFIELD ROAD CAR PARKS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CHARGES IN CIVIC CENTRE AND WESTFIELD ROAD CAR PARKS, TOTTON**

A statement was read out at the beginning of this item on behalf of Deborah Burrows, Healthy Pet Store, Totton in relation to the introduction of parking charges at the Westfield Road car park.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the call-in request from Cllr Rackham, in relation to a Portfolio Holder decision to make changes to three car parks in Totton, which included the introduction of car parking charges in the Civic Centre and Westfield Road Car Parks.

The Panel heard from Cllr Rackham as well as Cllrs Davis, Penman and Russell on the importance of Totton, how it was unique to other areas of the forest and should be treated differently. It was highlighted that due to the geographical location in Totton retailers needed to compete with businesses located outside of the District Council area, for example Shirley High Street and Hedge End. It was not practical for some local residents to walk to the centre of Totton. It was felt that the introduction of charges would impact negatively on the local economy and for employees on a lower wage or worked part time. Totton also provided important facilities such as a community centre, a library dialysis unit, stroke club and GP surgery and the users of these facilities benefitted from the free car parks. It was therefore requested that the Portfolio Holder reconsider his decision.

The Panel expressed their views, noting that other areas of the forest did not provide free car parking and that it was inequitable and unfair that other areas should subsidise those car parks in Totton which were currently free. It was noted that there was a cost to "free" car parking and that the residents of Totton had been paying towards the cost of the car parking, regardless of whether they used these car parks. The majority of panel members supported the Portfolio Holder decision to introduce car parking charges in the Totton car parks.

An alternative view was expressed by some members of the Panel raising concerns about the hardship additional charges would place on people, particularly during the national pandemic and that the views of the local District Councillors who had raised concerns should be considered.

Councillor Edward Heron, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure was present and addressed the Panel having heard the views expressed at the meeting. He spoke of the importance for all areas of the forest to be treated equally and all were unique in their character. The economy of local towns in the forest needed to compete with other areas, for example, New Milton with Christchurch and Ringwood with Castlepoint, Bournemouth so this issue was not unique. Free car parking did not encourage more environmentally friendly options such as walking or bus travel. The Council's car parking clock was available to purchase by both residents and non-residents and offered good value for money, noting that a short stay parking clock, used once a week cost 18p an hour. He did not feel this was a disincentive to use the car parks in Totton. Having heard the discussions at the meeting, he reported he had not heard anything to change his view on the decision he had made.

The Panel concluded the following:

- i) that the decision was within the Council's policy and budget; and
- ii) that it was not necessary for the policy and budget to be reviewed as a result of the decision; and
- iii) that the Portfolio Holder decision taken on 11 September in relation to short and long stay spaces and to introduce charges to car parks in Totton was supported.

The Panel noted that a summary report of the Panel's considerations and conclusions would be presented to the Leader of the Council and the next meeting of Council, in line with the Council's constitution.

CHAIRMAN