

Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 June 2019, 10.00 am



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor John Cottier (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Phil Dilks

Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
(Chairman)

Cabinet Members

Cabinet Member Commercial and Operations, Councillor Dr Peter Moseley

Officers

Strategic Director Commercial and Operations (Gary Smith)
Assistant Director Commercial and Operations (Ian Yates)
Business Support Team Leader (Clova Townhill)
Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and each Member gave a brief introduction. The Chairman informed the Committee that filming/photography was allowed as this was a public meeting but asked that courtesy be given to all those present. She asked that she be referred to as Chairman or Madam Chairman not Chair.

1. Disclosure of Interests

None disclosed.

2. Action Notes from the meeting held on 12 March 2019 and Updates from previous meeting

The notes from the meeting held on 12 March 2019 were noted. A question was asked by one of the new Members to the Committee about the options referred to in the notes in relation to the street lighting item. It was stated that the paper circulated at the meeting which contained the options, did contain

commercially sensitive information. A paper was made available without the commercial sensitive information. Councillor Baxter wanted it placed on record that he felt that the decision made at the Committee was not as transparent as it could have been in terms of how it fed through to the Cabinet decision.

3. Resources and Waste Strategy Consultations

Members had been circulated with a report on the response to the recent consultations relating to the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England. How waste was managed as a Country was high on the Government's agenda and an overhaul of the current process with regard to collection, disposal and management of waste was underway. Four consultations had been received but only one of the consultations which looked at waste and recycling and food waste was more relevant to the district as the collecting authority. The consultation was lengthy and had been completed the day after the district elections. The prescriptive content of the questions led down a specific route i.e. the promotion of localism to the local collection authority. However, how waste and recycling was collected in one area did not fit all areas. Work had been done with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership to produce a response following a robust debate which had taken place in relation to specific answers to the consultation in connection with the food waste aspect.

Discussion followed on the consultation document and when it took place. The previous Environment OSC had received a presentation and had been circulated with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnerships response. Anybody had been free to respond to the consultation, not just local authorities. New Members asked if this could be re circulated to enable them to have the background information.

> Action Note

A copy of the previous presentation to be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Further discussion followed about the responses given especially in relation to question 18 which concerned food waste collection. It was proposed that by 2023 legislation provided that everyone had access to at least a separate weekly collection of food waste. The interpretation of the consultation question caused disagreement when discussed at the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership meeting however a neutral response was agreed.

The previous action notes of the Committee had stated that officers would circulate the response to the consultation document, no response had been circulated to date. The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership response had been circulated previously and the Council's response was circulated at the

meeting. It was stressed that the timing of the consultations had been bad and this had been reflected in the previous meetings notes, the consultation had not been completed until the day after the district elections had been held. Going forward it was requested that information requested by the Committee be circulated in a timely manner. Further discussion on the responses followed. Due to how the consultation was undertaken the responses could only be printed out and without the question/statement relating to the response the context was difficult to understand.

The Chairman asked that future consultations be put into context by Officers before circulating to Members.

One Member asked when the response from Government was expected. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations told the Committee that they had met with DEFRA a few weeks ago and further consultation was planned for September. It was stressed that the timescale may slip and Members were referred to the timeline appended to the report, however the Committee would be kept informed.

A question was asked about the food waste trial, the Member was told that an update would be given in the next item. The Member did not agree with free green waste collection on environmental grounds, people should compost. It was felt that education played a large part. The Cabinet Member Commercial and Operations said that in relation to free green waste it was unfair for people who did not have a garden to subsidise through their council tax those that did to enable a free green waste collection to take place.

4. Food Waste Trial

The Cabinet Member Commercial and Operations updated Members on the pilot food trial which started last year and had been successfully funded through the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership.

In terms of collecting food waste a drop had not been seen in the collection volumes as expected. Reasons for this could include people's disposable income, time and diet management. The up take rate was still high between 80%-85% and this was down to positive engagement and communication including through social media. Free caddy liners had also helped which made the service as clean and efficient as possible. The trial would be continued into the next year and it was hoped that civil servants from DEFRA would be coming up to Grantham to see how the trial was progressing especially with the Government's view to make food waste a collectable item for every county from 2023. Work was being done trialling alternative collection methodologies to see if collection arrangements could be made more efficient. One Member asked if there was an urban/rural split but it was confirmed that the take up rate was consistent regardless of where in the

district you lived. It was noted that flats had been excluded from the pilot trial and the caddy liners were bio degradable.

The food waste trial had seen less contamination of the waste streams and grey bin contamination. Education was still seen as an important part of recycling and reference was made to recycling credits which had in the past been used for education on recycling but which the County Council now received. For the collection authorities having clean recycling streams was key. There was a link with the Government's proposal of having core recycling collection streams.

Further discussion on food waste followed, how it was collected and where it went and the use of the energy from the waste. It was stressed that there was a cost to the collection of food waste and it was how this was balanced, the benefits came at disposal and currently the costs came in collection.

5. Approach to Climate Change

A short presentation on Climate Change was given to the Committee. It was recognised that Climate Change covered a wide area. The need for action continued to rise up the Government's agenda as well as within the community, within organisations and individually. A small example of the many issues surrounding climate change was shown and it was for the Committee to decide what their next steps should be. What did they consider a priority area, some areas there was limited control of any impact that could be made where as other areas could see bigger impacts. What approach did the Committee want to take? It was suggested that perhaps a series of workshops be held to gather evidence and explore what direction the Committee wished to take, what priorities they wanted to take forward.

Reference was made to what other authorities had done, what had worked, what hadn't also a visit to an eco-house was suggested. Technology was another area which could drive innovation to provide carbon savings if utilized correctly. Technology could have an overarching knowledge base.

Members felt that workshops and gathering evidence was a good place to start and should include both our own officers and external experts. Some Members felt that workshops should be open. Caution was stressed in relation to having open workshops as this could stifle debate as Members may feel unable to express all their opinions. Further discussion followed on having open and closed workshops as well as having a fixed timeframe at which to look at topics, what the outcome would be, a policy on climate change, a strategy on climate change or a campaign. The Cabinet Member stated that it was within the gift of the Committee whether they put forward a policy and whether that influenced all the other Committees. Whether it was a policy on carbon reduction or carbon offsetting or an overarching policy on how other areas were developed.

More discussion followed in relation to timescale, evidence and achievability. The suggested focus was to look at technology, carbon reduction and carbon offsetting. It was agreed that a workshop be arranged for the Committee to gather evidence including external speakers if possible before the next meeting of the Committee in September. It was asked if the workshop could be late July rather than August when people tended to be away.

> Action Note

That a workshop be arranged for the Committee to look at Climate Change towards the end of July. Possible areas for discussion were technology, carbon reduction and carbon offset.

6. Consideration of Work Programme

Members had been circulated with a draft work programme. It was confirmed that the most recent e-mail contained the most up to date work programme. It was hoped that site visits could be arranged to the recycling plant, the energy from waste plant and a trip to the new EnvironmentSK depot.

A discussion on the content of the work programme followed and it was asked if indicative dates could be included on the work programme especially for items that had been on the work programme for some time. Reference was made to textile banks which had been mentioned at the last meeting of the Committee. The Member felt that there was an unnecessary delay in dealing with the issue and asked that a date be put against the item (November). It was for the Committee to prioritise what issues they felt had a higher priority. Reference was made to the Statement of Gambling Principals which had been added to the work programme. This issue related to a statutory legislative requirement that the Council had to undertake every three years. Although cycling was on the work programme it was questioned whether this sat within the Committees remit. Biodiversity was another issue that covered a wide area and it would help if Officers had a steer as to what part of the issue was to be covered. The Chairman indicated that she was happy for the Committee Members to put forward ideas/suggestions, they should be sent direct to her. Other Members of the Committee felt that site visits would give a better understanding for the new Members of the Council but urged caution in respect of the Climate Change work as the Committee could take on too much. The Member who had asked for biodiversity to be on the Work Programme referred to the e-mail that he had sent previously. The Vice-Chairman indicated that they should look at the tree guidelines and what policy was available at the moment. The draft work programme was welcomed by Members but they asked that going forward timelines be included.

>Action note

Dates to be included on the work programme going forward.

7. Future meeting venues

The Chairman informed the Committee that the November meeting of the Committee would be held in Bourne Corn Exchange. She indicated that she hoped a change of venue could be accommodated twice during the year.

8. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

The Chairman informed the Committee that she had asked for some overview and scrutiny training to be arranged and Members would be notified accordingly.

9. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 11:55am.