

Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 15 December 2020, 10.30 am



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Meeting held virtually, via Skype

Committee Members present

Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor John Cottier (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Helen Crawford

Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Linda Wootten

Cabinet Members

Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations

Officers

Gary Smith, Strategic Director,
Commercial and Operations
Paul Stokes, Corporate Operations Lead
Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate
Change
Lynne Lord, Grounds Maintenance
Coordinator
Steve Frisby, Parks Contract Manager,
Corporate Operations Team
Miki Gregory, Market and Events
Supervisor
Shelley Thirkell, Acting Principal
Democratic Officer
Susan Hislop, Democracy Officer

Other Members present

Councillor Bob Adams

External Guests

Dave Clasby, Sustrans, East Midlands
Partnership Manager
Gwyneth McMinn, Sustrans, Head of
Network Development

14. Comments from Members of the public

A member of the public raised a question relating to cycling, as being an advocate in its promotion. There was concern over the number of occasions he had been clipped by vehicles, whilst cycling in Grantham. It was queried whether there were any plans in place to educate vehicle drivers and engage with bike shops, to encourage maintenance of bicycles alongside cycling

education. In response, the Chairman explained that though this was not within the remit of this committee, she hoped that these concerns would be covered within item 6 on the agenda.

A second member of the public raised a question relating to the 'purple bins' being rolled out by Lincolnshire County Council, across the district. She queried what the current situation was and how the new bins would fit into encouraging waste collection and recycling. In response, the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations explained that these additional bins were to enable the separation of paper and card waste to achieve improved recycling. He anticipated South Kesteven District Council would not be included within the programme until 2023 and this was subject to Member decision.

15. Register of attendance, membership and apologies for absence

Following a register of attendance all Committee Members were confirmed as present.

16. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

17. Action Notes from the meeting held on 6 October 2020

Subject to typographical amendments and suggested changes as listed below, the notes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020, were agreed as a correct record. Communal properties under item 8 to the discussion held was also queried.

Page 5, Item 6 additional word 'were' to sentence

Page 6, Item 7 penultimate sentence in final paragraph to be deleted

Page 7, third paragraph down amendment of word to 'disappointment'

Page 8, second sentence down completion of phrase to 'task and finish group'

Page 8, last sentence in penultimate paragraph of item 8 to read singular Member

Page 10, last sentence in penultimate paragraph additional word 'of' to sentence

Page 11, item 12 addition to second sentence of the word 'had'

18. Updates from the previous meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the requested action to undertake a consultation to a proposed rewilding site at Jubilee Park in Deeping St James, would be discussed under agenda item 9.

19. Increasing Cycling in the District

Members received a presentation from representatives of Sustrans; Dave Clasby (East Midlands Partnership Manager) and Gwyneth McMinn (Head of Network Development).

Dave Clasby explained the benefits of active travel and services Sustrans were able to provide. A reflection of the results received from the recent South Kesteven District Council employees' travel survey. Key elements included of the presentation included:

- Enabling people to have a choice over walking and cycling for health and environment benefits.
- 50% of the country's future health budget will be spent on obesity related issues.
- 30,000 premature deaths as a result of poor air quality, with the poorest communities suffering most.
- A massive increase in cycling and walking during the Covid-19 had been observed.
- The Government's recent publication [Gear Change](#).
- Creating a people friendly retail environment resulted in higher usage and increased retail benefits.
- Success was reported to the creation of safe space around schools during the pandemic; including closure of roads for safety and to encourage walking.

Gwyneth McMinn continued with the second presentation highlighting:

- A need for improved development planning and design with delivery of improved transport links.
- Working with local authorities and partners to achieve 66% higher standard of walkways, as well as being traffic free by 2040.
- The existing cycle network to be increased through planning solutions and improved connectivity.
- Greater investment from developers to enable additional funds alongside those provided by the Department of Transport, for safe routes and cycle networks.

Members were shown examples of walkways including those within South Kesteven, which had been redesigned to enable safe cycle access. Appreciation was expressed by Sustrans for the support provided by South Kesteven District Council in helping to create additional cycle friendly walkways.

Following discussion, Members raised the following points and questions:

- Sustrans were working alongside Active England to consider new Planning Policies, to assist planners in improving accessibility for communities.
- The importance of including cycle routes and safe routes within the Local Plan
- Increased influence in decision-making for cycling and infrastructure schemes. It was noted that air quality controls fell within District Council's responsibility.
- A Member's suggested a cycle festival, this was welcomed by Sustrans. It was noted that oversight of that area would fall under with the Culture and Visitor Overview and Scrutiny Committee's remit.
- The progress of the cycle route to Belton House was attributed to the joint work of Sustrans, South Kesteven District Council and local volunteers.
- Consideration of connecting infrastructure to new developments was recognised. This would include better quality routes for schools.

The Chairman proposed with full agreement of Members, to include a post-presentation item on cycling for inclusion at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 January 2021.

ACTION 1

- To include in the work programme recommendations and conclusions to presentation by Sustrans, to improve cycling in South Kesteven.

The representatives from Sustrans were thanked by the Chairman and the Committee.

20. Emerging Carbon Reduction Plan

A report which provided an update to the emerging Carbon Reduction Plan was presented to Members. Elements of the Plan had been considered at previous meetings, which included a presentation of a report compiled by the Carbon Trust. This report had identified key areas within the Council's buildings and other assets, where large emissions had been indicated.

A quarterly update outlining the Council's carbon emission progress was to be presented to the Committee; with the first due January 2021. It was reported that the street light project was expected to be completed within 12 years, with anticipated delivery to carbon reduction of 180 tonnes. An application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme had been made to help identify investment requirements to improve energy usage within Council buildings. Future plans included; an investigation of the current fleet of vehicles fuel consumption, assessment of carbon usage within leisure services, upgrade of homes through the Green Homes Fund and working with other authorities on reduction of carbon usage initiatives.

The work of the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer was praised by the Committee, along with progress made.

Members queried if consideration had been given to alternative means of heating. It was noted that this had been considered by Officers, for example; air source heat pumps. There was recognition of high installation costs but was anticipated that the reduction of energy usage would result in an overall reduction in cost. Members were advised that presently there are approximately 800 properties reliant on solid fuel heating, with around 120 to be upgraded.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations and the Officer welcomed a suggestion to request developers to provide figures as to the level of carbon likely to be generated by a planning application.

ACTION 2

- The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer to include properties within the HRA to the list of potential projects, subject to HRA agreement.
- The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer to discuss with HRA colleagues the feasibility of alternative energy sources within the Council's housing portfolio.

Following unanimous agreement by Members the following was noted and that the Committee would continue with the third option as detailed within the Officer's Report.:

1. Note the work completed to date to identify opportunities to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.
2. Note the outlined approach listed in paragraph 2.1. for a carbon reduction plan targeting the Council's key carbon emission categories.
3. Provide feedback on any specific areas or carbon reduction initiatives the Committee would like to see prioritised.

21. Update on Street Lighting

An update was provided by the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations on the £150,000 investment by the Council, to upgrade South Kesteven District Council owned street lighting.

An investigation was undertaken into the financial commitments and benefits to LED lighting, as well as the addition of dimming technology which could add further savings in rural areas, as well as those with low pedestrian/vehicular usage. It was hoped that the commencement of the project would take place in 2021, following pricing options considered by the Procurement Team.

22. Update for Trial Rewilding Projects

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations explained to Members that three areas of rewilding had been completed, photographs had been provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members received an update from the Parks Manager on the Blue Green Project. The European Regional Development Fund are the primary funder of a scheme to deliver 14 ecology improvement projects across both South and North Kesteven. Works included the creation of two wetland habitats and meadows at Queen Elizabeth Park, Grantham.

The Grounds Maintenance Co-ordinator reported to the Committee that the active rewilding sites had received positive feedback from ward Members, users and the Heights of Play Scheme (HOPS) group to the Foxglove Road site. Signage had been arranged for both sites.

Discussion with local ward Councillors had taken place with the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations, to establish scaled down sites in Bourne. It was highlighted that the resident survey in the area had not received a positive response and the Town Council was not in support. An alternative site at Dyke had been requested for consideration. The Grounds Maintenance Co-ordinator was praised for her excellent work.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that the consultation, regarding Jubilee Park, was programmed for December 2020.

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

The Chairman requested that the Work Programme be considered by Members, which had previously been circulated. It was agreed to include the following items for consideration:

26 January 2021

1. Promotion of Cycling in South Kesteven
Members to discuss presentation by Sustrans received at this meeting.
2. Update to Staff Survey
3. Big Clean Update
To receive an update following return of the Big Clean scheme post Covid-19 restrictions.
4. Performance Indicators against agreed indicators
5. Tree Protection Orders (TPO), Tree Replacement and Hedge Planting
To receive a presentation by the Woodland Trust to consider new initiatives and recommendations for the protection of trees, hedges and woodland.

Members were invited to contact the Chairman with further suggestions for the Committee meeting to be held on 20 April 2021.

The meeting was closed at 12:58.