

Action Notes

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 28 September 2021, 10.30

Council Chamber, South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham.
NG31 6PZ



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members:

Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor Gloria Johnson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Dean Ward
Councillor Hannah Westropp

Cabinet Members in attendance:

Dr Peter Moseley (Cabinet Member for Commercial & Operations)

Members in attendance:

Councillor Jacky Smith

Officers in attendance:

Gary Smith (Director of Commercial and Operations)
Anne-Marie Coulthard (Assistant Director, Operations and Public Protection)
Christian Polzin (Environmental Health Team Leader)
Phil Moore (Special Projects Manager (Planning))
Serena Brown (Sustainability and Climate Change Officer)
Shelley Thirkell (Acting Principal Democratic Services Officer)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

13. Comments from Members of the public

No comments were received.

14. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Cottier.

All other Committee Members were present.

15. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

16. Action Notes from the meeting held on 8 June 2021

Members **AGREED** the Action Notes of the meeting held on 8 June 2021, as a correct record.

17. Updates from the previous meeting

There were no updates from the previous meeting, held on 8 June 2021.

18. Update on tree planting ambitions

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations presented a report which provided an update on tree planting ambitions within the District. The report outlined the work towards the promotion of tree planting and projects taking place within South Kesteven. It included an update and summary on the collaboration work with Lincolnshire County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations referred Members to the report's appendix which outlined four sites managed by South Kesteven and possible sites for tree planting proposals. It was stressed that consultation with stakeholders would be essential in relation to the sites.

Members made the following questions and comments:

- South Kesteven District Council were responsible for around 6,000 trees and it was felt that the budget for planting trees should be included within the Climate Change Budget.
- If 'tree mapping' of the whole District was possible.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that the Committee could recommend budgeting options for tree planting. The Climate Action Reserve Budget was available for expenditure in relation to additional tree planting. It was confirmed that trees which are the responsibility of South Kesteven District Council area are mapped, as are Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). It was noted that every TPO in the South Kesteven District was listed on the Council's website.

- A concern was raised regarding the designated areas for developments set out in the Local Plan, in relation to trees. The Member referred to the possibility that developers remove trees prior to submitting a Planning Application.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that this could occur before the Council had any involvement, unfortunately the Council had no statutory responsibility to deal with such matters before a Planning Application was submitted. Raising the issue in a public meeting was a good way of showing awareness to the public and how they could address the problem.

- The Chairman stated that she had been provided with a list of TPOs in her Ward, prior to a development taking place and asked about the working relationship with Lincolnshire County Council in reference to the Treescape Fund.

The Director for Commercial and Operations confirmed that there was a positive working relationship with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). An application had been submitted by LCC on behalf of a consortium of Lincolnshire Council's, in relation to the Treescape fund which only upper tier Councils could access. The application had been a success and work had been currently ongoing regarding how the funds would be distributed within the County, this included both District and Parish Councils. South Kesteven's share of the grant fund (£169,000 for the whole County) had yet to be confirmed and would be determined based on the plans brought forward for the project.

- What options were available for the Queen's Green Canopy initiative and how that would be promoted.
- A query was raised regarding the map of Bourne, shown in the appendix to the report, as it was different to the other locations.

The Director for Commercial and Operations confirmed that the Queen's Green Canopy initiative would be a national campaign and current proposals were being explored which included how it was to be promoted. Members would be informed, once they have been confirmed.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that the team had struggled to identify suitable areas in Bourne to plant trees.

- The report mentioned an 'Emergency Tree Fund', Members asked what would qualify for that fund.

The 'Emergency Tree Fund' was the name that the Woodland Trust used and linked back to the climate and ecological emergency.

Members discussed the use of the £20,000 climate change reserve fund allocated to the Committee and whether the budget was rolled over to the next financial year if it wasn't utilised. The Chairman stated that the Committee had to put forward a request for the budget on an annual basis. The previous year's budget had been allocated to upgrading lighting in the Guildhall to low energy LEDs.

A member put forward a proposal that the £20,000, allocated within the Climate Action Reserve Fund, for the current financial year be used for tree planting initiatives.

The proposal was seconded and following a vote it was **AGREED**.

It was confirmed that the process of the fund allocation would include consultation with relevant SKDC ward Councillors and copied to town council clerks. It was hoped that views on the proposed sites would come forward. Following the consultation, decisions would be taken on which schemes would be progressed.

ACTION 1:

To confirm proposals to the Members on the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, once they were known.

AGREED:

- 1. Noted the positive progress and opportunity to continue to work together with Lincolnshire County Council, to increase the speed and scale of tree planting across the County.**
- 2. Noted the ongoing work with the Woodland Trust and continued opportunities to work jointly, including reviewing grant funding opportunities.**
- 3. Noted the limited space that South Kesteven District Council had to develop additional tree planning on amenity spaces.**
- 4. Endorsed the enhancement to the tree replacement approach for Council managed trees to plant at least two trees for any trees that need to be removed.**
- 5. Explored the best models for future long-term stewardship of trees and landscaping within large scale developments.**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee considered the four outlined options for the establishment of new trees on Council managed open spaces and recommended to Cabinet how these could be funded, subject to consultation with local stakeholders.

DECISION:

That the Committee agreed the allocation of £20,000 from the Climate Action Reserve Fund to enable tree planting to occur this tree planting season, if possible.

19. Climate & Carbon dashboard 2020/21

A report on the Climate and Carbon dashboard 2020/21 was presented to the Committee. The report included an annual summary of South Kesteven District Council's carbon footprint report for 2020/21.

The report provided a comprehensive statement of the Council's annual carbon footprint for 2020/21. The report also highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on operations and the closure of buildings had impacted carbon emissions, which had reduced by 25% overall. Vehicle fuel consumption had increased, this however could be attributed to the pressure on waste collection vehicles. Gas consumption in buildings had also increased. A reduction was seen in the Council's carbon footprint; however it was noted that this was due principally to the impact caused by Covid-19, but was hoped that could be built on going forward and opportunities identified to lock in savings.

Members raised the following:

- The impact of lockdown had a positive impact on Carbon reduction and hoped that the Council would do more to educate and encourage people across the District to reduce carbon output in homes and transport.

It was confirmed a further report would be presented, which would detail how the Council would encourage and educate people across the District, on how to reduce their carbon output. It was requested that Members raise this with their Parish and Town Council's, with the hope to encourage communities to play a role in the overall reduction within the District.

- Agile working for South Kesteven's colleagues, what plans were in place.
- It was confirmed that the Council would be following a 'hybrid working model', a balance of business need and choice as to whether colleagues would work from home or come into the office.
- A query was raised on how the Council could make the Fleet greener and the possible future actions taken to reduce gas usage.

It was noted that the fleet vehicles were on a rolling programme to be continually replaced, with more efficient models. As the District was a very rural a significant mileage was used by the fleet vehicles, which was taken into consideration when looking at viable options.

AGREED:

The Committee noted the contents of the annual summary of South Kesteven District Council's reported carbon footprint for 2020/21.

20. Climate Matters annual report

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations presented the report that brought together the second draft of the Annual Climate Change and Carbon Reduction report, the report outlined the importance of educating people across the District on climate change.

- A Member queried if there was any feedback from the replacement LED street lights and how many had been completed.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that a contractor was currently in the process of replacing the street lights with LEDs, those attending did not have an exact figure in the meeting, but this would be provided outside the meeting.

- It was requested that the information within the report be actively communicated to the public.
- The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed it was available on South Kesteven District Council's website.

ACTION 2:

Number of LED street lights replaced, to be sent to the Committee.

AGREED:

The Committee noted the contents of the draft Climate Matters Annual Climate Change and Carbon report.

21. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme update

The Committee were presented with a report on the Council's work towards the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant Funding offer.

The report outlined the project issues and proposed closedown of the project following a notification from the provider that they were withdrawing from the contract as they could no longer assure delivery within the required grant timescales.

Members raised the following:

- If the work completed on the scheme could be used on a different project in the future, or would the work be lost

It was confirmed that development work had taken place, could be used to help decarbonise the buildings in question.

- Where had the delivery of solar panels and what stage of the planning progress it had progressed to.

Planning was not the constraint to the delivery; it was due to the lead time on the major equipment.

The next round of the scheme opened on 6 October 2021.

- it was queried what steps were being taken towards phase 3 of the grant scheme.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer confirmed that previous work completed would be eligible to use on phase 3. A key difference would be that the Authority was expected to contribute a proportion of the project budget for upgrading the heating systems, further work would be required and a capital contribution from the Council would be needed.

- What phase had South Kesteven District Council's grant been made under.

It was confirmed that South Kesteven's allocation was made under phase 1. Subsequent changes had been made to the scheme and eligibility criteria had been tightened. The scheme was only for public sector owned corporate buildings. There were other schemes for social housing, low-income housing and the wider domestic sector.

- It was queried if other authorities were experiencing similar issues with proposed projects.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that an indication had been received that other organisations had either withdrawn or chosen to take the risk and were continuing with their funded projects.

- What percentage contribution the Council would make during subsequent phases of funding.

This was budget dependant on an exact figure could not be provided at that time, but it would relate to costs of upgrading the heating systems of each building and supporting infrastructure.

AGREED:

1. **Noted the closedown of the current project and the return of the outstanding grant funding to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and noted the reasons why this was a prudent course of action.**
2. **The Committee supported the Council's application to future grant funding opportunities to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.**

22. Health and Safety Policy

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations presented a report on the updated Health and Safety Policy. The updated policy ensured compliance with the Council's legal duties and covered the period 2021-23. The Council's Health and Safety Policy was its statement of intent and commitment to managing any risk that may arise from its undertakings.

The Director for Commercial and Operations highlighted to Members that the Covid-19 section of the policy, was a new addition.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to endorse the Health and Safety Policy as appended to the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee endorsed the Health and Safety Policy 2021-2023 and recommended to Cabinet for approval.

23. Work Plan for Food and Health and Safety Enforcement 2021-22

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations presented a report on the Work Plan for Food and Health and Safety Enforcement for 2021-22.

The Chairman raised concern over the 'back-log' of food hygiene inspection/star rating visits due to lockdown and the plans in place to ensure all visits would be brought up to date.

The Commercial Team Leader stated that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had a recovery plan in place which the Environmental Health Officers were following, that covered up to 2023. All routine visits would be up to date by the end of the calendar year, but it was highlighted that although this would allow the Team enough time to bring inspections up to date, incidents may occur that would take precedence.

Members were encouraged that 85.1% of food premises in South Kesteven had a star rating of 'very good' and 10% had been rated 'good'.

AGREED:

The Committee noted the South Kesteven District Council Work Plan for Food and Health and Safety Enforcement for 2021-22.

24. Work Programme

The Chairman Invited the Committee to consider items for the Work Programme.

ACTION 3:

Members requested that the following items be added to the Work Programme:

- **Update on Flooding - 30 November 2021**
- **Street trading policy - 30 November 2021**
- **Street collection policy - 30 November 2021**

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

There were none.

26. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12:10.