

Minutes

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 11 October 2022, 10:00am



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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

Committee Members present

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

Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Hannah Westropp
Councillor Phil Dilks

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Robert Reid (Cabinet Member for Housing and Property)
Councillor Mark Whittington (Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change)
Councillor Linda Wootten (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing)

Other Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter

Officers

Richard Wyles (Chief Finance Officer)
Anne-Marie Coulthard (Assistant Director, Operations and Public Protection)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)
Tracey Mooney (Regeneration Project Manager)
Heather Green (Licensing Team Leader)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

12. Public Speaking

Tim Harrison raised the following points in relation to the reduced age of new taxis on application from 7 years to 5 years:

- That the reduced age had an immense stress on taxi trade in the South Kesteven area.
- That the complaint had not been thoroughly or urgently reviewed by Cabinet on 12 July 2022.

- The speaker made references to discussions held at the Cabinet meeting on 12 July 2022
- That licensing functions of taxis were the function of the Council rather than the executives, such as Cabinet.
- The speaker had raised the Equality Impacts Assessments with the Chief Executive and the speaker highlighted that vulnerable groups had not been contacted. The Equality Impacts Assessments had been merely on the impact on drivers and not members of the public.
- The speaker had requested information around the vulnerable groups that had been consulted with and their replies.
- The speaker had sent questions via a letter to the Chief Executive and had not had a response.

The Chairman of the Committee confirmed that the points made would be taken away and a response would be provided to the speaker once relevant information had been gathered.

It was confirmed that the Committee had previously reviewed a segment of the Taxi Licensing Policy and it was referred to Cabinet for a further review due to concerns raised by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Anne Gayfer raised the following points:

- Clarification over 'one working day' and '24 hours' notice' on registering to speak as a member of the public.
- What the role and remit of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were. The remit of the Committee could be found within the Constitution.

13. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

Councillor Phil Dilks filled the Alliance SK Vacancy at this meeting.

14. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

15. Minutes from the meeting held on 5 July 2022

Members **AGREED** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022, as a correct record.

16. Minutes from the Joint Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 June 2022

Members considered the minutes of the Joint meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 June 2022. It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** that the minutes were a true and accurate record.

17. Updates from the previous meeting

All actions had been completed on the action sheet.

One Member requested an update on consideration of the use of fixed penalty notices to address contamination of bins. It was queried as to whether any fixed penalty notices had been issued and the number of tags that had been put onto contaminated bins.

A further query was raised on whether the Council were involved in the National Recycling Campaign in September 2022.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection highlighted that enforcement is a staged approach with fixed penalties only being used after several stages including education. Engagement with residents had taken place and yet, no fixed penalty notices had been served for non-compliance.

National Recycling Campaign week had been postponed due to the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II. It had been rescheduled for week commencing 17 October 2022. This was being promoted on the Council's social media, through the Communications Team and work alongside Lincolnshire County Council.

It was confirmed that the number of tags on contaminated bins was not available at the time of the meeting. Contamination rates had been provided in data to the Committee.

One Member noted that the contamination rates had decreased from 30% to 26%. It was queried as to why the contamination rates of bins had reduced and whether this coincided with tagging contaminated bins.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection informed the Committee that a log of the number of tags was not kept, but contamination was logged by crews on in-cab services.

The reasoning behind the decrease in contamination rates across the County was expected to be partly due to 'Right Thing, Right Bin' campaign, which educates residents on which objects go into which bin and therefore, would improve the quality of recycling. Engagement with residents who were not using their bins correctly was still taking place.

One Member noted that all 3 Green Flag Status Parks were in Grantham. Clarification was sought on the action relating to communication with 'Friends of Jubilee Park' in Deepings St James regarding Green Flag Status. The action stated

that no communication had been received from 'Friends of Jubilee Park' to the Council, however, Members were asking the Council to contact 'Friends of Jubilee Park'.

It was highlighted that Jubilee Park was owned and managed by the Council, there had been a suggestion that the Council allow the Pariah Council to take it over. It was queried as to whether this would be the reason for delay.

The Chairman highlighted that organisations contact the Council for guidance around Green Park Status and the Council act as an advisory lead body as a point of contact for advice.

ACTION: For the Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure to provide more information around the Council's role and future aspirations in relation to Jubilee Park in Deepings St James.

One Member noted that a management plan was required to gain a Green Flag Status for a park, however, 'Friends of Jubilee' had not completed a management plan as of yet, due their busy workload. 'Friends of Jubilee' could not present a three-year grounds maintenance plan due to the park being owned by the Council; the Council would be required to present the plan.

It was queried whether parks in different areas of the District that may be suitable and eligible for Green Flag Status had been explored.

The Chairman congratulated Dysart Park in Grantham for achieving Green Flag Status.

One Member highlighted the difficulty of achieving Green Flag Status. Stamford Town Council were in the process of achieving Green Flag Status for The Meadows.

A query was raised regarding the Joint meeting of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and whether market testing had taken place in relation to Grounds Maintenance.

It was further queried when further information would be reported to a public meeting about Grounds Maintenance.

It was confirmed that a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Member workshop was due to take place at the end of October 2022 and another Joint meeting of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would take place on 15 November 2022 and the final decision would be made by Cabinet before 2023.

18. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service

There were none.

One Member queried as to why the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or Head of Paid Service had not reported any announcements to this meeting or previous meetings.

The Cabinet Member for Waste and Climate Change noted that day-to-day operational work was occurring. The announcements were specifically for updates around declarations of strategic policy and urgent matters.

19. Depot Update

The Cabinet Member of Housing and Property presented the report that outlined the project which was included within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2023. The Council approved the budget to purchase Turnpike Close and the design team had been appointed to work on the scheme for the replacement Depot, including repairs for the DWO team for Housing.

The design team had reviewed the specification and had produced concept designs. The scheme had paused at the Royal Institute of Architect (Stage 3) of producing a detailed design whilst undertaking works around the fleet procurement were completed.

The outcome of the procurement process would shape the future of the replacement of the depot and designs would commence upon completion of the work.

Site surveys had shown significant works at the site were required to level and prepare for construction for any development on the site. Cawarden were completing these works at a cost of £242,000 with works starting on 17 October 2022 and due to be completed by Christmas.

One Member noted that the purchase of the land had been nearly two years ago and in April 2021, the land was acquired by the Council. It was queried as to why the project was taking up so much time to be delivered.

Clarification was sought on costings around the income received for the demolition of the old site and the cost on developing the new site at Turnpike Close.

The Cabinet Member for Housing & Property highlighted that the expansion of the development was key and paramount as a priority. The projected delivery of new homes within the District needed to be included in the future scope for the depot to ensure that it would be fit for purpose.

It was noted that the current depot was functioning and fit for purpose but was at a working capacity to deliver the Council's frontline services. A route review of the waste vehicles was undergoing due to the increase of homes within the District meaning more freight vehicles and parking spaces were required. The new Depot would also be future-proofed.

The future fleet of freight vehicles was being explored: synthetic diesel, electric or hydrogen powered. The fleet would need to be suitable and efficient for the rural mileage.

One Member queried whether there was an aspirational date for the new depot on Turnpike Close to be fully operational.

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance confirmed that Officers were working through a stage of processes and designs. The construction budget would be brought to future meeting of Full Council. A completion date was unknown.

Further concern was raised on the delay of the process of the new depot. It was noted that it was agreed to purchase the site at Full Council in November 2020 and the purchase was not completed until April 2021. One Member expected more progress since the 18 months of purchase.

It was highlighted that the new site was larger and had options to lease or sell the surplus of the site. If the Council owned part of the current depot was to be sold, this would make a capital receipt towards the new depot. Consultations and evaluations were taking place on the land.

The Chief Finance Officer noted financial pressures that the Council were experiencing due to external influences that were impacting on budgets. There had been projected deficits beyond 2022 in a previous Full Council report, prior of pressures around inflation and fuel.

It was suggested that the Council apply for investment zones from Central Government to inject urgency into the depot project and other associated projects. The deadline to apply was 14 October 2022.

The anticipated budget for the build of the new depot was queried.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property provided an estimate for the construction cost of circa £7 million for the new depot. This indicative figure was estimated prior to knowing the outcomes of the works which affect the future designs, for example: the freight routes, extended routes, type of vehicles that would be used, number of parking bays.

It was highlighted that a definitive budget could not be set until options had been explored. The preferred options would then be defined and costed accordingly.

The Chairman thanked all involved within the project and welcomed further updates being provided at future Committee meetings.

AGREED:

For the Committee to note the update on the project.

20. Gambling Statement of Principles three-year review

The Cabinet Member for Licensing and Governance presented the report that outlined the Gambling Statement of Principles. As a Licensing Authority for gambling premises issue a range of permits to authorise gambling facilities within the District.

The existing statement was published in January 2020. The Gambling Act 2005 required licensed authorities on or before each successive period of three years to prepare a Statement of Principles that they propose to apply in the exercise of their functions under the Act and to publish the statements.

The statement sets out the general approach the Council will take when carrying out its regulatory role under the Act and promoting the three licensing objectives:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

There were no proposed changes to the intent or direction of the Statement of Principles. Updates had been made to ensure it reflects the current local profile and guidance and continues to be fit for purpose whilst promoting improvements.

Statutory consultation was undertaken between 22 August and 18 September 2022, 13 responses were received.

One Member queried as to whether any of the proposed changes may pose problems in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Licensing and Governance confirmed that the proposed changes should not foresee any problems in the future.

One Member had compared the number of responses to the same consultation against another authority, who had received 2 responses and 1 query.

It was queried how gambling supported a number of priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Licensing thanked all Officers involved for the work provided.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED that:

- 1. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the proposed updates to the Gambling Statement of Principles which reflects responses from the statutory consultation.**
- 2. Subject to feedback from Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that the revised South Kesteven District Council Gambling Statement of Principles is suitable to be presented to Council for adoption.**

21. Witham Slea Blue Green Corridor Project Update

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance presented the report which had been requested from the last Committee meetings.

The report provided work that had occurred over summer 2022 and a timeline of planned works. There had been huge progress within the program and projects had gained publicity through events. Some elements of the project had enabled strong learning engagement and were working in collaboration with student portfolios within the construction and carpentry industry.

The in-channel projects had been undertaken and successfully completed at Wyndham Park, St Catherine's Road and Queen Elizabeth Park within the District. Three further in-channel projects were scheduled for completion by November 2022, two in NKDC and one in SKDC.

The project continued to have strong partnership and stakeholder engagement. It was confirmed that reports were taken quarterly to board meetings, where the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy was the Chairman.

A query was raised on whether a biodiversity baseline had been established for the project and what the anticipated increase in biodiversity would be from the actions taken.

The Regeneration Project Manager confirmed that works had been undertaken with Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trusts to establish the current biodiversity. Most baseline data could not be gathered due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so a definitive percentage of biodiversity uplift could not be provided.

Prior to commencement of the in-channel works, MoRPH River Assessments had been undertaken which formed part of Biodiversity Net Gain matrices.

The matrices fall into three sections: terrestrial, linear and aquatic. Aquatic surveys had already been undertaken and would be repeated following the completion of the project to identify improvements to river habitats created during the program. Matrices provide a benchmark for the current state of the environment and a comparison to what it would be like in a natural form. It should be noted that in urban settings, rivers were unlikely to achieve their most natural state, so comparisons should be made on what is realistically achievable rather than what the system would be like and how it would behave without human impact and modification.

Concern was raised over the rare species of White Clawed Crayfish that are within the area of the Witham Sleas Blue Green Corridor. It was queried as to whether the team were aware of the protected species and what was being done to prevent the species from possibly being illegally poached.

The Regeneration Project Manager highlighted that all undertaken works had been designed around the preservation and protection of the endangered species and to improve their habitat. The Council work closely with an ecological clerk of the works to ensure correct surveys are undertaken. The ecological clerk of the works is licensed by Natural England and the Environment Agency.

It was confirmed that the design of the works was completed in mind to increase the habitat for the species. Structures involved within the project were natural materials and had a non-intrusive installation approach and methodology.

AGREED:

For the committee to note the update.

22. Work Programme 2022 - 2023

The Committee noted the Work Programme for 2022-2023.

The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting was to be held on 23 November 2022 at 10:00am.

The Animal Welfare Policy was due to be renewed and would be added to unscheduled items on the Work Programme.

Members requested that the following items be added to Work Programme 2022-2023:

- Street lighting update

One Member queried as to whether a meeting of the Climate Change Group had been scheduled.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change confirmed that the team were working with policy documents and once they were in a first draft form, a meeting of the Climate Change Group would be arranged.

One Member queried whether the future air quality report would recommend mitigation measures.

The Chairman confirmed that the air quality report was an item on the agenda for the next meeting.

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

There were none.

24. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:32.