

Minutes

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 11 July 2023, 10.00 am

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



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Ian Selby (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Paul Martin

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Richard Cleaver (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Ashley Baxter (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Phil Dilks (Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning)
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Cabinet Member for People and Communities)

Other Members present

Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Elvis Stooke

Officers

Richard Wyles (Chief Finance Officer)
Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance, Monitoring Officer)
Craig Spence (Acting Director of Housing)
Anne-Marie Coulthard (Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection)
Adrian Ash (Interim Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection)
George Chase (Interim Waste and Recycling Manager)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Policy, Performance and Corporate Projects)
Serena Brown (Sustainability and Climate Change Manager)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Public Speaking

Anne Gayfer – question in relation to agenda item 7:

“The paper says that household with a 240l silver bin will be issued with a 240l purple lidded bin. What about those who have a 120l bin?”

Response provided via email by the Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection:

The Council had less than 30 households with 140l wheeled bins which could be purchased as part of an initiative a number of years ago and these have not been available for some time. The 240 litre purple lidded bin is the standard size for the scheme across Lincolnshire, where residents have difficulties manoeuvring bins to the kerbside for health reasons they can request an assisted collection from an agreed location. If there are genuine concerns about space, households will be able to discuss their specific circumstances with the team.

Anne Gayfer – question in relation to agenda item 9:

“It is recognised that blue-rich white light (BRWL) at night is harmful to human health and ecology, due to human and wildlife circadian disruption. Furthermore, it is detrimental to road safety and contributes to undesirable sky glow, due to excessive glare caused by the so-called “Rayleigh Scattering Effect”. Finally, there is a considerable negative aesthetic impact, particularly in areas with heritage lighting. Based on the growing body of scientific research which shows that BRWL is harmful, emissions of short wavelength, blue-rich light should be minimised in all outdoor lighting applications.

Given that with soaring temperatures and associated disruption to weather patterns, the crisis in nature has become even more apparent over the last 2 years, it would be a shame to miss the opportunity to instal lighting that is both safe, economic and nature friendly. Has the council looked at alternatives such as “Warm White” specification, with a Correlated Colour Temperature of less than 3000K?”.

Response provided via email by The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer:

Considerations for temperature of LED lighting:

- Very early installations of LED streetlamps were associated with blue spectrum light.
- Modern LED streetlights tend towards a colour temperature of 4000k, which is a neutral white and avoids the impacts associated with higher colour temperature light.
- The light scattering effect is reduced with LED installations, due to lower light intensity and that lamps are pre-programmed to dim between midnight and 6AM.

Considerations for bat friendly lighting:

- Certain spectrums of light have potential to interfere with the natural behaviour of insects and certain species of bats who feed upon them. Location of lamps is an important consideration.
- A trial of bat friendly streetlights was implemented on one main road in Worcestershire adjacent to a nature reserve. These lights are in the amber and red spectrum and are believed to interfere less with wildlife. Worcestershire County Council announced plans to introduce more bat friendly lighting in select areas as part of their ongoing programme to upgrade lights to LED: [More bat lights for Worcestershire as LED streetlight plans rolled out | Worcestershire County Council](#) To date, Worcestershire County Council are the only local authority to implement specific lighting in one specific location.
- It is noted that turning off the lamps during the night (a policy that some authorities have implemented) also allow the bats to resume natural feeding behaviour.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Charmaine Morgan, Councillor Paul Wood and Councillor Rhys Baker, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

4. Minutes from the meeting held on 14 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

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

The Deputy Leader of the Council drew the Committee's attention to the Climate Change Reserve proposal which was currently being considered. It was noted that any suggestions or initiatives on how the funding of £300,000 could be utilised were welcomed and would be considered at future meetings.

6. End of year KPI's

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance presented the report that built on previous reports in order to provide an update on performance to the end of the 2022/2023 financial year. It incorporated the changes recommended by the last KPI review to outline areas of the council's performance which were successful and to advise where challenges may lay.

Appendix A within the report outline the overall performance against the original actions, as well as specific performance against the sub measures contained within those. Specific commentary was provided for each action, and summarised as follows:

- 2 of the actions were rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.
- 3 actions were rated as Amber, these are those off target by less than 10% or where milestone achievement is delayed but with resolution in place to be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.
- There were no actions rated red.

It was noted that the take up of green bins had stabilised. It was queried as to whether any policies or suggestions had been discussed by Cabinet to try and increase the take-up of green waste collections.

The Deputy Leader of the Council confirmed that the number of garden waste bins was a possible indicator of residents being able to afford the £50 green bin, it suggested that residents could compost or dispose of in another way.

One Member expressed their disappointment that a Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste was not present at the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Committee could request attendance of a Cabinet Member in advance to the meeting in future.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection highlighted a section of the report that provided commentary around potential reasons for the performance of the use of green waste bins.

Clarification was sought around the 'baseline for growth' and what work was being done to maximise the commercial opportunities of the Council's waste services.

It was confirmed that the 'baseline for growth' was an annual growth that focused on communications through the website and newsletter which was the main core of promotion the garden waste service in place.

The Deputy Leader highlighted that trade waste used to be collected within South Kesteven by commercial contractors and it was thought that collection costs were too high. Therefore, the Council had set up a trade waste scheme where no profit was gained, however this enabled cost recovery rather than high costs paid to commercial contractors.

The Chief Finance Officer clarified that legally, the Council could not make a profit outside of a trading entity. Under the Localism Act, Council's were encouraged to set up companies if they wished to pursue commercial activities.

One Member requested an update on the progress of the insourced grounds maintenance service.

The integration of street scene with grounds maintenance had only taken place recently and the implementation was currently being monitored. It was requested that an update on the insourced grounds maintenance service be brought to the Committee in the future and to include any cost savings that had been identified.

The Deputy Leader of the Council noted there would be a cost to the Council on the closure of Environment SK Ltd. The closure process and the final position of Environment SK Ltd would be brought back to a future Committee meeting.

It was queried as to whether the Council had plans to roll out any further electric charging points within the District.

The Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance noted that there were currently no plans to increase the number of electric charging points at present, however, this topic of discussion could be added to the Work Programme for future meetings.

The action relating to the new depot was below target. The Committee were reminded of the Joint Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where the new depot project would be discussed on the 25 July 2023.

AGREED:

- 1. Review and scrutinise the performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.**
- 2. Use this report to inform and support their ongoing Work Programme.**

7. Introduction of the Separate Collection of Paper and Card (Twin Stream Recycling)

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which outlined the adoption of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire. The Strategy set out how the seven Lincolnshire district councils would work together with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) as members of the LWP.

The overarching aim was to protect the environment by delivering sustainable waste management services and establish best value waste management practices for the benefit of Lincolnshire. South Kesteven District Council is a "Waste Collection Authority" and had a duty to collect household waste. Lincolnshire County Council was the "Waste Disposal Authority" and was required to manage the disposal of waste collected by waste collection authorities.

The Council introduced wheeled bins for the separate kerbside collection of residual waste and mixed dry recyclable (MDR) materials in 2007. All target MDR was currently collected in one silver bin or clear sack which is then sorted at a materials recycling facility. Residents can choose to subscribe to the garden waste collection scheme which also contributes to the overall recycling rate.

In 2021/22 the recycling rate in South Kesteven was 43%, which was similar to both the Lincolnshire and average national rates. The quality of the recyclable material collected in Lincolnshire had historically been poor with around 31% of materials collected from households at kerbside being “contaminated”, meaning recyclable materials were either contaminated with other materials such as foodstuffs, nappies etc and are not able to be recycled.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection reiterated that South Kesteven District Council would be the 5th authority for the roll out of separate collection of paper and card.

Concern was raised on those residents that lived in flats, terraced houses, or houses with small gardens. It was queried as to how the Council would communicate and work with those who lived in smaller properties.

It was thought that following Cabinet, the report would go to Full Council due to the decision affecting every Ward within the District, it was queried as to why it was no longer going to Full Council as part of the roll-out timetable.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection confirmed that the team at Lincolnshire County Council would be visiting households with a particular focus on flats or those that require support to improve their recycling practices overall and to establish whether they could join the scheme.

Lincolnshire County Council were exploring options for the future for those residents that are unable to have a bin, to enable them to participate through a 'sack-scheme'.

The Chief Finance Officer clarified that there was no requirement for the report to receive a Full Council decision due to no budget amendments required or policy framework changes.

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee the new administration was fully committed to being open and accountable. Cabinet was content to consider an addition to the recommendation from the Committee to consider the item at Full Council.

It was queried as to whether the Council had the provision to implement further food waste bins in the future, which may assist residents in preparing storage space for their bins.

The Deputy Leader of the Council noted the Council that the Environment Act would mandate the collection of food waste with funding but at present the Council did not currently have the financial resources to facilitate collection of food waste themselves. The food waste bins would be reasonably smaller than 240l bins provided.

A Member queried as to whether the collection of paper card would be mandatory to residents or not.

The legislation allowed the District Council to direct how residents presented their waste. The Council were able to mandate how residents separate and sort their waste. Support and education would be provided to residents on the introduction of the separate collection of paper and card.

One Member questioned as to whether a smaller paper and card bin would be an option to explore.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection confirmed that the standard roll out of all purple lidded bins were 240l.

Further concern was raised on those residents that do not have the space to store an additional bin, it was requested what the communication strategy with residents would entail.

It was suggested that Members be provided with a briefing note to be able to answer frequently asked questions by residents within the District.

A query was raised on whether utilising communal storage areas for bins had been considered.

It was noted that some of the South Kesteven owned flats and sheltered accommodation properties had shared 1100l bins in a communal space. Furthermore, the addition of a 1100l paper and card bin could be implemented within communal spaces.

A Member queried the carbon footprint on the manufacturing of the purple lidded bins.

The carbon footprint figures were unknown; however, the information would be brought back to the Committee.

It was hoped that the carbon footprint of the manufacturing of the purple lidded bin would be incredibly less than the waste which would go into the energy from a waste incinerator or landfill.

It was further requested that the report be heard by Full Council as part of a previous timetable.

It was **proposed** and **seconded** that an amendment be made to the recommendation for the item to go to Full Council following Cabinet, to enable all Members to contribute. This amendment fell.

Concern was raised on the timescale of the report being heard by Full Council, which would delay decisions being made.

The Chief Finance Officer clarified that there was no requirement for the report to be heard by Full Council. There was a requirement for the report to be heard at Cabinet where it would be presented. The Committee could only request that Cabinet consider whether the report be taken to Full Council.

The Leader of the Council emphasised that all Members had been given the opportunity to participate in debate on this matter.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED that the Committee:

- 1. Recommends to Cabinet that the separate kerbside collection of paper and card for recycling is implemented across the district.**
- 2. Recommends to Cabinet that the revised South Kesteven District Council Waste and Recycling Operational Policy is adopted.**

(Councillor Mark Whittington abstained from the vote).

8. Climate Action Strategy Update

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer provided a verbal update on the Climate Action Strategy.

In 2019, the UK government set the target to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the whole of the UK by 2050. We were already seeing the impacts of global temperature rise within Lincolnshire, with a record temperature of 40.3°C being recorded in the county last July.

There was a clear role for local government to shape, drive, and deliver local action on climate change. South Kesteven District Council was amongst the majority of local authorities to have declared a climate emergency. In March this year, the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with the council's first Climate Action Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy was to provide a framework for action for South Kesteven to reduce carbon emissions and safely adapt to the unavoidable impacts of a changing climate. The Strategy includes 8 key themes to be addressed as part of the Council's approach to climate change.

Following discussion at Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed for the Climate Action Strategy to go out to consultation to ensure that key partners and residents are able to input on the strategy. Working around the pre and post-election periods, the consultation was launched on 10 July 2023. Town

and Parish Councils as well as key stakeholder groups would be contacted directly to ensure they have a chance to input on the strategy.

The questionnaire would also capture information from South Kesteven residents on what actions they are already undertaking, for example saving energy at home or changing how they travel.

The consultation was open until 7 August 2023. The results would then be analysed and the content of the Climate Action Strategy reviewed in line with the outcomes of the consultation, and reported back to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the October 2023.

One Member requested an update on the next steps following the closure of the consultation.

It was confirmed that the results of the consultation would be reviewed and brought back to Committee. It was possible for the Climate Action Strategy to be considered by Full Council.

9. Update on upgrading street lights to LED

The Deputy Leader of the Council present the report that outlined options of the provision of LED street lighting. The Council was responsible for 3,893 streetlamps. The Council was not responsible for streetlights on main roads such as the A1 and other highways.

It was noted that the options presented in the report demonstrated a positive payback of approximately five years.

Clarification was sought on the funding around the upgrading of streetlights to LED.

The Chief Finance Officer clarified that this item had been brought back to Committee due to the previous payback excess being 12 years due to energy costs at that time being low enough to not justify the level of investment. Due to unfortunate escalation in costs, this had been brought back to Committee for further consideration.

Members were reminded of the recommendations and were requested to base discussions around the infrastructure of wholesale replacement or replacement when a bulb is replaced with an energy efficient bulb due to coming to the end of its life.

Funding would be allocated appropriately from the existing reserves following the Committee meeting and future Cabinet recommendations.

It was suggested whether the £300,000 climate change reserve could be partly utilised for this scheme.

The Leader of the Council reminded the Committee to include any considerations for Cabinet within their recommendations.

Lincolnshire County Council had an existing policy on streetlights that the Committee could utilise as a template for conditions on the matter.

The Deputy Leader of the Council highlighted that the £300,000 climate change reserve should be used for other schemes rather than one scheme.

A concern was raised on which reserves the £1m would be taken from to fund the scheme.

One Member felt that there was not enough information provided in the report regarding dimming and turning off lights to be able to make a decision.

It was noted that following roll-out of the upgrading of LED streetlights, it was suggested there be a period of time to consult with Parish Council's on locations of where they feel the dimming or turning off of lights be appropriate.

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the item would be brought back and further evidence on anti-social behavior hotspots would be requested by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Further consideration had to be given to CCTV cameras being blighted and operational effectiveness as a result of turning off streetlights.

At a previous Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it had been discussed that the £1m would be taken from reserves: £500,000 from the local priority reserve, £250,000 from the invest to save reserve and £250,000 from the budget stabilization reserve. It was hoped that the £300,000 climate change reserve be put to use on other climate change and energy saving efficiencies.

Members agreed for this item to be brought back to Committee on 12 December 2023 where further debate with 'overnight dimming' or turning off lights could be discussed.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED:

- 1. To proceed with the strategy for upgrading streetlights with LED lamps.**
- 2. To schedule further discussion with 'overnight dimming' between the hours of midnight and 6AM or to turn off some streetlights between 1AM and 6AM.**

10. A1 Litter Issues

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection provided the Committee with an update on the litter issues on the A1 and principles around background work on the matter.

The District Council was responsible for litter picking on trunk roads, which included the A1. National Highways were responsible for litter picking on motorways and special trunk roads and had the overarching responsibility for the use of the A1 road and its maintenance.

Lay-bys on the A1 were regularly litter picked by the District Council's street cleansing team. A consideration on this matter was the safety of litter picking on approximately 40 miles of dual carriage way through the District (from Long Bennington to Stamford). This would require a lane closure, speed restrictions and working in conjunction with National Highways to establish when other works were due to take place on the road. Works would usually be undertaken overnight to avoid disruption to motorists.

There were safety considerations to take into account between the Council's staff and other road users at the time around access, lighting, traffic and uneven ground. The Health and Safety Executive had recently prosecuted an Authority where somebody had lost their life as a result of litter-picking on a dual carriage way in Norfolk.

Due to National Highway works being undertaken overnight, the Council were reliant on the street cleansing staff volunteering to complete the works as over time, meaning they would be unavailable to work the following day. The litter-picking would take weeks to complete and would be constrained by any programs National Highways had at that time.

One Member queried whether approaching a specialist company where staff were trained to litter-pick on busy roads was a possibility.

It was noted that approximately 50,000 vehicles passed through the A1 daily and a bad impression may be given to motorists with the considerable drop in the quality of cleanliness of the side of the A1.

Newark and Sherwood District Council had successfully cleaned large stretches of the A1 during the daytime in groups of three employees. Concern was raised that people may not visit or invest in South Kesteven if the A1 stretch of road was badly presented.

It was suggested that Officers undertake work in liaison with National Highways and provide a business case on costs and options.

The Leader of the Council noted that there were lay-bys every half mile on the A1, where bins were available and emptied daily.

One Member highlighted that the scale of the litter issue on the A1 was worse in certain areas and was particularly hidden by vegetation on the side of the A1 road.

The Deputy Leader of the Council noted that other parts of the A1 outside of South Kesteven were also experiencing litter issues. The importance of health and safety was also outlined and risk assessments would be put into place.

Working in conjunction with National Highways on rolling lane closures and alignment of diaries could cause delays in operating the litter-picking.

Further concern was raised in relation to a possible litter abatement order and fines compelled against the District Council if the litter worsened.

It was suggested that a company and trained staff may litter-pick and cut the grass verges at the same time.

The Deputy Leader of the Council clarified that Newark and Sherwood District Council were closing the lanes, working through the night and had stated that previously used methods of cleaning the A1 were no longer suitable and they were now working in conjunction with an external company.

One Member queried whether Officers had the capacity to present a business case on this matter.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED:

- 1. That the Committee recommend that a business case be produced by Officers and brought back to the Committee in December including costing options.**
- 2. That the Committee request The Leader of the Council to lobby on behalf of South Kesteven District Council to enable possible funding opportunities or the legal responsibility shifted back to National Highways.**

11. Work Programme 2023 - 2024

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2023-2024.

The Vice-Chairman made a presentation on biodiversity and requested that the Council explore declaring a Biodiversity Emergency for the District.

The Committee agreed that the following items be brought to Committee on 3 October 2023:

- A1 Litter Issues
- Environment SK Ltd/ Environment SK Commercial Services Ltd final accounts
- Carbon Emissions reporting

The Committee agreed that the following items be brought to Committee on 12 December 2023:

- Tree Policy
- Dimming policy of LED streetlights

It was requested that the Committees remit included street scene and grounds maintenance, which was now insourced.

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

The Chairman and Committee Members thanked the Assistant Director or Operations and Public Protection for all her work undertaken at the Council and wished her well for the future.

13. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12:30.