

# Minutes

## Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 19 March 2024, 10.00 am

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



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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### Committee Members present

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

Councillor Gloria Johnson  
Councillor Bridget Ley  
Councillor Paul Martin  
Councillor Paul Wood  
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren  
Councillor Tim Harrison

### Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Rhys Baker (Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste)  
Councillor Philip Knowles (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance & Licensing)  
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Cabinet Member for People and Communities)

### Officers

Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director Culture and Leisure)  
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change)  
Ayeisha Kirkham (Head of Service – Public Protection)  
Serena Brown (Sustainability and Climate Change Officer)  
Charles James (Corporate Policy Officer)  
Lucy Bonshor (Democratic Officer)

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### 59. Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

### 60. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Charmaine Morgan, Councillor Murray Turner and Councillor Mark Whittington. These Members were substituted by Councillor Tim Harrison, Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing and Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren.

An apology for absence was also received from the Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Patsy Ellis.

**61. Disclosure of Interests**

None disclosed.

**62. Minutes from the meeting held on 13 February 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

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

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste informed the Committee that the Witham and Sleaford Blue/Green Corridor project had been short listed for the prestigious UK River Award, which was awarded by the River Restoration Centre. The winners would be announced on 24 April at the UK River Prize Awards Dinner in Llandudno. The project encompassed four projects along the River Slea in Sleaford which enhanced and created new habitats and improved access to and along the river.

The Leader of the Council referred to the recent Council meeting where the removal of litter on the A1 had been discussed. Work was being done in the background but it was not straight forward and a recent health and safety risk assessment had been carried out for a stretch at Stoke Rochford and it was found to be unsafe to carry-out any litter picking. Dialogue was being carried out with the National Highways Authority to look at a co-ordinated approach.

The Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place stated that it was a complicated issue and a further assessment of costs was required. The A1 was a dangerous road and safety was paramount.

The Chairman advised the Committee that he was altering the order of the agenda and that agenda items 7 and 9 were being swapped around. The next item would be the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership Presentation.

**64. Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership presentation**

The Committee received a presentation from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) who gave an overview of the work that they did within Lincolnshire. They were one of 48 local nature partnerships within England and worked across 49 partners within the County to deliver better biodiversity.

The presentation was given by Charlotte Philips who was the Manager of the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) and Luke Bamforth, Policy Officer.

The Committee received an overview of the work carried out by the GLNP on the following issues:

- Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geodiversity Sites system
- Ancient Woodland inventory
- Operation Water Vole
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Policy work
- Local Environmental Records Centre
- Mapping

The GLNP partnered with 49 organisations which included all Councils in Greater Lincolnshire, Internal Drainage Boards, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and locally within the community such as with the University of Lincoln, Lincolnshire Bird Club, Lincolnshire Bat group and a lot of other organisations. The GLNP was hosted by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and they had an office within their building.

The GLNP had five full time employees and covered an area from the Humber to the Wash. The GLNP had a long history and had formed a bio-diversity partnership before the Government White Paper was introduced in 2011 which required Nature Partnerships to be formed.

One of the reasons that the GLNP was successful was that they hosted the Environmental Records Centre. In theory Nature Partnerships should be in every County however, this was not the case and often there wasn't a partnership or if there was, it was one person for one day a week.

Local Sites Systems covered local wildlife sites and local geodiversity sites and compiled data that the GLNP managed on behalf of South Kesteven and all other Councils in Greater Lincolnshire. The sites had to be of a certain standard which was recognised as good for bio-diversity. The sites were regularly monitored to see if they were doing well, if they were improving and whether they were under positive management. Although there was a lot of land within South Kesteven, a lot of the land was owned by land managers and farmers and therefore it was difficult to make sure the wildlife sites remained in a good state. However, there were opportunities for new sites to be created such as wetlands.

Operation Water Vole was then discussed which concerned the eradication of the American Mink which was an invasive species within the UK and preyed on the Water Vole. The GLNP was working in partnership with the Life Recovery Trust to fully eradicate the American Mink from Lincolnshire within the next two years. The American Mink had already been eradicated from Norfolk and Suffolk. It was hoped within five years the American Mink species would be eradicated from the whole country. Lincolnshire was a strong hold for the Water Vole due to the large number of drains and ditches which covered the area and once the Mink had been eradicated it was hoped that Lincolnshire would be a hub for the Water Vole within the whole country.

Another project was in respect of Ancient Woodland. A lot of work was being done compiling data and keeping it to date. Currently a desktop exercise was being carried out comparing old maps with aerial photography to identify ancient woodland. Once the desktop exercise had been completed fieldwork would be undertaken. When the last compilation was carried out in the 1980's anything under two hectares had not been considered and it was hoped that following the exercise new areas of ancient woodland would be found. Ancient woodland was an irreplaceable habitat, once it was lost it was gone for good and it was incredibly important.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy was the main issue to come out of the Environment Act and every County within the UK was taking part. Lincolnshire County Council was responsible for the Strategy but a lot of the work was being undertaken by the GLNP due to the partnerships already in place looking at a plan to recover nature. Conservation was no longer enough and the UK was one of the most depleted countries in the world. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy was made up of a Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and also a Local Habitat Map.

Working Groups were held regularly with communities, businesses, environmental organisations, farmers and land managers as well as local planning authorities to discuss the priorities set out and to map all the information on local wildlife sites. Areas where direct nature recovery to connect landscapes and link them up was needed, to enable climate resilience and make a functioning ecosystem and direct bio-diversity net gain into the right places.

Members from South Kesteven were already involved and currently they were in the middle of engagement with lots of working groups. In person events with land managers and farmers were proposed to gather all the information and input it into the strategy. Consultation would be later in the year with the publication scheduled for March 2025. Although the Council had the responsibility to make the strategy there was no responsibility to fulfil the strategy. It was therefore up to the GLNP to deliver the content within the three to ten year timeframe until the Secretary of State indicated when the next Strategy would be compiled.

The Record Centre was then discussed. As South Kesteven was a partner, there was an open access to environmental records. The system was a fully automated on-line system which was very easy to use. An example was then given of how the system worked and the information that could be accessed.

Policy priorities were then discussed which covered:

Farming with nature – farming more sustainably

Being well with nature – research into how valuable nature was to mental and physical health and wellbeing

Planning with nature – special and strategic planning, consultation on local plans

Enjoying nature – projects enabling nature to be enjoyed such as the Lincolnshire bird trail which was being worked on with Visit Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire County Council, RSPB Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Work had been undertaken with South Kesteven since the 2018 Local Plan and a statement of common ground was entered into on how the development of the environmental policy could help with the bio-diversity net gain data. Screening potential sites and how these were impacted. Looking at priority sites for diversity opportunities and how sustainable development can benefit the natural environment.

Other work considered the development of mapping tools and the use of GIS data and examples on bio-diversity mapping were given to the Committee on how these worked and what they could be used for.

Members of the GLNP were thanked for the interesting presentation and the information given and answered Members questions which covered production of strategies, access to the environmental data, the eradication of the American Mink, loss of habitat, the clearance of dykes and ditches and the effect on the Water Voles, networking with farmers and land Managers and river crayfish.

## **65. Draft KPI's**

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing presented the report which proposed the draft key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Corporate Plan 2024-27 to be monitored by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing placed on record his thanks to Charles James, the Corporate Policy Officer and Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change for their work on putting the KPI's together.

It was important that the KPI's were agreed, adopted and monitored, however, they were not set in stone and could be changed if circumstances developed which necessitated a change. The KPI's would be reported to the Committee every six months with the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team meeting to discuss them every three months.

It was important that the KPI's were SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). Some of the KPI's were subjective whilst other were objective. The Environment OSC had 12 actions.

A short discussion followed with references being made to waste collection, fly tipping and litter on the A1. One Member acknowledged what the Leader had stated earlier in the agenda, but felt that it was important that the issue with littering on the A1 and the sum of money that had been put aside was not forgotten or that the Council didn't do anything about the litter situation, he acknowledged that anything that was done needed to be carried out safely.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste stated that they could not pre-empt what the final decision would be, but the cost for clearing the litter on the A1 was very likely to be in the region of £200,000+. The A1 was not unique and additional work was being carried out researching costs, unfortunately there was not an easy solution.

A further question was asked about emptying the litter bins on the A1 laybys.

Members were reminded that the Committee were there to confirm the draft KPI's before them. The recommendations contained in the report were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** with the inclusion of six months for an update.

### **Recommendation**

***That the Committee:***

- 1. Confirms the draft key performance indicators (KPIs) as appended to the report associated with the actions in the Corporate Plan 2024-2027.***
- 2. Notes that key performance indicators will be monitored by the Committee every six months.***
- 3. Notes that the KPI suite will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process.***

## **66. Environmental Crime Partnership**

Members received a presentation from Ayeisha Kirkham, the Chair of the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership (LECP) who was also the Council's Head of Service (Public Protection) on the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership Annual Report for 2023 and the work undertaken by the LECP.

Ms Kirkham had been the Chair of the LECP since November 2020.

The Vice-Chair was Stuart Hoyle who was a Waste Crime Engagement Specialist at the Environment Agency.

Communications Lead was Molly-Mae Taylor who worked at South Kesteven Secretarial Support was undertaken by Paige Monaghan from PCC  
Andrew Beaver was the LECP Chairman of the Enviro Crime Officers Working Group (Community Safety Manager at South Kesteven)

Members were informed of the beginning of the partnership which started in 2019 when the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) got a group of partners to sign a pledge to work together to tackle fly tipping. Fly tipping was raised frequently at meetings including the Lincolnshire Safer Partnership as it was a crime and something that needed to be addressed. At this time, although actions and plans had been made, due to Covid, projects weren't progressed.

The catalyst for the formation of the LECP was Summer 2020 when fly tipping had increased and there had been large scale fly tipping on farmland at Norton Disney and Leadenham in North Kesteven and also in Fulbeck at Pottergate Road within South Kesteven. The Committee were informed that at a recent Cabinet meeting a Public Space Protection Order had been put in place at Pottergate Road where a gate had been erected across the road to restrict access.

The Council had a responsibility to remove fly tipping on public land but not on private land and the 40 tonne fly tipping instances had massive financial implications for the farmers concerned also at a time when Covid restrictions still applied. Following the instances of the fly tipping at North and South Kesteven and the partnership working that followed between North and South Kesteven, the Police and the Environment Agency the Strategic Officers Waste Group and Lincolnshire Waste Partnership were approached to see if an Environmental Crime Partnership could be established. It was agreed that the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership could be established which reported to the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, other partners also kept watch on the work of the LECP such as the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.

The partnership was formed in November 2020 and had a Terms of Reference, Action Plan and an Information Sharing Agreement, which was one of the first in the Country and had been written by the Police and was seen as Best Practice. The Partnership consisted of a wide range of partners not just regulatory partners (Local Authorities) but representatives from land owners and other partners impacted from environmental crime

An Environmental Crime Officers Working Group had also been established which fed into the LECP and received presentations from other bodies such as Lincolnshire Legal Services and the use of Section 108 of the Environment Act 1995.

The aim of the partnership was to:

*“To reduce and prevent fly tipping across Lincolnshire, by bringing all relevant agencies together and working in partnership.*

*To seek to find new and innovative methods for closer working, both operationally and strategically.”*

Members were referred to the link within the report which would take them to the Environmental Crime Partnership Annual Report which sat within the officer for the Police and Crime Commissioner website under the tab for transparency and the page on environmental crime.

Ms Kirkham then spoke about the Annual Report 2023.

Membership of the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership was wide ranging and included the District Councils within Lincolnshire together with other

organisations such as Lincolnshire Police, Humberside Police, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, the Forestry Commission, the Ministry of Defence, Lincolnshire Police & Crime Commissioner, the National Trust, National Farmers Union, Country Business and Land Association, Witham and Humber Drainage Boards and the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency. There were 23 members of the LECP.

The work of the partnership was promoted widely with members of the partnership giving presentations at events such as the Environmental Services and Solutions Expo in Birmingham.

One of the ambitions of the partnership was to share best practice and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the LECP had been involved in the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group which had resulted in the development of the Fly Tipping Partnership Framework which included Best Practice from the LECP. Regular meetings of the LECP were held at least quarterly with speakers who came in to give presentations such as the Probation Service and the Environment Agency Chief Scientist Group.

To help raise awareness representatives from the LECP also attended the Lincolnshire Show (2023) and held a competition to which school children investigated a fake fly tipping incident. Leaflets, posters and information were all available with contact details for the specific areas. It was hoped to continue the engagement by attending again in 2024. It was important that people knew how to report fly tipping and it was raising this awareness and that everybody had a duty of care to dispose of their waste responsibly.

Ms Kirkham then spoke about communication as a partnership and the purpose built messages that went out across Lincolnshire at key times. Good news stories involving prosecutions, enforcement actions were also shared and more of a social media presence was being carried out with a dedicated LinkedIn page and a possible Facebook page in the future.

The presentation was concluded with what the ambitions of the LECP were for the year ahead and what the LECP would be focusing on. Reference was made to Operation Asgard which dealt with the seizure of vehicles involved in waste crime and it was also proposed for more social media presence as well as data capture across Lincolnshire and to continue to attend various events throughout the year to raise awareness.

The Chairman thanked Ms Kirkham for the presentation and indicated a short adjournment would take place before questions.

*(11:55 – 12:04 a short adjournment took place)*

Following the adjournment questions were raised in respect of the household waste collection sites and whether the reduction in these sites contributed to fly tipping. It was stated that fly tipping generally had increased since Covid and there were

multiple reasons for this. Unfortunately, due to the rurality of Lincolnshire waste criminals often exploited this especially with vulnerable people.

More discussion followed in relation to the household waste centres and when they were open with some requiring an appointment to be made before waste could be disposed of. Members were reminded that the household waste collection sites were the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council not the District Council, it was the County Council who stipulated the opening times.

Further discussion followed with reference being made to the centres at Bourne and also the trial waste collection that had previously happened in Stamford which had now been removed. A recommendation to Cabinet was put forward to reinstate Saturday morning collections in the Cattle Market Car Park at Stamford for a trial period which was seconded.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Waste stated that the reintroduction of a household waste collection point in Stamford had been raised recently by another Member and the response from the County was that the collection would not be reinstated at Stamford. Any additional collections would have a significant cost to the District Council waste was collected on behalf of the County Council who were the responsible body for its disposal.

More dialogue followed in respect of fly tipping and reporting it and also the household waste collections in Stamford and Bourne. Following the recommendation that Saturday morning collections for household waste be reinstated in the Cattle Market Car Park at Stamford for a trial period an amendment was proposed that an investigation into the costs and logistics of reinstating a Saturday collection in the Cattle Market Car Park at Stamford be carried out and this was seconded. On being put to the vote the recommendation was **AGREED**.

### **Recommendation**

***That the Cabinet be asked to investigate the costs and logistics of reinstating a Saturday morning household waste collection service for a trial period in the Cattle Market Car Park at Stamford.***

## **67. Tree and Woodland Strategy**

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste presented the report which concerned the South Kesteven District Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2024 – 2034. A considerable amount of work had gone into the document following the approval of previous documents: The Council's Tree Guidelines for the Management of Trees in South Kesteven which was approved on 17 September 2019 and also the Local Government Charter for Trees, Woods and People which was approved at Cabinet on 12 November 2019. The Council had identified the need to take further action with regards to enhancing and protecting the trees of the whole district, as well as those directly managed by the Council.

A workshop on the proposed Trees and Woodlands Strategy was held on 18 January 2024 to which all Members had been invited. The workshop was led by Treeconomics, who were appointed to lead on the development of the new strategy. A separate workshop was held for parish councillors and environmental stakeholders as identified by officers that same day. A three week public consultation followed which received 919 responses, one of the highest responses to any consultation undertaken by the Council in the last 18 months.

Trees played a vital role and contributed to habitat for wildlife, shade for crops and livestock, they reduced the risk of flooding and helped with poor air quality. Lincolnshire had one of the lowest levels of tree cover in England, at 5.67% compared to an average for England of around 10%.

The aims of the Trees and Woodlands Strategy were:

- To set out the current level of tree canopy cover in the district
- To highlight main areas of opportunity to enhance trees and woodlands
- To set out what role the Council as local authority can play in facilitating that alongside key partners

The Strategy was made up of four separate documents:

- Trees and Woodlands Strategy Introduction and Vision
- Trees and Woodlands Strategy Targets and Priorities
- Trees and Woodlands Strategy Action Plan
- Trees and Woodlands Strategy Appendices

Following recommendations from the Environment OSC a new Tree Officer post had been established for the 2024/25 financial year, in order to deliver on the Council's work on trees on land within the ownership of South Kesteven District Council as well as to deliver on the actions of the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy.

Members discussed the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy with comments being made in respect of the amount of land that was available to plant trees having regard to clean energy and the use of solar panels, agriculture and the demand for housing. Green spaces were disappearing rapidly and did the new strategy link with the new Local Plan being compiled.

It was stated that getting the right balance was essential and work was being done to make sure that the draft document did not supersede or undermine what was already in place. Further discussion followed on proposed developments within the district specifically the development at the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks which contained a large number of trees and Members expressed concern about how these could be retained.

The Chairman expressed his thanks in relation to the new Cherry Tree that had been situated on Melbourne Road, Grantham. He thanked those officers present for their work in moving the tree and also made reference to including hedgerows within the work programme of the OSC.

The recommendation contained within the report was proposed, seconded and **AGREED.**

**Recommendation:**

***That the Committee:***

***Recommends the new South Kesteven District Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2024 - 2034 to Cabinet for approval.***

**68. Update on Climate Change Reserve fund**

Before presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste referred to the recent joint meeting that had taken place between the Environment OSC and the Rural and Communities OSC which had discussed the Council's response to Storm Henk. It was noted that the Council had taken a very proactive response to Storm Henk and it was also noted that what had historically been considered as "freak" events were now becoming increasingly frequent and that proper prevention was cheaper and less disruptive to residents than on going reactive responses.

As part of the Council's declaration on Climate Emergency, a carbon reduction target of at least 30% of the Council's own operations had been agreed by 2030 and the Committee received annual updates.

A Climate Action Reserve Fund of £300,000 had been established within the 2023/24 financial year to proactively work towards the target. Good progress had been made in reducing the Council's carbon emissions, but further investment was required across the various areas of the Council in order for a continued reduction to be sustained. The Council also needed to respond proactively to the sharp increase in utility costs (electricity and gas). Targeted upgrades had been made to reduce on going utility costs and to sustain a significant reduction in carbon emissions.

Projects with a financial payback had been chosen which gave value for money for Council Tax payers.

The report detailed those projects that had been confirmed and those planned which included the installation of pool covers at Bourne and Stamford Leisure Centres to reduce heat loss which was a significant reduction in their operational costs and a significant improvement in related carbon emissions.

Other projects included the upgraded of LED lighting to the 3G football pitch at the Grantham Meres Leisure Centre and the installation of upgraded energy efficient LED lighting to the sports halls at the Grantham Meres Leisure Centre. Energy reductions and cost savings would be carefully monitored once the projects were completed and carbon emissions and energy efficiency initiatives would be reported later in the year.

Savings within the report were briefly discussed and a question asked about a pool cover for Grantham Meres Leisure Centre. It was stated that currently information about the Grantham Meres Leisure Centre couldn't be discussed at the meeting, but information could be given to the Committee after the meeting.

The Vice-Chairman of the Environment OSC then gave a speech advocating the topping up of the Climate Change Reserve Fund. It was not just an investment but a commitment. Climate change posed an existential threat to the planet with extreme weather, rising temperatures, flooding, the loss of bio- diversity which was affecting eco systems. Action was required from all sections of the society including the Council and by replenishing the Climate Change Reserve Fund annually showed the Council's commitment to mitigating climate change impacts and moving towards a more sustainable low carbon future. The fund was crucial for financing initiatives that aimed to reduce greenhouse emissions and invested in renewable energy infrastructures and showed that the Council was serious about confronting climate change head on and the cost of inaction out weighted the investment required to safeguard communities. She asked the Committee to support a recommendation for annually replenishing the Climate Change Reserve Fund.

A brief discussion on ideas followed and it was stated that any ideas should be communicated to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

A comment was made in respect of current reserve and any carry over. It was confirmed that any unspent funds would be carried over to the next year. Clarity was sought in respect of the figure and it was confirmed that the Committee were recommending that the Climate Action Reserve Fund to be topped up annually.

The recommendations as outlined within the report were proposed and seconded and unanimously **AGREED**.

### **Recommendation:**

#### ***That the Environment OSC***

- 1. Notes the updates and projects funded to date utilising the Climate Change Reserve Fund.***
- 2. Recommends that the Reserve balance of the Climate Change Reserve Fund is replenished annually following the review of the financial Outturn 2023/24.***

## **69. Update on Home Energy Upgrade Scheme**

Members received an update from the Cabinet Member for Environment and on the main outcomes of the Home Energy Upgrade Scheme project to upgrade eligible private properties in the district with energy efficiency measures.

The UK had some of the oldest housing stock in Europe and this had been recognised by South Kesteven District Council to upgrade the housing stock to make the houses more energy efficient and reduce heat loss to make them safe, suitable and comfortable for their inhabitants.

In February 2021 the Government published its latest fuel poverty strategy and following its publication the Sustainable Warmth Competition for local authorities was launched for local authorities bringing together two distinct fuel poverty funding schemes: Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3) and Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 (HUG1). The funding offered to local authorities was to support households living in energy inefficient homes to support low carbon heating upgrades. The report updated the Committee on the main outcomes of the scheme, the Home Energy upgrade scheme. To maximise the outputs of the scheme South Kesteven District Council worked in partnership with North Kesteven, West Lindsey and the City of Lincoln to deliver the project and get best value for money, as the Central and South Lincolnshire Consortium.

At the close of the scheme within South Kesteven a total of 49 properties were upgraded with one or more energy efficient measures.

Following the scheme an opportunity was identified to provide some more specific and tailored support to Lincolnshire residents around home energy efficiency and successful bid was submitted.

Further funding via the next round of the Home Upgrade Grant scheme (HUG2) had been secured and would be delivered on the same consortium basis with West Lindsey being the lead authority.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer stated that the report was for information only and that the promotion of on-going schemes to residents by Members would be welcomed.

A discussion on the report content followed with questions/comments being made about the following:

- The decision to only go to E, F & G EPC rated properties not D which had meant that funding had been returned as it had not been used, could this not have been used for D properties?
- It was noted that one of the challenges of the scheme was finding E, F & G EPC rated properties. Band D properties were currently the national average and the aspiration was to increase these properties to a band C by 2030 nationwide. Finding properties E, F & G was difficult. The terms and policy of

the scheme was set by the Government; the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) as it was now known. The Council delivered the scheme according to the terms set. The terms had been changed for the LAD element and the HUG element regarding band D properties and through LAD3 more band D properties had been delivered. The focus had been on properties which had the most need which were E, F & G EPC rated properties.

- It was confirmed that HUG1 funding was closed but HUG2 was currently being delivered which targeted low income properties which were did not have gas central heating.
- The Council had a role in delivering ECO4 funding which was available for properties with gas heating and was branded under the Home Energy Upgrade Scheme.
- Solar Panels could be part of an upgrade scheme but each property had to undergo a survey to find the most efficient energy upgrade for that property.
- It was noted that funding for the ECO4 scheme was not allocated directly to a local authority, it came from energy companies, the small part that the Council played was in respect of verifying the eligibility of some residents.
- Listed properties remained difficult to upgrade, for example consent was always required for solar panels to be added.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer stated that she was happy to circulate information to the Committee after the meeting on the funding available and where to access it.

Members noted the report.

➤ **Action**

***That the Committee be circulated with information on the current funding available in respect of accessing home energy upgrades.***

**70. Work Programme 2023 - 2024**

The following items to be included on the Work Programme:

- September/October - An update on flooding following the joint meeting of the Environment OSC and the Rural and Communities OSC held on 18 March 2024.
- KPI's relevant to the Environment OSC to be reported to the Committee every six months.
- Items for the June meeting of the Committee date TBC:
  - Air Quality
  - Animal Welfare
  - Disposal of Vapes
  - National Hedge Laying Association

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

As this was the last meeting before the Council AGM in May, the Chairman thanked all Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Officers for their contributions to the meetings of the Environment OSC during the past year. He also thanked the Democratic Service Officers for their support.

**72. Close of Meeting**

Meeting closed at 13:10.