

# Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 21 July 2020, 10.30 am



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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## Committee Members present

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

Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor Gloria Johnson  
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith

## Cabinet Members

Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations  
Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

## Officers

Scrutiny Officer (Zena West)  
Election and Democratic Support Officer  
(Jack Gardner-Javid)  
Strategic Director, Transformation and  
Change (Lee Sirdifield)  
Strategic Director, Commercial and  
Operations (Gary Smith)  
Sustainability and Climate Change  
Officer (Serena Brown)  
Performance Lead (Ben Russell)  
Head of Environmental (Anne Marie-  
Coulthard)

## Other Members present

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Councillor Virginia Moran  
Councillor Ray Wootten

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## 55. Comments from Members of the public

None

## 56. Register of attendance, membership and apologies for absence

All Members of the Committee were present.

## **57. Disclosure of Interests**

No interests were disclosed.

## **58. Action Notes from the meeting held on 21 June 2020**

The Committee deferred agreeing the action notes from the meeting on 23 June 2020 to enable a review of the action notes. The review would examine if it was agreed that the rewilding project would be on a one project per town basis. Officers would liaise with the Chairman and the action notes from the meeting on 23 June would be brought forward for approval at the next meeting.

## **59. Updates from the previous meeting**

A Member thanked the Scrutiny Officer for distributing the selection criteria used in identifying the proposed sites for rewilding. He commented that he disagreed with some of the findings of the selection as he thought that Market Deeping and Deeping St James ought to have been treated as separate entities. He disagreed with the indicative costings used in the selection when he compared these to the costings given to the Committee in February 2020. The Member felt that it was unfair to use the positive feedback given to the Tattershall Drive proposal as a reason for its selection because he felt feedback in relation to Jubilee Park was also positive.

### **Councillor John Cottier joined 10:51**

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations acknowledged the Member's unhappiness with the explanation and stressed that this was a trial and did not preclude the possibility of further projects in the future.

A Member asked for costs for new tree planting to be sent to Members and the Chair responded that this issue along with hedges would be added to the workplan for future consideration. The Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations replied, stating that the cost of tree planting had been supplied previously and could be recirculated to Members.

### **Action Points:**

- **Tree and Hedge management to be added to the workplan.**
- **The scrutiny officer to recirculate the costings for tree plantings to committee Members.**

A Member spoke about the Bourne proposal, which was rejected by the Committee after it was found to be unsuitable. She spoke of the local feedback received which had identified possible alternative sites. A Member commented that he thought it was positive that Bourne Ward Members were able to identify new sites for consideration. The Cabinet Member noted that as the original Bourne site was not suitable, an alternative site should be

identified to bring rewilding to Bourne residents. He informed Members that that new representations would not be accepted at this time until the existing trial had been reviewed.

A Member commented that at the Committee's last meeting it was agreed to examine other potential rewilding schemes. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations commented that until the review of the previous minutes has been completed, he could only comment on the scheme as published in the action notes.

## **60. Performance Report**

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations introduced the report and asked for input from the committee as to what they thought should be included as environmental performance indicators. A Member spoke of his surprise that the report was signed off when he felt that it was incomplete and lacking key indicators. He spoke of the proposals that he had made in the past and how he felt they could have been used to develop the report. The Member commented that some of the indicators in the report would already be reviewed by other committees and that this committee should add value by looking at new areas. He briefly outlined several suggested areas for examination, which included electricity usage, gas usage and electric vehicles. He noted that in a previous meeting it was decided his proposed indicators should receive feedback, which had not occurred.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that he wanted this report to be a starting point for the committee so that it could identify areas it wished to scrutinise. He stated that whilst the level of detail in this report may be suitable for other Committees, he wanted to understand what this Committee wished to see. He agreed that some of the areas outlined by the Member could become key performance indicators but stressed that the indicators should be specific to areas for which the Council had direct responsibility.

There was a discussion about what areas fell under the Council's direct responsibility, rather than reflecting the actions of external agencies. This included a discussion around the possible use of commercial waste recycling as an indicator. The Cabinet Member stated that this may be of interest but it would not be a fair assessment of the Council's performance because of its limited influence in this area. He did suggest that domestic recycling could be an indicator as the Council has a duty to encourage residents to recycle.

The Vice-Chairman commented that energy usage would be a useful indicator as there were several proposed energy reduction schemes in the Carbon Trust report. There was a discussion around the food waste scheme and how this could impact the Council's recycling rates. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations informed the Committee that households using the food waste scheme were not separated within the report and that the 10%

uplift in recycling would not be seen due to the limited area of the district eligible to take part in the scheme.

A Member asked about the future of the food waste scheme and the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations spoke of the Key Decision that had been made to continue the food waste scheme in the pilot area after the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership ceased its funding. This outlay would be reviewed on a six-monthly basis. The Committee heard of the Cabinet Member's ambition to continue and expand the scheme. There was a question of cost to the Council and the committee was advised that there was a small increase in the cost of running the scheme but there was an ambition to move towards making the scheme cost neutral in the future. The Chairman confirmed that she was happy to continue to review the food waste scheme as part of the committee's workplan.

The Committee discussed its role in the selection of indicators. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations commented that he wished to join the debate and offer his thoughts on the resource implications of any proposal.

There was a proposal for seven indicators to be adopted as environmental performance indicator with a further proposal that seven other indicators should be examined in greater detail in a workshop of committee Members. This proposal was passed by the committee.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations responded that he was happy to work towards these indicators but warned some would be outside the Council's control and that there may be difficulties gathering the required data. He also added that some of the data gathered may not be up to date as there were delays in the Council gaining some of the data in part due to the effects of Covid-19. He added that there may be areas that would measure other agencies' performance rather than this Council's. The Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations added that some of the indicators had already been provided and that the report outlined that some of the others were already in train whilst others may be harder to report.

### **Actions**

- 1. The Committee recommends the following seven areas to be used as environmental indicators:**
  - 1. Energy consumption and cost (for the Council).**
  - 2. Water consumption and cost (for the Council).**
  - 3. Overall domestic waste arisings (for the District).**
  - 4. Percentage domestic waste recycled (for the District).**
  - 5. Percentage domestic waste diverted from landfill/incineration (i.e. to include food waste and green waste).**
  - 6. Percentage contamination of silver bins.**
  - 7. Number of fixed-penalty notices issued by enforcement teams.**

2. **The Committee will hold a workshop to examine other possible environmental indicators including the seven listed below:**
  1. **Volume of paper used by the Council.**
  2. **Mileage claimed by Councillors.**
  3. **Mileage claimed by staff using private vehicles.**
  4. **Miles travelled by council vehicles.**
  5. **Number of trees planted by SKDC.**
  6. **Area of SKDC land dedicated to managed wildlife and/or rewilding.**
  7. **Number of complaints received relating to street scene.**

## **61. Carbon Footprint Report**

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations introduced the report and stated that the Council, since declaring a climate emergency, had made excellent progress. He spoke of the recommendations in the report and highlighted the depth of information and the suggested projects included within the Carbon Trust report. The Committee noted that some of the projects would not yet be technically or financially feasible but it was assumed that they would be in future.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer highlighted some projects that she believed would be ideal areas for the Council's immediate ambitions. She spoke of the refurbishment works that were already planned at the offices within St Peter's Hill and that solar panels, a new heating system and LED bulbs could be added to those plans. She spoke of her belief that energy management could be a good area for the Council's immediate consideration.

In the longer term she spoke of the Council's fleet of vehicles which accounted for 25% of the Council's carbon emissions but warned against moving to electrification immediately to enable the examination of technical and financial issues in greater detail. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations spoke about the impact of Covid-19, which had reshaped the work of the Council's core functions. He also spoke of the positive environmental impact of remote meetings and working from home.

A question was raised about whether, when fleet vehicles were due for replacement, electric vehicles were considered. Members also queried how the larger waste vehicles could move away from traditional fossil fuels. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations responded, stating that the Council had completed a two-year review of its fleet. It had identified that the two electric vehicles in use were not suitable for wider rollout because of their reduced range. He commented that the Council had limited use for the vehicles however he stressed that as technology improved, the Council would review the range of newer models. He added that the Council's pool cars were not due for replacement for several years but post Covid-19 changes to working culture could result in a rationalisation of pool cars taking place. He

informed Committee Members that the large waste vehicles could be replaced with hydrogen fuelled vehicles as technology improved. The Committee heard that the Council replaced three to four vehicles of this type each year, so when an alternative was found the replacements could follow this pattern.

The Committee received an update on electric vehicle charging points which were in place. Members were informed that when lockdown came into place, completion of the project was delayed. It was hoped that the points would be operational by end of the first week of August. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations informed the Committee that the Council was continuing to investigate funding opportunities to expand the number of charging points.

The Vice-Chairman asked about the replacement of streetlights with LED lamps. The Cabinet Member responded, stating that the numbers of LED lights were low because the Council had been examining internet of things smart street lighting. As the pilot project had yielded positive results, the Council was now ready to go to procurement. The Cabinet Member referred to the invest to save replacement programme, which had also been delayed pending the results of the smart streetlighting pilot scheme

A Member questioned if the Carbon Trust report had been amended from the internal version that had been shared with the climate change task and finish group. He was informed that no changes were made. The Member questioned if the proposed project at St Peter's Hill should be a priority as it did not have the best return on investment. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations agreed that there were projects which provided a better return on investment but the shutdown of buildings as a result of Covid-19 and planned refurbishment works presented an opportunity.

The Cabinet Member went on to talk about the impact of Covid-19 on working arrangements which could affect the use of the Council's buildings and needed to be considered. He believed that other improvement projects involving the Guildhall Arts Centre in Grantham and the Stamford Arts Centre could be undertaken whilst the buildings were out of use.

There was a discussion around planning policy and the opportunities the council had to improve the environmental impact of planning within the district however it was commented upon that the Councils remit to use planning policy was strongly influenced by national planning policy.

The Committee heard about the remit of the climate change task and finish group and how in the later stages of the Council's work on climate change it could provide leadership, influencing other agencies, residents and businesses within the district. The committee heard that the task and finish group was next scheduled to meet in September 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations spoke of his desire to learn the Committee's priorities so that they could feed into the planning of future projects. A Member spoke of the need to move quickly in identifying projects for the Council to enter considerations around the budget at the earliest date. Members agreed that project management would have to be integrated with budget planning as many of these projects would run across multiple years.

A Member spoke of the new leisure centre and improvements to existing centres which were planned. She stressed her belief it was an opportune time to embed carbon reduction measures into these projects. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations agreed and advised that the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer was in contact with the project leads around this issue.

The Chair asked if there were other projects like the LED street lighting scheme that were in progress. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations replied that there was a small fund of £20,000 to be used to complete small projects but that there were no projects in progress that were similar to the LED street lighting scheme in action.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Committee was advised that plans for the refurbishment of the offices at St Peter's Hill had been delayed because of Covid-19. Carbon reduction schemes would be considered as part of any refurbishment. The Vice-Chairman asked if any of the £20,000 fund had been spent. He was informed that it had not been used as the Council had waited for the carbon trust report to understand the Council's baseline and identify projects.

A Member stated that there was an opportunity to use this money to fund improvements to Stamford Arts Centre, stating that it would provide an opportunity to broadcast the Council's ambitions to upgrade community assets

#### **Action Point**

- **Indicative costing to be carried out and distributed to member for the project to install solar panels on council buildings.**

The Cabinet Member spoke of his ambition to take the priorities outlined by the Committee to create some proposals that could be brought back later for consideration. A member spoke of their desire to move forward in an efficient manner and to see progress with regard to the Council's response to the climate emergency. The Cabinet Member agreed that speed was important but that the financial impacts were significant. He reminded members that the Council has a duty to deliver a balanced budget.

A Member who spoke stated that all council buildings, no matter where they were located in the district, needed to be examined for improvements that could be made to ensure the best return on investment. She warned against

taking a view to improve only the St Peter's Hill office just because it is the hub for the Council. The Cabinet Member agreed that return on investment was a key consideration but that cost per ton of carbon would also need to be examined to identify which projects would have the greatest impact.

### **Action Point**

**The climate change task and finish group to receive proposals from the Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations for the use of the £20,000 fund in September.**

### **The Committee:**

- 1. Notes the progress to establish and understand South Kesteven District Council's direct contribution to climate change in the form of organisational carbon emissions.**
- 2. Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations develops a phased carbon reduction plan and initiates feasibility assessments for priority carbon reduction projects outlined in the Carbon Trust's Carbon Footprint and Reduction Opportunities report.**
- 3. Recommends that the following carbon reduction initiatives should be prioritised:**
  - Solar panel installation on Council assets**
  - Improvements to Stamford Arts centre and The Guildhall**
  - LED street lighting**
  - Improvements to office space including fitting of LED lighting**

## **62. Review of Public Space Protection Orders**

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations introduced the report on the review of Public Space Protection Orders. He explained that the Orders were due for renewal on a 3-yearly basis and that they were now due to be reviewed. He reminded Members that it was necessary to conduct consultation in respect of these orders. The Committee was being asked to review the current and proposed orders. He stressed that the Orders could not be implemented without significant evidence to demonstrate that they were required.

The Chairman enquired whether it would still be necessary to consult on an Order if it was proposed they should be reviewed without amendment. It was confirmed that this was the case. The Chair also asked if the Ward areas on the appendices were current and whether that was relevant. She was informed that the Ward boundaries could be amended if the Committee supported the proposals.

A Member asked why The Spinney was the only area on the proposed new protection order and not the cemetery in general. The Head of Environmental commented that the town council wanted the area covered by the Order to be proportionate and restricted to the area where it had identified concerns.

A Member asked about the limitations of the Orders how they could affect other anti-social behaviours. The Head of Environmental responded, advising the Committee that they could be used for behaviour that could be detrimental to the wellbeing of an area, but this must be evidenced. The areas could be enforced by authorised officers, Police Constables and Police Community Support Officers. A Member expressed his support for the Market Deeping application and asked about how the Police would be consulted. Members were informed that the Police was a statutory consultee.

A Ward Member for the Deepings area spoke of their experience as Deputy Mayor, stating that the town council had felt that the application was necessary because of dog fouling in an area used for the scattering of ashes, which was distressing to the bereaved. She commented that there was no evidence of fouling mess in the cemetery so it was not included in the proposal. She informed the Committee that the Market Deeping Town Council had received positive feedback from residents on social media about taking action regarding the issue of dog mess within The Spinney.

A Grantham Ward Councillor spoke of historic issues of public drinking in the town centre and Wyndham park. The Order covering this area had combatted public drinking and had a positive effect, moving street drinkers away from these areas. He shared his belief that these Orders would continue to combat the detrimental impact of street drinking and encouraged the Committee to support the recommendations found within the report.

#### **Action Point**

##### **The Committee:**

- 1. Recommends that the existing Public Space Protection Orders be used as a basis for public consultation, requiring that the maps are updated to reflect current Ward boundaries.**
- 2. Endorses the request from Market Deeping Town Council to implement a Public Space Protection Order to control dogs at The Spinney, Market Deeping Cemetery.**
- 3. Recommends to the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations that public consultation is undertaken in respect of the extension of the existing Orders and proposed new Public Space Protection Order subject to the maps being updated to reflect current Ward boundaries.**

#### **63. 2020/21 Work Programme**

The Chairman recognised the hard work of officers, while working to meet the pressures created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following amendments were made to the to the Committee's work programme:

- Add trees and hedge planting to the workplan (TBC).
- Options to use of the £20,000 reserve to be brought to the October meeting.
- Updated report on Environmental performance indicators to be given at next meeting.
- Report on the Big Clean to be added to the workplan (TBC).
- Cycling update to be brought to the October meeting.

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

The meeting was closed at 12:58