

## ACTION NOTES

# Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 8 June 2021, 10.30 am

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

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### Committee members present

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

Councillor Bob Adams  
Councillor Ashley Baxter  
Councillor John Cottier  
Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor Hilary Westropp

### Members in attendance

Councillor Dr Peter Moseley (Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations)  
Councillor Jacky Smith

### Officers in attendance

Gary Smith (Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations)  
Ken Lyon (Assistant Chief Executive)  
Ben Russel (Performance Lead)  
Serena Brown (Sustainability and Climate Change Officer)  
Jack Gardner-Javid (Democratic Officer)

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## 1. Comments from Members of the public

No comments were received

## 2. Apologies for absence

Members noted that Councillor Dean Ward had been substituted by Councillor Bob Adams and Councillor Hannah Westropp had been substituted by Councillor Hilary Westropp, for this meeting only.

All other Committee Members were present.

### **3. Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

### **4. Action Notes from the meeting held on 26 January 2021**

Members agreed the Action Notes of the meeting held on 26 January 2021, as a correct record.

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

Members noted the updates from the previous meeting, held on 26 January 2021.

### **6. Trees in South Kesteven**

#### **Aveland Trees Ltd**

The Chairman introduced Hugh Dorrington, Aveland Trees to the Committee. Mr Dorrington spoke about the work of Aveland trees, as a plant nursery for woodland planting and the creation of hedgerows. The Committee heard of the opportunity for woodlands that could be established on smaller agricultural fields that were currently funded by a Central Government Grant but are not suited for modern farming machinery. The Grant was set to end in 5 years, it would be able to provide the opportunity for areas like Ropsley, to create woodlands to separate residents and farmers, providing a benefit to both.

The committee received a presentation on a Woodland in Dunsby. The presentation noted that the layout of woodland could be designed to allow for easy maintenance, whilst at ground level appearing to have natural spacing between trees. Members were invited to examine the work of Aveland Nursery.

Members questioned the scale and density of tree planting that could take place. They were advised that 1600 trees per hectare with 2 ½ metre spacing between trees, was the most. Members discussed the need for tree planting meeting local conditions, that a mix of woodlands and smaller scale tree planting would be best suited to the area.

#### **Woodland Trust**

The Chairman invited the Regional Officer from the Woodland Trust to provide a Presentation to the Committee. The Officer spoke of the history of the Woodland Trust with the headquarters being based within Grantham. The Woodland Trust had worked extensively in partnership with both the public and private sector. The committee examined the Woodland Trust's work with Sheffield Council, after the removal of 5000 healthy mature trees, they helped with the creation of a Street Tree Strategy and a Wide Woodlands Strategy.

The officer spoke of the Climate Emergency, Biodiversity Emergency and the Covid-19 pandemic and the ways that tree planting could help by capturing carbon, providing a habitat and a place for the local community to enjoy. The Woodland Trust had created an Emergency Tree Fund which provided funding for organisations like local authorities.

A Member queried what work had taken place in protecting ancient woodland and trees, where planning applications would potentially endanger them. The Officer advised that this could be a challenge. The Woodland Trust were not statutory consultees for Planning Applications, they relied on the work of Councillors and members of the public in bringing these applications to their attention.

The Committee spoke of the Design Code adopted by the Council and expressed an interest in the Woodland Trust informing them how other councils were planning on managing their maintenance costs in managing an increasing number of trees. A member expressed their interest in considering if this should form part of the Council's Planning Policy and mandate a set percentage of tree coverage in large developments.

The committee discussed the Council's Policy around Tree Protection Orders and questioned if it should be altered from one sapling being planted, to a larger number of saplings, after the loss of a mature tree. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that this could be underpinned by Council Policy.

Members discussed their ambitions for tree planting and for memorial tree planting. It was noted that Council Budgets and land availability were limited, which would impact on the Council's opportunities for tree planting. The Committee agreed that Parish or Town Councils should be encouraged to plant trees. Such organisations may have greater agility to act in this area.

The Committee were advised that a Parliamentary Committee had published a report on Climate Change, the UK would need to plant 80 million trees per annum, until 2040, to combat the Climate Crisis.

Possible recommendations were discussed by Members; that would ensure effective and appropriate steps would be made to develop policy and ensure tree planting. Members debated if it was suitable to ask Cabinet to consider the creation of a Budget for tree planting, or if the Committee could request for suitable sites to be located in the same way they had requested land for rewilding.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- 1. That Officers examine practical/tangible proposals to increase speed and scale of tree planting with partners including Lincolnshire County Council, The National Farmers Union and Parish Councils**
- 2. Officers seek to identify four sites and make proposals for additional trees to be planted (with costs).**

**3. To continue a positive working relationship with the Woodland Trust.**

**7. DEFRA: Consultation on Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England**

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations gave an analysis of The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) recent Consultation and how the proposals could have an impact on the Councils waste collection and Budgets.

The Cabinet Member outlined the key areas that would be affected the most. The Committee was informed of the proposal to extend food waste collection across the country from 2023/2024 and that South Kesteven District Council, with its own food waste trials already taking place, were at an advantage compared to many other authorities.

It was highlighted to the Committee that Green Waste collections may be required to move to a free service, which would have a considerable impact on Council Budgets.

Members discussed the future of waste collection and the possibilities of a 'pay as you throw' model being adopted in the future but agreed that such a model would require intervention from Central Government to assist with the Capital costs for equipment needed to adopt such a model.

The Cabinet member encouraged the Committee and as individual Members to take part in the consultation. The Chairman requested that Committee members take time to review the consultations and forward any ideas or concerns to her, so that a joint response from the Committee could be submitted.

The Chairman requested the Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations distribute samples from the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership's response to Committee members.

**ACTIONS:**

**4. That Committee members take time to review the consultation and forward any ideas or concerns to the Chairman, so that a joint response from the Committee be submitted.**

**5. The Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations to send the Lincolnshire Waste Partnerships response to the Committee.**

**8. Corporate Plan - Key Performance Indicators**

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced an update to the Key Performance Indicators.

It was noted that some data which informed the report had been collected from external sources, on an annual basis, which meant that some indicators were from the previous Quarter.

Members discussed the presentation and made suggestions as to how it could be improved.

## **9. Climate Change Update**

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer informed the Committee of the work around the key climate change actions and provided an update on the work of the Climate Change Task and Finish Group.

The Committee were updated on the Group's success in securing a budget for the next 2 financial years and that the Council has received Grant Funding for the improvements of 4 key Council owned sites, to improve their Carbon efficiency. The works would begin as soon as possible, before the March 2022 deadline set by the Grant.

Members queried the Climate Change Budget and heard that the climate change task and finish group could examine proposals to utilise that budget. A Member noted advances in technology that allowed for greater efficiency and gave the example of modern street lighting, which would allow the Council to gain in efficiency.

## **10. Work Programme 2021/22**

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

### **ACTION:**

#### **6. Members requested that the following items be added to the Work Programme:**

- **Bourne cycling festival update – Date to be agreed.**
- **Plans for tree planting in South Kesteven – 28 September 2021**
- **Annual Climate report – 28 September 2021**
- **Biodiversity in council parks and looking at the use of contractors in relation to this –Date to be agreed.**

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

There was none.

#### **12. Close of meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 13:06.