

Minutes

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 5 July 2022, 10:00am

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



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

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

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor John Cottier
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Ian Stokes

Cabinet Members in attendance

Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew (Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy)
Councillor Mark Whittington (Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change)

Officers in attendance

Alan Robinson (Deputy Chief Executive)
Anne-Marie Coulthard (Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection)
Debbie Roberts (Organisational Development and Change Manager)
Tracey Mooney (Regeneration Project Manager)
Serena Brown (Sustainability and Climate Change Officer)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Comments from Members of the public

There were none.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Ben Green, Councillor Phil Dilks and Councillor Hannah Westropp.

Councillor Helen Crawford acted as a substitute for Councillor Ben Green.

Councillor Virginia Moran acted as a substitute for Councillor Phil Dilks.

Councillor Ian Stokes acted as a substitute for Councillor Hannah Westropp.

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

4. Minutes from the meeting held on 10 May 2022

Members **AGREED** the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022, as a correct record.

5. Updates from the previous meeting

The Chairman informed the Committee that the item relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles was being considered by Cabinet on Tuesday 12 July 2022.

One Member requested updates on the following matters:

- Whether there had been any social media publicity on composting.
- Whether the Council had been in communication with 'Friends of Jubilee Park' in relation to Green Flag Status.
- Whether a letter had been sent DEFRA's secretary of state to express the Council's concerns about the outstanding consultation response regarding the Environment Act.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change assured the Committee that he had written to DEFRA's secretary of state on 30 May 2022, and a response had not yet been received. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had received a copy of the letter.

It was confirmed that the parks had undergone inspections for Green Flag Status and were awaiting the outcome, which would be known at the end of July 2022. An update would be provided at a future Committee meeting.

ACTION: For the Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure to notify the Committee of the outcome of the Green Flag inspections.

ACTION: For the Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure to find out whether the Council had been in communication with 'Friends of Jubilee Park' in relation to Green Flag Status.

The Chairman highlighted that previous discussion indicated that 'Friends of Jubilee Park' could also contact the Council themselves.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection confirmed that composting was on the work plan for SK Today and the Comms team were working on social media releases to promote composting.

6. Q4 Year End Performance

The Organisation Development and Change Manager presented the report that outlined the end of year KPI's for 2021/22.

Three actions were rated green:

- Continue to innovate the Council's approach to waste management to build on strengths and maximise commercial and other opportunities.
- Work with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership to reduce waste and further improve recycling.
- Recognise changes in environmentally friendly modes of transport and seek to work with others to adapt required infrastructure.

Three actions were rated amber:

- Maintain and enhance green areas across the district, aiming to secure Green Flag Status for Queen Elizabeth Park, Dysart Park and other relevant areas.
- Work proactively with Environment SK to deliver high quality services and maximise commercial opportunities.
- Build a new, modern depot which is fit for the future.

There were no actions rated red.

One Member highlighted the difficulty of comparing current KPI outcomes to previous KPI outcomes, and therefore it was challenging to establish whether the action status had improved, got worse or stayed the same.

A query was made on a green rated KPI relating to the measure of contribution to increasing the proportion of recycling, as set out in the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership strategy. The percentage on the action was 42.38%, however, the target was set at >42.5%. It was enquired that this action should be rated amber, rather than green.

The Organisation Development and Change Manager confirmed that the action measure status should have been amber in the report.

Clarification was sought on who sets the KPI targets.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection confirmed that the targets were based on those set by government for the next 10-15 years. The Government targets were national and not set for individual Council's.

A point was raised on the action relating to recognising changes in environmentally friendly modes of transport and seeking to work with others to adapt required infrastructure. It was queried who the Council were working with and whether the Council were working district-wide on the action or within a certain town.

It was suggested that more public modes of transport be utilised in the south of the district due to disconnections from Grantham.

The Organisational Development and Change Manager highlighted that the targets were set around electric vehicle charging points but different KPI's would be explored as a review of the corporate plan.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change reported that Lincolnshire County Council had applied for funding regarding more electric charging points, Grantham being one of the identified towns.

One Member noted that the action relating to recycling required residents to recycle adequately.

A query was raised in relation to Queen Elizabeth car park, following the closure of the Covid-19 testing site and what the Council were doing to encourage the re-opening of the car park.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy informed the Committee that the delay in re-opening the car park was due to contractors. The car park had now re-opened, however would need to be closed again for 1-2 days for completion works to take place.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change highlighted that a high level of contamination was seen in recycling collected in some areas and some areas of the district did not recycle. Bagged waste was often put out too early and the use of fixed penalty notices were being considered to address this.

A further issue was raised in relation to bins in Bourne having two compartments separating recycling and general waste. The two compartments had black bags and were disposed of together. Therefore, the bins were not being used correctly.

One Member queried whether the Council had a budget for educating residents about recycling.

It was highlighted that the Council had not proceeded with facilities for textile recycling banks.

Clarification was sought on how the 42.5% recycling target had been reached and how it related to government targets.

The Chairman highlighted that many residents engage in the Council's recycling program.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that there was not a specific budget set aside for educating residents on recycling. However, there was an ongoing campaign to inform residents of the correct items to put into each bin.

ACTION: For the Committee to receive an update on how the 42.5% recycling target had been reached and how it related to government targets.

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that contaminated bins were occasionally tagged. The Council works to educate residents on disposing their waste correctly.

The Chairman highlighted that SK Today also publicises what waste should be put into which bin.

It was suggested that the Council could also become involved in the National Recycling Campaign in September 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change reported that residents who continually dispose waste incorrectly and ignore correspondence may be liable to receiving a fixed penalty notice.

Clarification was sought on whether contaminated waste was collected and where the waste goes.

It was confirmed that the waste team could not leave contaminated waste bags as it may become a public health concern, and therefore would have to collect and dispose of it.

The Chairman asked for clarification on the colour of the bags used for waste.

It was confirmed that pink bags were for used for residual waste, the equivalent of the black wheeled bin, clear bags were the equivalent of the grey bins for recycling.

One Member queried how many tags had been put onto contaminated bins.

It was further questioned as to whether the Council were aware of which areas required further education on recycling than others.

The Chairman suggested that the Council educate schools in the district on recycling.

ACTION: For the Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection to provide the Committee on data around the number of contaminated bins.

It was clarified that contaminated bins that were identifiable to a property would not be collected.

It was further queried as to whether public litter bins that had two compartments to distinguish normal waste from recycling were monitored.

The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection highlighted that the public litter bins were not utilised in the way they were intended.

One Member noted that if the public bins had a black bag in both compartments, the public may assume that they are both general waste.

AGREED:

- 1. Note the contents of the 2021/22 year-end performance report.**
- 2. Members to consider if any concerns highlighted by the report require additional investigation to be added to the work programme.**

7. Climate Action Group meeting update/Climate Change Update

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer presented the report that outlined various projects relating to the Council's climate change ambitions and declarations.

An update was provided on the recent 'Climate Action Group' meeting, held on 7 June 2022. A number of items were discussed at the meeting:

- Updated terms of reference – confirmation of meeting frequency and online meetings.
- Consideration of paperless committee meetings.
- Update on review of the Council's vehicle fleet supported by Energy Saving Trust.
- Draft work plan for 2022/23.

The Council were allocated a capital budget of just over £1.2 million for the Home Energy Upgrade Scheme to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to residents within the district:

- The focus of the funding was primarily for low-income owner-occupied and private rented sector properties.
- The delivery timescale for the upgrades was up to March 2023.
- The Key focus of the scheme was on energy efficiency and alleviating fuel poverty.
- Types of upgrades eligible for delivery would include insulation, cavity wall or loft insulation, external wall insulation, solar panels, and low carbon heating upgrades to properties with no gas connection.
- The Council were delivering the scheme as a consortium of Council's including City of Lincoln, West Lindsey and North Kesteven.
- The scheme had been launched for South Kesteven residents.
- Information on details of how to express interest for residents was available on the Council's website.
- Current expectations were that using the funding allocation would allow a maximum of 50-60 properties in total to receive an upgrade by March 2023.

The street lighting project commenced in October 2021. The upgrading of each individual lamp to LED's led to around a 50% reduction in energy use per unit.

Lincolnshire County Council were in the process of exploring the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund, which would assist on aspirations around tree planting.

One Member noted that 200 upgrades of LED lights had been done since October 2021. It was queried as to whether 8 months was the expected pace going forward or whether the pace would become quicker.

The Chairman queried as to whether streetlights are replaced with LED's once the bulb has gone or whether it is a 'blanket' replacement roll out regardless of the existing bulb.

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer informed the Committee that failed bulbs are replaced immediately, therefore the Council were not replacing redundant equipment and then having to replace again with an LED light.

It was confirmed that the project had been budgeted on an 'Invest to Save' scheme which meant that as the project progresses, more units would be upgraded as the savings were internally invested when purchasing more units. The whole project was estimated to take 7-8 years to complete.

The 'Internet of things' project had been investigated, however, had not gone ahead in its full form. This had been due to a contract delay but also that the contractor was slow to mobilise because of supply chain issues and the covid-19 pandemic.

The Chairman emphasised that the Council should encourage conversation with Lincolnshire County Council in relation to tree planting. Furthermore, a query was raised on the percentage of money that would be allocated to the Council for tree planting.

It was confirmed that the process was at conversation stage at present. The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer attended monthly meetings with other Sustainability Officers at other district Council's and Lincolnshire County Council. Tree planting projects were discussed regularly.

Most funding opportunities were only eligible for an upper tier authority to apply for.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change informed the Committee that he had been in liaison with the Woodland Trust regarding tree planting to improve their working relationship.

There had been an outstanding funding bid with the Woodland Trust. The outcome of the bid was unknown at present, however, if successful, an Officer could be employed on an 18-month project to develop a Tree Strategy for the Council.

Assurance was sought on whether environmental good practice, efficiency and on-site energy generation would be included as part of the Council's three projects: St Martins Park, the new depot, and Deepings Leisure Centre.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change could not comment on St Martins Park or the Deepings Leisure Centre. It was confirmed that the brief for the new depot included energy efficiency options, for example, solar panels.

It was further confirmed that the Council's smaller fleet vehicles would eventually be electric going forward, with the new depot having electric charging points installed.

The Organisational Development and Change Manager highlighted that discussions with the developer had taken place regarding St Martins Park and the inclusion of sustainability measures on the development were in conversation, following approval of building control.

One Member informed the Committee that the 'Green Street Scene' would be relevant to St Martins Park. It was reassured noted that Planning Committee consider mitigation measures on big developments.

AGREED:

1. Notes the updates regarding climate change and carbon emissions reduction across areas of South Kesteven District Council.

8. Witham Sleasdale Blue Green Corridor Project Update

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy presented the report that had previously been considered by Cabinet in September 2019. The proposal was for the Council to become the lead in the partnership project for improvement of ecological connectivity between Grantham and Sleaford.

The project was funded by a range of partners and had a project board in place to oversee the governance and delivery of the schemes.

The Blue Green Corridor had 14 projects in total, 10 of which were in Grantham and 4 in Sleaford. This had achieved 7.05 hectares of land rehabilitated and a total of 5.29 hectares of habitats supported to attain better conservation status. Therefore, the project's total measurable outputs was 12.34 hectares.

A project extension request form was due to be submitted to the ministry of housing communities of local government for an additional 9 months due to the covid-19 pandemic delaying some of the earlier projects. Subject to the extension approval, Officer posts would be extended with costs met from the existing budgets.

It was confirmed that a Comms Strategy between North Kesteven District Council and South Kesteven District Council was being progressed and regular updates would be circulated to Members and residents going forward.

One Member declared he was a Council representative the Upper Witham Drainage Board. It was queried as to why Upper Witham Drainage Board had not been contacted about the project.

The Regeneration Project Manager confirmed that the matter would be addressed, and the Committee would be informed once communication had taken place.

ACTION: For the Regeneration Project Manager to provide the Committee with an update on communications with Upper Witham Drainage Board.

One Member queried how the project would promote sustainable travel as set out in the report and whether this may include the use of bicycles.

The Regeneration Project Manager noted that the sustainable travel aspect of the project was mainly focused in the Sleaford area. In Sleaford, works around the installation and upgrading of new footpaths would be undertaken to make them wide enough to incorporate cycle paths. The project was keen to address and look at the link between major plans in Sleaford and Grantham for housing developments with a view to incorporate sustainable transport links ahead of the developments occurring.

It was further queried as to whether any aspects of incorporating sustainable travel were due to take place in South Kesteven or Grantham.

It was confirmed that works planned for Grantham focused on enhancing the riverside walk to encourage communities to utilise the space. The aim was to improve the biodiversity and aesthetic value.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for the report and congratulated all involved in the project.

AGREED:

1. For the Committee to note the update regarding this project.

9. Work Programme 2022-23

Members noted the Work Programme for 2022-23.

Members requested that the following items be added to the Work Programme for the next meeting on 11 October 2022:

- Depot Update
- The Carbon Climate Report
- Gambling Statement of Principles three-year review
- Witham Slea Blue Green Corridor Project Update

Members requested that the following items be added to the Work Programme for the next meeting on 29 November 2022:

- Mid-term performance indicators

One Member highlighted that the Council's website had a page dedicated to performance indicators, however, the information from agenda item 'Q4 Year End Performance' was not available to view on the Council's website. It was requested that the information be available on the website.

The Organisation Development and Change Manager confirmed that the performance indicators would be going onto the website and the mid-term report on performance indicators would be going to Committee on 29 November 2022.

ACTION: For the Organisation Development and Change Manager to complete works around the information of performance indicators being available on the Council's website as soon as possible.

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

There were none.

11. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:00am.