

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY - ENVIRONMENT &  
PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

**5 January 2021**

Present: Councillor Judith Skinner (Chairman), Councillor Judith Welbourn (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Tom Ashton, Peter Bedford, Anton Dani, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale and Neill Hastie

In attendance: Councillor Peter Watson (Observer)

Officers –

Assistant Director - Regulation, Assistant Director - Operations, Climate Change and Environment Manager, Operations Manager, Transformation & Governance Manager and Senior Democratic Services Officer

**71 APOLOGIES**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors David Brown, Martin Howard and Chelcei Trafford.

**72 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 were agreed as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman.

**73 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

**74 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

**75 TWIN STREAM RECYCLING COLLECTION**

The Assistant Director - Operations presented a report, which presented a proposal to expand the separate kerbside collection of paper and card across the Borough following a successful trial.

There were 3,002 properties currently taking part in a trial to collect paper and card from the kerbside separately from the mixed recycling presented in the blue recycling bin.

The Council stepped forward to trial this new 'twin stream' recycling collection service and it had demonstrated that the collections could achieve improvements in both the quality of the recycling collected and increase in materials captured for recycling. Positive feedback on using the service had been received from residents in the trial area.

This project was the culmination of collaborative working with the Council's partners in the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, to meet the objectives of the Lincolnshire Waste Management Strategy, which would also meet the requirements of the forthcoming

national legislation contained in the Environment Bill 2020, and the Council's commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.

The report detailed the proposal to expand this service for the separate kerbside collection of paper and card to the remaining properties within the borough, setting out the environmental benefits, and operational and financial impacts. It also took account of the Council's commercial customers who would also need to take part in this twin stream recycling collection.

The Portfolio Holder addressed the Committee and voiced strong support for the scheme and then raised the following issues:

- The County Council should cover the cost of replacement bins as it would receive the surplus from the sale of the paper and card collected. ELDC's Portfolio Holder agreed that County Council funding should be 3%, not the 1% offered.
- The size of the bin would be an issue for residents in Victorian terraces etc.
- All bins and side waste should be collected currently. There had been many complaints because bins and side waste had been missed over Christmas.
- It was essential that both residents and staff received training.

Members fully supported the scheme and felt that officers and refuse staff were doing an excellent job. Various points were made, including:

- Households having another bin on view in some streets would detract from the attractiveness of the area.
- They had received many complaints from residents who did not have room for an additional bin with some having to take them through the house.
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) had not been included in the trial.
- The monthly collection of the blue and purple bins might not be sufficient, particularly in lockdown when more waste was created. Blue bins would be heavy with only been collected every four weeks.
- There were conflicting views about the colour of bins; purple stood out too much and black would be less visible at night.
- It would be useful to know the views of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership and other Lincolnshire authorities about how they were tackling recycling.
- It was satisfying that Boston would be at the forefront of the rollout and some initial problems were inevitable.
- It could make a huge difference to contamination rates.
- It would be preferable to try to secure additional funding.
- There had been many problems over the Christmas period, particularly as there were no stickers on the bins to explain when collections would be made.
- It was doubtful that the scheme would reduce the level of fly tipping; This had not been experienced in a ward included in the trial.
- Side waste should be collected.
- There needed to be further education regarding what went in each bin in order to avoid contamination. Facebook could also be used to get the message out.
- The Council could liaise with letting agencies in order to ensure residents from all communities receive clear information.

- Provision of large communal bins on collection sites and managed 'bring sites' would be preferable to forcing people to have additional bins.

The Assistant Director - Operations confirmed that the new bins would be black with a purple lid.

**Action: VB**

To discuss whether the purple bins used during the trial card and paper scheme will be retained or replaced with the black/purple bins

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the County Council about installing cameras on lampposts in fly tipping hotspots. It was noted that they could also be fitted to trees.

The Chairman was pleased that Boston was at the forefront of the scheme and thanked officers for their hard work and hoped additional funding would be secured. It was essential to get the message across to the public; pictorial information was more effective in doing this. Communal bins could be provided for HMOs, perhaps with a combination lock.

The Assistant Director - Operations agreed that there needed to be full engagement with the public. Officers worked hard to include all communities. Information was given out in different languages and the refuse crew themselves included operatives who spoke different languages. Pictures were being used rather than words. Larger bins were part of the procurement and communal bins were used in East Lindsey. Fly tipping was happening regardless of the recycling schemes in place. The issue of HMOs was on the list of matters to be addressed. Other local authorities would learn from Boston's roll out.

The Assistant Director - Operations thanked Members for their ideas, which would be considered. It was important that, for the scheme to be a success, recycling needed to be as easy as possible for the public. Consistency of materials collected for recycling was a crucial point and they were working hard on producing more consistent messages across Lincolnshire. The Government was expecting consistency of material streams nationally and authorities now collected the same materials for recycling across Lincolnshire.

## **76 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT UPDATE**

The Climate Change & Environment Manager presented a report, which detailed the progress made by the Council against the nine recommendations agreed by Full Council in January 2020 (Appendix A), attached a draft Environmental Policy for Members' consideration (Appendix B) and set out the next steps to be taken.

The Climate Change Working Group, established by the Committee, had submitted the nine recommendations to Full Council, but the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted progress and the necessary resources to take the work forward had only been identified recently. The Climate Change & Environment Manager had been working with the Assistant Director - Regulation since August 2020.

The Strategic Alliance with East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) gave a renewed opportunity to pick up this work and to share knowledge and experience to help both authorities take action on the climate change agenda.

The Council's new Corporate Strategy for 2020-24 included a priority around environmental awareness and accountability. This contained several commitments including developing a Carbon Reduction Plan and ensuring that every service and policy delivered on the Council's climate change commitments.

The Council was in the process of commissioning the Carbon Trust to produce a new Carbon Reduction Plan, which would also provide an updated baseline of the current carbon footprint. Work would begin on this in early 2021. The Carbon Trust had recently completed a similar exercise for ELDC and it was hoped there would be opportunities to align both plans and identify savings through joint projects.

The nine recommendations demonstrated a clear intention to embed a culture of environmental consideration and carbon reduction across all areas of the Council. To ensure this happened, the Environment Policy would set the framework under which relevant plans and strategies, such as the Carbon Reduction Plan, would sit. It was a simple mandate for climate change and environment action with four main themes that would ensure every service area was working to an agreed set of objectives consistent with the new corporate priority.

It was also important that all Council staff had an awareness of the far-reaching implications of climate change, the multiple benefits that taking action could achieve and an understanding of where changes could be made. A Carbon Literacy training programme was in development to be rolled out to all staff and Members in 2021.

The next step would be to produce a Climate Change Strategy for the Strategic Alliance as a whole, which would set the context for Boston and East Lindsey. The Strategy would identify key sectors and stakeholders with which to engage and set out an action plan for ensuring the Council and ELDC worked collaboratively to reduce emissions and enhance the natural environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

As Portfolio Holder, the Leader explained that the new Climate Change Strategy would be an important key consideration for the Council. Progress could not be made alone; it would be crucial to draw on experience to benefit the whole area.

Members welcomed and commended the report. It was remarked that all individuals could play their part towards the carbon reduction, e.g. with respect to their choice of vehicles.

There was recognition of the importance of climate change issues and delivery of carbon reduction within the planning process. It would be useful for the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (SELJSPC), which had not yet met since early 2020, to meet as soon as possible to discuss how to make progress on the themes of the environmental policy.

There was concern about reference to significant financial resources in terms of not putting the Council in difficulties, as it was in a more challenging financial position than ELDC.

The Leader explained that the themes of the Environmental Policy would be delivered at the same time as delivering value for money and that many projects were being considered.

A non-Committee Member who had served on the Climate Change Working Group was invited to address the Committee and expressed the view that the proposed measures to address the issues of climate change would also assist the Council, because when making energy savings, money was also saved, adding that it would be useful to see an estimate of cost savings and timescales.

The Climate Change & Environment Manager explained that costs were unknown at present. A significant amount of work would have to be carried out first, but they were examining the cost/benefit analysis of projects to ensure they were financially sound. They would be developed over time and considered on a case-by-case basis. The Council had done quite a lot of work over the last few years towards this, but there was still a lot of unknown factors. In addition, in the forthcoming years, new technology would come to the forefront and its effects were not yet known.

A significant amount of money was coming from Government, e.g. the feasibility study of the Municipal Buildings had been completely funded through grants. Some costs would be covered by grant funding and some would be invest-to-save projects.

The Chairman fully supported the policy and report, and expressed particular interest in eco-developments and felt work should be undertaken with developers as they were still building houses without consideration for climate change issues.

The Climate Change & Environment Manager confirmed that this was being given consideration, but it would take time. They were considering establishing a reference group with agents and developers to work with them to understand the issues. Although it would reduce viability of developments, these matters had to be addressed. ELDC's local plan was being reviewed currently and they could run through the viability assessments to ensure they were robust. However, progress would be slow.

In conclusion, the Assistant Director - Regulation expressed his appreciation to the Climate Change & Environment Manager for the quick progress achieved since her arrival and her professional input, and also thanked the Portfolio Holder. The Climate Change Working Group had given the Council a clear mandate, but the pandemic had intervened. The report set out progress made and the roadmap of how it would be delivered in future. Members were thanked for their support.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. The progress already achieved in delivering the nine recommendations approved by Full Council in January 2020 is recognised and the next steps as outlined in the report are supported.**
- 2. Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Environment Policy.**

## 77 WORK PROGRAMME TO INCLUDE QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE DATA

Members considered the Committee's work programme for the remainder of the year along with performance monitoring information for 1 July – 30 September 2020 in relation to the priorities within the Committee's remit.

The Transformation & Governance Manager advised the Committee of the positive progress made in many areas despite the difficult circumstances. There were some challenges and the report set out how these were being addressed.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that the low percentage of net business rates collected had been the result of the impact of COVID reliefs.

Members gave further consideration to fly tipping, which they felt was a significant issue. They asked that the fly tipping teams be congratulated and thanked for their hard work, particularly due to the increase in the last few months. However, despite their tremendous work, it had still not been possible to reduce the amount of fly tipping, especially in the summer months. It was appalling and resulted in a significant number of complaints. One view was that there was a link between incidents of fly tipping incidents and the tip, which should be more accessible to make it easier to use to get rid of waste. It was felt that Members should meet urgently to rethink the issues and explore possible solutions.

In agreement, the Portfolio Holder asserted that they should all work together to help clean up the town and all areas of the borough. The non-Committee Member in attendance asked if a working group should be set up.

The Leader agreed and confirmed that they were checking fly tips in order to identify those responsible in order to prosecute them.

A Member expressed satisfaction at the increase in fines and stressed the importance of raising awareness of how matters were pursued, suggesting that details of fines and prosecutions should be published prominently.

The Transformation & Governance Manager confirmed that the figures in the report were affected by the timing of the end of the quarter in that some had not yet had time to be paid. A table would be contained in the next quarter's report with full and clear data.

The Assistant Director - Regulation confirmed these issues would be discussed with the Assistant Director - Operations with a view to holding a meeting to explore ideas along with the Operations Manager, though they needed to be conscious of the timing with respect to work on the twin stream recycling scheme.

It was agreed to form a Working Group for Members to explore solutions to the problems of fly tipping, with names to be forwarded to the clerk.

**Action: JC**

Advise all Members of the Committee that a Working Group is to meet to explore fly tipping solutions and forward names of those interested to Madam Chairman.

The Assistant Director - Regulation then updated the Committee as follows.

1. The opening hours of the Waste Recycling Centre in Boston had been circulated to Members.
2. The Operations Manager had raised Members' concerns in respect of dog kidnapping with Boston's Inspector Fran Harrod who had reported that the police had not seen an increase in reports of such incidents.
3. With respect to the installation of CCTV at recognised fly-tipping hotspots across the borough, the Council had entered into a contract for overt surveillance CCTV. A camera placed by Asda had made 175 observations within two weeks and the quarterly reports would reflect this information in due course. They were considering the matter with colleagues to develop this.
4. A report on the provision of public conveniences, both local authority facilities and privately owned facilities available for public use, would be added to the work programme.
5. Regarding reports of street lights out within the town centre, down West Street and through Wide Bargate, the County Council had provided an update. They had met on site with the contractor to carry out repairs and the LED upgrade kit manufacturer was looking at a permanent repair / replacement strategy. All lights were currently working.

The next meeting on 23 February would be a single item agenda.

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The Meeting Closed at 9.10 pm