



Environment Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, 21 September 2022 at 18:30

PRESENT:-

Councillor Wells (in the Chair); Councillors Cameron, P Carpenter, Fairhead, Martin, Robinson-Payne, Waters-Bunn & B Wright.

Councillor Candon attended as a substitute for Councillor Bensly.

Councillor P Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Bird.

Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs M Lee (Head of Customer Services), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Manager), Mr J Barnard (Project Manager), Mr M Brett (IT Support) & Mr P Kelf (Grounds & Leisure Manager, GYBS).

Ms K Thomas (Head of Coastal Partnership East).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bensly, Bird, D Hammond & Talbot.

Councillor Candon attended as a substitute for Councillor Bensly.

Councillor P Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Bird.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor P Carpenter declared a personal interest in agenda items 5 & 10 as she was a Ward Councillor for Caister North and was a member of the Great Yarmouth Transport & Infrastructure Steering Group. However, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, was allowed to both speak and vote on the items.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 were confirmed.

Councillor Waters-Bunn asked that information relating to what can and cannot be placed into household recycling bins to be communicated via social media and other means. The Committee was keen that the Council reminded all residents of our recycling rules.

Action:- The Strategic Director to contact the appropriate officers to ask them to consider how best to do this and action accordingly.

The Chairman reported that the letter of thanks to GYBS had been sent to Chris Silverwood for him to pass onto his team.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

5 THE PLANTING OF TREES IN THE BOROUGH

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director & Project Manager.

The Project Manager gave an overview of three workstreams that were currently/proposed to deliver tree planting in Great Yarmouth. These are Green Recovery Challenge Fund, Parks and Green Spaces Levelling Up Fund and GYBS Annual Tree Planting works.

As part of developing the planting strategy as part of this project, there are some specific requirements from the funders in terms of the areas in which trees can be planted. Areas selected for planting must fall within an urban area. This is defined as a built-up area, with a population of at least 2000 people.

As a result, the ten planting areas selected are:

- Trafalgar Road

- Mariners Road
- York Road/St Johns
- Deneside
- St Peters Road
- The Conge
- North Drive
- South Quay
- Marketplace
- North Quay

The project team were working hard to try and plant as many trees as possible within these specific areas. The tree species which have been chosen are best suited to the areas where these trees are to be planted, and the conditions needed for the trees to survive and thrive.

We were notified of our funding success in October last year. As a result, timescales were very tight in terms of delivering any planting for the Winter of 21/22. By working with landscape master planners as part of this project and the Town Centre Members Working Group, a small number of sites were identified which could be planted during 21/22, resulting in 86 trees being planted over 4 sites.

Phase 2 is the planting scheme that has been designed with our master planners for tree planting between November 2022 and February 2023 and will consist of 205 trees being planted over 5 sites. At this stage of the project our anticipated planting numbers are less than originally planned at funding bid stage, but the team are confident that the proposed trees will be planted in the right areas in a way that they will become established and thrive. The table below details the sites and trees which are proposed to be planted as the second phase of this project.

Specific analysis has taken place with regards to South Quay, due to ongoing issues with tree survival rates in this area. This has included extensive investigation and soil testing. Several tree pits were excavated as part of site investigation to inform plans to replant in the area. Recommendations for the most appropriate approach given the various site constraints were given and form part of the planting proposals in this area. Although it is stressed that there will still be a risk to tree planting in this location, much has been done to try and mitigate this risk in the longer term.

On the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 planting, in total, 285 trees will have been planted. This will leave 220 trees which will need appropriate sites that adhere to the funders guidelines to be identified and proposed. Work is now underway to develop these proposals. It is therefore proposed that once any agreements have been made with the funders in terms of additional planting areas that phase 3 proposals will be finalised and presented for further discussion.

As part of the funding for this project, GYBC has created two traineeship Tree and Horticultural Assistants who are working with GYBS on a full-time basis for a period of nine months. These placements will assist in the planting, documenting, and monitoring of establishment to ensure longevity of trees. These placements commenced in June this year.

Working alongside the Field Studies Council, a range of workshops will take place, both face to face and remotely. With the aim to increase awareness of tree species, the health of trees both existing and new and how to identify healthy trees through the seasons. Creating a wider knowledge within the community of tree health, will support

the long-term maintenance of trees within the borough and promote a sense of shared ownership of communal areas and trees.

This project is also part of the Queen's Green Canopy, created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee where residents will be invited to plant a tree for the jubilee. Everyone from individuals to children's groups, schools and businesses will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environments by planting trees during the official season between October and March. There is a focus on planting sustainably, encouraging the creation of a legacy to honour The Queen's leadership of the nation, which will benefit future generations.

The Queen's Green Canopy event in Great Yarmouth will take place between November 2022 and February 2023 and will involve the planting of trees by stakeholders, VIPS and school children, alongside a variety of engagement activities. A Queen's Green Canopy plaque will be unveiled, and an afternoon tea will be held for key stakeholders and VIPs.

In July 2022, the Council was notified that it had been selected as an area to receive monies as part of the Governments Levelling Up Parks Fund. This fund has been developed specifically to improve parks and urban green spaces within cities and towns, identifying the importance of providing spaces for communities to come together and people to have access to the outdoors and green spaces to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

In working through these considerations, Diana Way in Caister was identified. This is also potentially eligible for an additional £75,000 in terms of section 106 monies, increasing the total available budget to £160,000 for park improvements. The map below outlines this area. This Park is of a good size and will have space for tree planting to take place, alongside capital works, and is a site which could achieve Green Flag status once improvement works have been undertaken.

Consultation has taken place with the relevant ward Councillors, and the proposals for this site are currently being developed. As this funding forms part of the Levelling Up Fund and involve section 106 monies, the final proposals will be presented to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in September for ratification.

The Grounds & Leisure Manager reported that the GYB Services Arboriculture Team carry out tree maintenance and tree planting across the Borough in accordance with the Service Level Agreement on behalf of GYBC. GYBS have a limited budget to undertake any new tree planting which totals approximately £20,000.

The Chairman asked if local Members had been consulted. The Project Manager reported that he had held a member engagement meeting two weeks ago.

Councillor Fairhead asked for confirmation as to what type of fruit tree would be planted as fruit dropping to the ground could cause issues. The Grounds and Leisure Manager informed Members that ornamental cherry trees had been planted.

Councillor P Hammond asked for clarification as to where the trees would be planted in North Yarmouth. The Project Manager reported that they would be planted around the planned beach huts. Councillor Hammond asked if they would be evergreen or deciduous. The Project Manager reported that they would be evergreen.

Councillor Cameron asked whether the existing trees at the southern end of the Market Place would be removed as part of the new planting scheme. The Project Manager informed Members that the planting scheme had been designed for the northern end of the Market Place.

Councillor Robinson-Payne informed the Committee that herself and Councillor Martin had attended the briefing meeting. However, she still had concerns regarding the placement of the trees and trusted that they would not just be plonked into the designated areas as had happened in the past.

The Project Manager reported that the trees would be planted in accordance with the planting scheme plans but there would be some on-site leeway allowed to avoid services and utilities.

Councillor P Carpenter reported that she welcomed the trees to be planted at Diana Way.

Councillor Waters-Bunn referred to the play and open spaces as mentioned at 4.3 the report and funding that would be available for play equipment. Councillor Waters-Bunn asked that this funding be utilised for disabled, accessible play equipment which was much needed in the Borough. The Project Manager agreed to note this request.

Councillor B Wright asked if the trees to be planted would be native species. The Project Manager confirmed that they would be native species.

Councillor P Hammond asked that the Committee and Ward Councillors have sight of the plans for the siting of this play equipment. Councillor P Carpenter informed Members that Parish Councillors would be invited to a meeting in early October where this would be discussed.

Councillor P Hammond suggested that a row of trees should be planted along the green mile at Crab Lane, Gorleston. The Grounds & Leisure Manager reported that if Members suggested potential planting sites then these would be considered. The Chairman asked him to email this request out to all Members.

ACTION:- The Grounds & Leisure Manager reported that if Members suggested potential planting sites then these would be considered. The Chairman asked him to email this request out to all Members.

Councillor Waters-Bunn reported that she was disappointed that 124 trees had been planted in the last three years but none of these had been in her ward. The Grounds & Leisure Manager agreed to send the planting plan to all members.

ACTION:- The Grounds & Leisure Manager agreed to send the planting plan to all Members.

Proposer: Councillor P Hammond.
Seconder: Councillor Annison

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

6 ANGLIAN AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER - WATER MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION

The Chairman reported that this item had been deferred.

7 COASTAL PARTNERSHIP EAST UPDATE

Karen Thomas, Head of Coastal Partnership East gave a presentation to the Committee.

Councillor Fairhead was concerned regarding surges of salt water going up the river and contaminating the Broads which was an issue often raised at Broads IDB meetings. There was an urgent need for a barrier to be installed to prevent this. Karen Thomas reported that tidal surge risk was the responsibility of the Environment Agency but that CPE would support the Council in lobbying for a construction of a barrier.

Councillor Waters-Bunn asked if the Community Resilience Forums would be contacted, who had been out of the loop and largely inactive since the pandemic, to re-establish contact as they were a valuable resource. The Strategic Director reported that an emergency resilience desk top exercise had been planned but had been postponed due to the sad passing of the Queen. However, the Resilience Officer, had had regular contact with community groups during the pandemic who had assisted with roles such as delivering medication.

Councillor P Carpenter reminded the Committee that the gabions at Scratby were still in situ, they were working and they were doing their job effectively.

The Chairman thanked Karen for her detailed presentation and update.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the update.

8 BROADLAND FUTURE INITIATIVE

The Chairman reported that this item had been deferred.

9 SCRATBY DAMAGED GABIONS

The Committee received and considered the report from the Senior Coastal Advisor & Rob Goodliffe, Coastal Manager, Coastal Partnership East.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that following a north-easterly storm event which occurred on the evening of the 31st March 2022, a significant

lowering of beach levels were seen at locations along the Great Yarmouth Borough Council's coastal frontage. This resulted in the exposure of the base of a section of the Scratby gabion structure, at its north-western extremity on the boundary between Scratby and Hemsby. A length of approximately 100 metres of the gabion structure was left damaged, including a pedestrian beach access through the defence. The area was fenced and signed to warn of danger alongside implementation of monitoring of the crest of the damaged gabion structure. This monitoring has shown no further seaward movement of the gabion structure since the initial damage. Consent has been received from the Environment Agency under Section 5 (6) of the Coast Protection Act, 1949, of the need to commence emergency works, although this does not secure funds required to complete works. Due to complex issues relating to this damage, consulting engineers were instructed by Coastal Partnership East to produce a high-level assessment of options for the damaged Scratby gabion structure. Such options are placed within the context of the SMP6 Kelling to Lowestoft Ness Shoreline Management Plan, Policy Unit 6.14, Winterton-on-Sea (South of Beach Road) to Scratby, in order to support recommendations on management of this structure going forwards.

The Head of Property & Asset Management asked that the complete set of presentation slides be emailed to Members following the meeting for information.

Action:- The Democratic Services Officer to email the complete set of presentation slides to Members following the meeting.

Councillor P Carpenter reiterated the need for first-class regular communications with members of the public and the Parish Council to avoid mis-information and public misconception.

Councillor P Hammond informed the Committee that the siting of the overflow pipe did not help the situation as the discharge of surface water would liquefy the sand underneath.

Councillor Candon reiterated that the gabions were still effective in doing the job they were designed for and were in a position to protect Scratby in the winter ahead.

Karen Thomas reported that the level of the beach had come back to an acceptable level to face the next winter.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that regular meeting had been held with SCEG and the Parish Council. Clear signage had been placed on the beach near the damaged gabions warning the public of potential H & S issues and regular press releases had been issued to this effect.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Seconder: Councillor Annison

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

- (i) Notes the work completed to date on the monitoring, analysis of longer-term changes in beach levels and production of high-level engineering options for the damaged Scratby gabion structure.
- (ii) Supports the completion of a further formal public safety risk assessment and

if identified associated small-scale works, to enhance on-site health and safety provision for the damaged Scratby gabion structure owned by Great Yarmouth Borough Council. These actions to be funded through the use of existing Great Yarmouth Borough Council coastal protection budgets; and

(iii) Supports the commission of an initial detailed engineering investigation of the structural stability of the damaged Scratby gabions, to further inform the understanding of the stability and health and safety risks of the damaged structure. Outcomes of the initial detailed engineering investigation to be used to inform the subsequent selection of an engineering option for the damaged Scratby gabion structure and identify further design work as required. These actions to be funded in the first instance through the use of existing Great Yarmouth Borough Council coastal protection budgets, prior to wider funding by Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

10 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS - OPPURTUNITIES FOR ON STREET PROVISION

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Customer Services.

The Head of Customer Services reported that GYBC has already made provision and implemented a number of EV Charge Points across council-owned car parks in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. The majority have been funded following successful applications for 75% funding to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) through their ORCS scheme (On-street Residential Charging Scheme) with a further 25% contribution from the supplier (BMM Energy Solutions).

Further car park locations are currently being explored with our existing partner BMM Energy Solutions, specialist suppliers and installers of EV equipment. It is anticipated this will lead to a third application for funding under the OZEV ORCS Scheme later in the year with BMM making a further contribution for the balance of funding.

In collaboration with other districts across the county, NCC recently submitted an application for funding to OZEV under the Governments pilot LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) scheme with the aim to increase charging capability along the coastal areas and on the Broads. This is with a view to benefitting the local tourism sector and visitors thereby promoting multiple modes of green tourism through the provision of road vehicle, micro-mobility and boat charging hubs as well as to increase the number of charges in rural areas across the county.

GYBC locations included in the LEVI bid covered postcode locations in Hemsby, Martham and Winterton along with Great Yarmouth Yacht Station. Although this initial application has been unsuccessful for the pilot scheme, ongoing discussions around progressing funding this project will continue with OZEV.

Work to progress opportunities to increase EV Charge Points in the borough continue in alignment with the Great Yarmouth Sustainability Strategy & Action Plan. GYBC has been part of ongoing discussions with NCC and other districts as part of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership where the EV Charging Task & Finish Group was set up from October 2021. This group has ambitions to prioritises the

acceleration of charge point deployment, making the most of funding opportunities to assist the rollout in a large, rural county where the market is less responsive to need and opportunity.

More recently GYBC and NCC have been in preliminary discussions with a potential supplier already working on a project in Norwich. GYBC have an exciting opportunity to work with NCC on a new pilot project for the borough of Great Yarmouth to expand EV charging locations/capability across the area which could lead to a larger project over a phased period covering the next 3-5 years. Specifically looking to provide 'on-street' locations, initially looking to identify areas for the first pilot phase which could be delivered this year, the proposed solution utilises existing power in street lights to provide the EV charge. Lampposts normally have a larger electricity supply than the street light actually needs. These type of chargers working from a street light can work at 5kW. That is enough power to be able to charge a 60kW battery overnight, or to top-up following an average daily commute in just over an hour.

Identification of initial locations could result in the use of a combination of the two assets and could look to serve areas where we know there is a current and growing need, but also some residential areas across Gorleston, Great Yarmouth & Caister-on-Sea where there is no, or very limited home charging capability. The areas selected would be a good test and provide ongoing intelligence regarding use and need from residents and visitors which are likely to change over the coming years. Investigation & feasibility into initial locations for a pilot are already underway with aspirations to have the installations completed by the end of this year.

The Head of Customer Services informed the Committee that the next steps would be Member engagement and Members of the Great Yarmouth Transport & Infrastructure Steering Group had been updated on progress and consulted on potential locations for the initial pilot. Norfolk County Council would be the lead organisation for procurement as the Highway Authority and were investigating the appropriate procurement route.

Councillor Candon reported that this initiative would help residents, businesses and boost the local economy and was a real plus for Great Yarmouth to help boost its green credentials and play our part to reduce carbon emissions.

Councillor Fairhead was concerned that the increase in the cost of electricity would put residents off of the idea of buying an electric vehicle. The Head of Customer Services reported that she hoped that the current energy crisis would be over shortly and that the borough must plan for the future.

Councillor P Carpenter asked that all Members be invited to propose areas in their wards which would be suitable for on-street charging points to be considered after the pilot scheme.. The Head of Customer Services assured Members that their views would be sought following the pilot scheme.

Proposer: Councillor Cameron
Seconder: Councillor P Carpenter.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the progression of next steps to work in partnership with Norfolk County Council on this project to expand the EV Charge Point network in the borough of Great Yarmouth.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Councillor Waters-Bunn raised the issue of the green beach between the two piers which had not been removed prior to the summer season and asked why this had not been carried out as promised and that she did not want to see this repeated for next year. Councillor Waters-Bunn asked that this item be added to the Forward Plan.

Action:- The Chairman to ask for an update and then to decide whether it is appropriate to add the item to the Forward Plan.

(ii) Councillor Robinson-Payne asked for an update regarding the distribution of recyclable cups to all Members. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had been assured that they would be handed out at a future Council meeting.

The meeting ended at: 20:00