

# Environment Committee

## Minutes

Tuesday, 18 July 2017 at 18:30

Present :

Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Annison, Bensly, Borg, Grant, Fairhead, Jones, Pratt, Walch, Weymouth and Wright.

Councillor Plant attended as substitute for Councillor Hanton.

Also in attendance :

Mr G Buck (Head of Environmental Services), Mr M Stephenson (Environmental Strategy Officer), Mr S Mutton (Service Manager, Environmental GYB Services) and Mrs S Wintle (Member Services Officer)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor Hanton.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman declared a personal interest in the item relating to the review of joint venture arrangements in his capacity as a Member of the GYB Liaison Board.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14 June 2017 were confirmed.

#### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 LIGHTING ST. GEORGE'S - TRIAL**

The Committee received and considered the Head of Environment Services report which asked Members to consider approval of a proposal for a trial lighting scheme within St George's Park.

The Head of Environmental Services reported that a resident and business operator in Great Yarmouth, Mrs Staff had submitted the proposals for LED lighting within a tree in St George's Park, he stated that a range of costs had been provided by Mrs Staff and that these costs were to be raised by Mrs Staff not the Borough Council.

Members were advised that vandalism had been raised as a possible issue to mitigate the concerns the height of the commencement of the lights had been increased, light pollution had been considered and a timer would be installed to ensure any necessary adjustments could be made through reduction of operating hours if necessary. The life span of the lights is estimated to be 5 years and ongoing fund raising by Mrs Staff would need to be identified to maintain or expand the trial.

The Head of Environmental Services reported that should approval be given, Mrs Staff would like to commence fund raising for the installation of the lights with ongoing energy costs being mitigated through the use of low voltage LED's and a potential reduction in other lighting in the immediate area of the tree.

The Chairman reported to Members that some concern had been raised in relation to the need for planning consent on the proposals, he stated that he had contacted the Group Manager, Planning who had advised that the proposals would be subject to planning permission and would therefore, if approved, need to be considered by the planning department.

A Member asked how the electric cable would be fed from the tree, the Environment Strategy Officer reported that the Tree Surgeons had been consulted and were unhappy to attach to the tree permanently a column would have installed next to the tree.

A Member asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the lighting, the Head of Environment Services stated that there would be no financial contributions made from the Borough Council.

A Member pointed out that there were 2 columns existing near to the proposal

site and asked why these could not be used for electric cabling, the Service Manager (Environmental) advised that those columns could not be used due to a trench. Some concern was raised by Members in relation to the low costs for trenching / feed / electric.

Resolved :

That approval be given for the trial of LED tree decoration in St Georges Park once adequate funds have been raised by Mrs. Staff for the trail scheme subject to the following :-

- (1) That there is no deviation from the work already presented to Officers,
- (2) That all finance to provide the lighting and it's future maintenance to be met by the Community.
- (3) That the Councils Tree Surgeon is satisfied that no damage will be caused to the tree.
- (4) That planning permission be sought as the park is within a conservation area.

## **6 A REVIEW OF FOOTWAY AND OTHER LIGHTING**

The Committee received and considered the Head of Environmental Services report which sought to advise the Committee of the Council's responsibilities for footway and other lighting.

The Head of Environmental Services reported that the Borough Council looked after a variety of footway, car parking and decorative lighting units together with some Parish Councils who also look after a number of units in their parishes. For the Borough Council this equates to approximately 4500 footway and lighting units, the majority of these were inherited by the Borough Council as part of a Local Government reorganisation in 1974, he advised that since 2006 the Borough Council has not provided additional footway lighting.

It was reported that the provision, renewal and maintenance of the lighting units was a significant capital spend with the Council approving a capital budget of £100,000 a year since 2009. In addition, last year footway lighting cost approximately £280,000 for repairs, maintenance and energy costs.

The Head of Environmental Services reported that since the Borough Council had stopped providing new lighting in 2006, the Council had concentrated on repairing and modernising the network in it's ownership, the Council is responsible for a number of private supply networks underground such as those supplying many of the rear passageway lighting columns. Given the age of the majority of stock, there has been a rise in the number of faults that have developed on the underground cables. Members were advised that cable replacement costs can stretch to several tens of thousands of pounds, where new cabling systems had been provided, the Council has endeavoured to

secure that these are transferred to the national UK Power Network thus removing the Council's liability for future underground maintenance.

The Head of Environmental Services advised the Committee that the Council holds various approved lighting policies around footway lighting, these have now been consolidated into a single policy document, Members were advised that this document could be found at Appendix one of the report.

A Member suggested the installation of solar panelled lights, it was advised that manufacturers of solar lighting could not guarantee the lighting for the whole evening.

A Member made reference to a scheme that Norfolk County Council had undertaken to replace all highways lighting under their control, but it was pointed out that Norfolk County Council had received funding to undertake the scheme.

A Member asked in relation to the timescale of changing lights, it was advised that with current resource approximately 200 lights per year were being replaced. A Member raised concern in relation to the timescale of changing lights, he made reference to the amount of columns that were aged over 20 years and suggested that a priority list be implemented to speed up the process of replacing columns. The Service Manager (Environmental) reported that once every 6 years the Council columns are inspected in order to highlight any columns that need to be looked at for replacement.

The Service Manager (Environmental) reported that at Riverside Road, Gorleston the Council were in ownership of 16 footway lights, he stated that Norfolk County Council had been approached to ask if they would take over the management of these light as they are situated on a Highway adopted road with no footway and were lighting the roadway, but this had been declined. Members expressed their concerns at the lack of engagement from Norfolk County Council and suggested a letter be written to the EDT Committee at the County Council to state that Committee's concerns and ask that the footway lighting be reverted back to the County Council for ownership. It was suggested that Councillor Grant present the Committee's letter of concern to the EDT Committee.

A Member asked if there were any other areas within the Borough that had Borough Council owned footway lighting on Norfolk County adopted Highways, this was confirmed. It was suggested that a more detailed report be brought back to a future Committee meeting detailing all the anomalies.

The Head of Environmental Services suggested that both he and the Environmental Strategy Officer arrange a meeting with Highways to discuss issues raised.

RESOLVED :

(1) That the Committee note the Head of Environmental Services report

(2) That the Committee confirm the future Footway Lighting Policy as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

(3) That the Committee agree to receive future reports in relation to areas whereby underground cabling rectification has been identified.

(4) That a letter be sent to the EDT Committee at Norfolk County Council stating the Committee's concerns and ask that the footway lighting at Riverside Road, Gorleston be reverted back to the County Council for ownership.

(5) That the Committee receive a future report detailing options around possible future budget savings.

## **7 REVIEW OF THE COLLECTION OF DOMESTIC SOLID WASTE**

The Committee received and considered the Head of environmental Services report which provided Members with an update in respect of the Borough Council's waste collection and recycling service and the work proposed by the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

The Head of Environmental Services reported that the collection of waste remained one of the principal services for the Borough and all Norfolk Council's, in conjunction with the Norfolk Waste Partnership (NWP) the Council continually looks at ways to improve its recycling performance. He advised that the NWP had agreed the reduction in contamination and the investigation of other material that could be recycled are priority areas to be addressed.

Members attention was drawn to the Anti Contamination Plan for 2017/18 which highlighted the current and future works being undertaken to tackle contamination.

A Member raised concern in relation to packaging used on disposable nappies in that packaging used stated that it could be recycled, the Head of Environmental Services advised that WRAP who were Government advisers were undertaking work to change and improve packaging used.

A number of concerns were raised in respect of the high contamination rate for Great Yarmouth and the need to re-educate residents.

**RESOLVED :**

That the Committee note the information contained within the Head of Environmental Service's Report.

## **8 REVIEW OF JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chairman reported to the Committee that an urgent meeting of the GYB Liaison Board had been held to discuss issues and concerns that had been raised. He advised that following the meeting it had been agreed that a review of the agreement held with GYB Services would be undertaken. It was reported that it had been agreed that Members would receive detailed information as to what is expected to be undertaken within their ward.

The Chairman advised that monthly meetings had been arranged in which the head of Environmental Services, the Chief Executive Officer, Councillors Smith, Walch and Pratt and GYB Services would attend in order to maintain communication and address issues that may arise.

The Service Manager, (Environmental) reported that a draft version of the reviewed Service Plan had been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for comments, he advised that GYBS hoped to work together with the Council in order to deliver services and make the Borough the best it can be.

In discussion the issue around fly tipping, littering and private land were raised and it was noted that in some circumstances planning controls that can be imposed to ensure the up keep of private land.

The Head of Environmental Services also stated that in common with other local environmental quality issues such as dog fouling and fly tipping, the Council had a low tolerance of littering and will take formal enforcement action if the evidence is received.

A Member advised of a private company 'Kingdom Environmental Services' who undertake a high level litter campaign within a Borough to target and fine individuals who are seen to be littering. It was agreed that further information be sought on this matter and that this item be added to the Forward Plan for the next Environment Committee.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A Member asked in relation to Waste Carriers Licences and whether the Council routinely check who holds these licences. It was advised that if Officers are made aware of a unlicensed waster carrier driver then enforcement action will follow.

The meeting ended at: 20:05