

Environment Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, 20 July 2016 at 18:30

PRESENT :

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

Councillor Borg attended as substitute for Councillor Fairhead

Councillor Hammond attended as substitute for Councillor Hacon

Councillor K Grey attended as substitute for Councillor Jones

Jane Beck (Director of Customer Services), Glenn Buck (Group Manager - Environmental Services), David Addy (Environmental Health Officer), and Sammy Wintle (Member Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fairhead, Hacon and Jones.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest declared at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 June 2016 were confirmed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

A Member referred to the use of wording in relation to Members questions and asked if Councillors names could be stated instead of "A Member ", the Chairman advised that the wording referred to was the standard format for minutes.

A Member advised that in relation to item 4, a rota in relation to road sweeping was yet to be received, the Director of Customer Services stated that an email had been circulated which contained details of types of road which were swept by GYBS although pointed out that it would be extremely difficult for exact roads to be highlighted due to the vast numbers.

A Member pointed out that also in relation to item 4, weeds at the Beaconsfield play area and stated that the length of the weeds were making the play area unsafe for children, the Group Manager, (Environmental Services) advised that this matter would be looked in to.

5 AIR QUALITY STATUS REPORT

The Environmental Health Officer, provided Members with a brief overview of his report which set out to inform Members of the Great Yarmouth 2016 Annual Air Quality Status.

The Environmental Health Officer reported that Great Yarmouth Borough Council must annually report on the status of the air quality within the Borough, as required by Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. He advised that overall the Air Quality Annual Status Report has not revealed any exceedance of air quality standards and has not predicted any likely exceedance over the next 12 months.

A Member asked in relation to Table A2 within the report, why there was a variation of heights used to measure, it was advised that heights were dependant on a number of factors. Ideally they would be at average person height between 1.5 – 1.8 metres and would need to take into account situations where for example there is residential accommodation above shops so these would be higher. There is also the constant battle against vandalism of the tubes and so some are located to be just out of reach. The diffusion tubes that are used are only accurate enough to provide a broad indicator of air quality and to highlight areas for more detailed work if breaches of standards are identified.

A Member asked in relation to the Monitoring Sites in particular Site DT4 within the Environmental Health Officers report , why there had been a significant drop seen in February 2015, the Group Manager (Environmental Services) advised the measurements were used to give an indication of the levels and that many factors could impact on the concentration levels including traffic flows and meteorological conditions.

Concern was raised in relation to the height that levels are measured at the Bridge Road Site due to the location of a nursery near by, it was felt that the measurements needed to be taken at a level suitable to take in account the nursery. The Group Manager (Environmental Services) clarified to Members as to where the site was located and advised that a site located nearer to the nursery could be looked into. It was agreed that the Group Manager (Environmental Services) source a suitable location.

RESOLVED :

(1) That the Committee note the Air Quality Annual Status Report and its content.

(2) That the Group Manager (Environmental Services) source a suitable location for a Nitrogen Dioxide testing facility near to the nursery located at Bridge Road.

6 UPDATE OF GYBS SERVICES

(a) Ghost Bid

The Director of Customer Services gave a brief overview of the Great Yarmouth Borough Services Ghost Bid, she advised that an opportunity had arisen for the Joint Venture to be subject to a ghost bidding process in partnership with North Norfolk and Broadland District Councils. The proposed Ghost BID would enable the Borough Council to assess whether the Joint Venture presents the best value for money delivery of the services in the best way for the Borough.

A Member asked how much the ghost bidding process would cost, and it was advised that the bidding process would be found from within existing budgets and was likely to cost £3,000 to £4,000.

A Member asked what would happen if once the ghost bid was complete it was proven that the Joint Venture did not represent best value. The Director of Customer Services advised that a number of options would be considered.

A Member asked whether the costs involved with the Joint Venture were regularly reviewed. The Director of Customer Services advised that a breakdown of costs are discussed at Liaison Board meetings.

RESOLVED :

That the Committee note the information held within the Great Yarmouth Borough Services, Ghost Bid Report.

(b) Quality Audit of GYB Services

The Group Manager (Environmental Services) provided Members with a brief overview of the contents in relation to the Quality Audit of GYB Services report which set out to advise Members of the Auditing process which included two different but related processes, a visual survey and a audit of GYBS systems that are in place as part of the grounds maintenance and street cleansing functions.

- Visual Survey

The visual survey was undertaken over a period of two weeks in early July by the Environmental Ranger. The survey looked at high profile areas of the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston Seafronts and took in a random selection of other main roads and residential streets. Some of the areas targeted were those where complaints had been received from both elected Members and members of the public.

The survey looked at four areas of street scene :-

- Litter
- Grass Cutting
- Detritus in street gullies
- Weed Growth

- Paper Audit

The Paper Audit of GYBS procedural arrangements together with relevant paperwork was undertaken on the 14 July 2016. The audit looked at the procedures in place relevant to the staff delivering the service, the quality procedures in house at GYBS and the relationship to Norse quality processes.

- Area Visit

A spot check of areas tended to back up the views of the Environment Rangers visual survey. Both the seafront areas were considered to be very good from both grounds maintenance and cleansing point of views. Gorleston was also considered good with noted recovery of the grass verges following

the spraying incident earlier in the year.

A walk around the streets between Camperdown and Devonshire Road found litter and detritus at a level that required cleansing and this was picked up by the GYBS personnel accompanying the inspection. The Cliff Park area to the rear of Gorleston Seafront was found to be in general good condition.

The Group Manager (Environmental Services) advised that an audit of GYB Services will be completed on a regular basis.

A Member raised concern in relation to the grass cutting and mechanical sweepers. The Chairman advised that these issues had also been raised at the meeting of the GYBS Liaison Board.

A Member asked in relation to an area on Gorleston Cliff top that was overrun with weeds. The Group Manager (Environmental Services) advised that this matter would be looked into.

A Member raised concern in regards to the removal of bags of street sweepings left beside the bins by the street sweepers in Church Road. The member stated that bags had been left here uncollected for a number of days and were becoming split and attracting other rubbish. It was advised that the matter would be fed back to GYB Services as a matter of urgency.

The Director of Customer Services referred to an email that had been received from Simon Mutton, GYB Services the email gave detail of the deployment of additional Services within the Borough to deal with issues that had been raised. The Chairman suggested that this matter be reviewed in four weeks. A Member asked if a press statement would be released to advise the information given by GYB Services to residents within the Borough. The Chairman advised that a Press notice was to be arranged.

A Member asked in relation to the clearing of drains, and was advised that drains were the responsibility of Norfolk County Council.

The Chairman advised that the County Council had agreed to an extra £20,000 to be spent on extra verge cutting on roads across the County. Concern was raised in relation to land ownership between Norfolk County Council and Great Yarmouth Council.

A Member asked in relation to the grass cutting on roundabouts. It was pointed out that Highways England had started cutting the grass although this was to a very basic standard, and would only be cut 3 times a year.

RESOLVED :

That the Committee agree that a further update be submitted to the next meeting to discuss.

7 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed the next meeting would be held on the 12 September 2016 at 6:30pm.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that the monthly meeting discussed at the last meeting between Graham Jermyn of GYB Services, Councillors Pratt, Hacon and himself would form a Sub-Committee of the GYB Liaison Board. He advised that the Director of Customer Services, the Group Manager (Environmental Services), Simon Mutton and Nicola Holden of GYB Services would also be members of the Sub-Committee.

The meeting ended at: 19:45