

Environment Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, 18 July 2018 at 18:30

Present :

Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, G Carpenter, A Grant, Hacon, Hanton, Pratt, Robinson-Payne, Waters Bunn and Wright.

Councillor Wainwright attended as substitute for Councillor Borg.

Also in attendance :

Mr N Shaw (Strategic Director), Mrs G Britton (Head of Environmental Services), Mr J Clements (Principal Strategic Planner), Mr D Wiles (Press and Communications Officer), Mr B Harris (Coastal Manager), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property and Asset Management), Mr B Parker (Head of Coastal Partnership East), Mrs T Pope (Coastal Manager) and Mrs S Wintle (Members Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Borg.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Smith declared a Personal interest in his capacity as Chairman of the GYB Liaison Board and Chairman of the Coastal Partnership East

Councillor K Grey declared a Personal interest in her capacity as a Member of the GYB Liaison Board

Councillor Bensly declared a Personal Interest in the item relating to the Hemsby Coastal Management report in light of being a business owner in Hemsby.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 June were confirmed subject to the following amendment :-

- Councillor Fairhead attended as Substitute for Councillor Wright not Councillor Flaxman-Taylor

The Chairman reported that the Social Enterprise Green Light Trust had commenced work in St Georges Park, he advised that he would like the Committee to undertake a visit to see what work had taken place at the Park and suggested that Green Light Trust be invited to attend the next meeting.

Members were reminded that an open day would be held at the Crematorium on Sunday 5th August.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and noted the Forward Plan.

Members were advised that a briefing would be held on Wednesday 25th July to discuss GYB Services.

5 HEMSBY COASTAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Committee considered the Head of Coastal Partnership Easts report, which presented a high level review of options for Hemsby Coast Erosion.

The Head of Coastal Partnership East advised that the report had received positive feedback and provided a range of different options for Hemsby.

Councillor Wainwright commented of his disappointment that the works proposed had not been completed sooner, he made reference to the original surge which had occurred in 2013 and stated that in his opinion there had not been enough support available at that time, however praised the Head of Coastal Partnership East for a positive report and briefing and hoped that the new level of support for Hemsby would continue. The Chairman advised that a Coastal partnership East Board had now been established in the hope that

more agencies could be involved to provide support.

Councillor Bensly passed on his thanks to all Officers involved in supporting the Hemsby Coastal Management.

RESOLVED :

(1) That the Committee note the progress of and support the on-going work of Coastal Partnership East with specific reference to Hemsby.

(2) That the Committee note the content of the report.

(3) That the Committee support work to undertake stakeholder feedback and consultation in relation to the study findings

(4) That approval be given to develop further potential options around adaptation

(5) That approval be given to investigate funding opportunities to further develop a full business case.

6 COASTAL PLANNING - AGREEMENT OF STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

The Committee considered the Principal Strategic Planner's report which asked for the Committee's approval of the Statement of Common Ground on Coastal Planning on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED :

That approval be given to the Statement of Common Ground on Coastal Planning on behalf of the Council.

7 APPROVAL OF FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2018-19

The Committee considered the Commercial Team Manager's report which sought Member approval for the formal adoption of the Food Service Plan for 2018/19 and provided details of the work undertaken by the Food Safety Team during the previous year.

The Head of Environmental Services summarised the salient areas of the report to Members.

The Chairman made reference to paragraph 2.8 within the report, and passed on the Committee's thanks and appreciation to those Officers who had been involved in the recent tragic accident at Gorleston and praised the work that had been undertaken by Officers.

Reference was made to the recent airshow and the positive comments which had been received.

Clarification was sought as to whether inspections were carried out at car boot sales in light of some traders selling food products, the Head of Environmental Services reported that this remained a difficult area due to traders arriving on the day of the sale, however pointed out any concerns or issues raised would be investigated in the appropriate way.

A question was raised in relation to staffing levels and whether the Food Safety Team had adequate staffing to cope with demand, reference was made to a recent inspection which had taken place where the inspector had been contracted from London, the Head of Environmental Services confirmed that there had been a period where a contractor had been in post however this contract had finished December 2017, she also advised that a review of staffing levels was currently being undertaken.

RESOLVED :

(1) That the Committee support the aims and objectives of the Service Plan

(2) That approval be given to adopt the Food Service Plan for 2018/19.

8 BULKY WASTE SERVICE CHARGES

The Committee considered the Head of Environmental Services report which sought Member approval for the revised charging structure for the Bulky Waster Service and that it be recommended to Full Council for formal approval.

The Head of Environmental Services advised that the report identified 3 options for the future approach to charging for the service as follows :-

- Option 1: Continue the current approach

Continuing with the current projected annual increases in the manner in which they have been implemented over the past three financial years would result in an increasing funding gap between the cost of the service and the fees received for the use of the service. Based on a similar uptake and an increase in costs of 9%, as suggested by the budgetary uplift forecast of GYBS, this would leave the council with a deficit of around £15,000 per annum.

This approach minimises any negative financial impact on residents and will provide residents with a lower costing service to other neighbouring districts

- Option 2: Make the service cost neutral

This would require an increase in the current charges to enable the service to operate without requiring an increase in the numbers of collections required to breakeven or have a detrimental impact on other parts of the GYBS budget. The annual increase in fees would then be proportionate to the cost of the service.

This approach brings the service charges in line with other neighbouring districts. The council runs the risk of the increased charges increasing the number of items being fly-tipped. The council could introduce a discount for those residents in receipt of benefits such as Universal Credit, council tax, pension credit or housing benefit. This would mean that the cost of the service would have to be increased to a higher rate to negate the reduction in income received from those entitled to a discount.

- Option 3: Make the service cost neutral (staggered approach)

This will require increasing the cost of the service so that it is cost neutral to the council as outlined in Option 2, but staggering the increase in charges over a two-year period. This is likely to make the process more palatable to the public, but would result in a continued loss of revenue to the council for an additional year.

A change in the charging structure to up to three items for a set fee would help to set a base charge which would enable the council to cover costs. This is the preferred option of 6 of the 8 local authorities whose charges were considered as part of this paper.

By simplifying the charging structure to a 2 tier system, this should also help to manage the costs as larger collections do have an additional cost to the service as it requires more unloading stops to be added, increasing the time taken to deliver the service and also the distance travelled over a collection day

It was reported that all options would require an update on the Council's web pages to highlight the other options to disposal of good condition unwanted items before the option of the bulky waste collection.

Some concern was raised in relation to the number of residents that struggle to pay for collections at the current price, therefore it was felt that an increase would only cause further distress, Councillor Wainwright stated that in his opinion the review seemed premature in light of the current review of GYB Services, he also sought clarification as to why no income was received from the recycling of white goods the Head of environmental Services advised that this matter would be looked into.

Reference was made to HMO properties within the Borough and concern was raised in relation to the management of these properties in light of the amounts of rubbish left outside of the properties and the cost to the Council, although the Chairman pointed out that rubbish can only be removed if outside the property grounds as operators are not allowed to remove items from public property. The Strategic Director advised that work was currently being undertaken with Landlords and residents.

A suggestion was made that the report be deferred and brought back to the Committee once questions raised in respect of the income of white goods recycling.

RESOLVED :

That this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Environment Committee.

9 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-18 FOR ENVIRONMENT

The Committee considered the Head of Environmental Services report which provided Members with details of the Environment element of the annual performance report for 2017/18 which along with elements from other service committees makes up the annual performance report for 2017/18 which is on the agenda for approval by Policy & Resources Committee on 24 July 2018.

RESOLVED :

That the Committee note the Environment element of the annual performance report 2017/18.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be discussed at the meeting.

11 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED :

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act."

12 MINUTES

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 19:20