



Environment Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 25 November 2021 at 18:30

Present:

Councillor Wells (in the Chair); Councillors Bensly, Bird, Candon, P Carpenter, Fairhead, D Hammond, P Hammond, Robinson-Payne, Talbot, Thompson, Waters-Bunn and B Wright.

Also in attendance at the above meeting were:

Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mr C Silverwood (Director of Operational Services), Mr J Wilson (Head of Environmental Services), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property and Asset Management), Mr J Holder (Waste Collection Manager) & Mrs T Bunn (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Annison (sub Councillor Candon) and Cameron (sub Councillor P Hammond).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 29 September were agreed by assent.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the forward plan.

Councillor P Carpenter requested that an item was added to the forward plan in respect of a presentation by Water Resources East and Broadland Futures Initiative.

Agreed

5 AIR QUALITY REPORT 2020

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Services which summarised the report contents.

He reminded members that this report was in respect of 2019 and the more up to date 2020 report is in the process of being finalised once the consultation process has been completed.

Councillor Wells commented that the report contents showed a positive trend and asked if there was any data which could identify the cause of this. The Head of Environmental Services advised that this was a slow process and it could be due to improvement in engine emissions but currently it is not clear.

Members discussed the timeframe in respect of receiving the 2020 data, Councillor Waters-Bunn noted that this is duplicate information which has been seen before and she is keen to see the new information in respect of her ward as the levels have been high. Members asked that the 2020 figures are presented to Committee as soon as the work is completed as it will be interesting to see the impact of the lockdown on the air quality particularly with reference to areas which have traditionally had higher counts due to traffic pollution.

Councillor Carpenter asked for clarification and context in respect of the mention of removal of unnecessary street lights. This will be provided by the Head of Environmental Services.

Councillor P Hammond asked for information in respect of cross referencing the monitoring undertaken in respect of traffic movement and the impact on air quality. The Head of Environmental Service advised that the County Council undertake the data counts in respect of traffic volumes and he would update Members on how this information is fed into the Air Quality report data.

RESOLVED

To note the Air Quality Status Report and its contents.

Agreed

6 BEACH CLEANSING AND MARRAM GRASS REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the Beach Cleansing and Marram Grass report from the Head of Environmental Services. The report described the options for the future management of the beach as a tourist beach and to prevent the advance

of the marram grass and other flora and dunes.

Councillor Wells asked how confident officers are that additional resources will not be required to undertake this type of beach management. The Head of Environmental Services explained that there is budget currently reserved for this work and following the trial the costs may be higher in year 1 but future years costs would be limited. There may, however, be a requirement for a capital investment in respect of improvements to the rake currently used.

Councillor Waters-Bunn said that she was delighted that this work was going to be undertaken and particularly referred to the orange grass that had appeared on the beach at the north of the Britannia Pier which is a type of red fescue grass.

Councillor Bird thanked the Head of Environmental Services for this report and advised that his colleagues on the Tourist Board would be very pleased with this constructive approach and the designation of a tourist beach.

RESOLVED

That Members

- Agree that the Central beach be managed as a tourist beach and measures are used to remove grass growth on an annual basis.
- Agree that the North Beach from Britannia Pier to the Northern end of the Euston road car park is designated a tourist beach and the ingress of the Marram and other grass is managed on an annual basis.

Agreed

7 PROJECT FACET

The Committee received a presentation and report by the Strategic Director updating them on the EU Interreg 2Seas Project FACET.

The Committee were advised that Great Yarmouth Borough Council were the only Council in Norfolk to respond to this and had therefore received the full benefit. The project is underwritten by the UK Government and runs until 31 March 2023.

The Strategic Director briefed Committee on the four pilot projects and their objectives and locations. She advised that there were challenging targets but there was enthusiastic support from local tourism businesses.

The Committee discussed options moving forward to expand implementation to other areas of the Borough and thanked officers for the work undertaken to date.

Councillor Carpenter noted that Caister was not mentioned in the report as a busy holiday destination. The Strategic Director advised that there were businesses in Caister who were involved in this project.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Committee notes the contents of this report and endorses the continued development of this project.

Agreed

8 HOUSEHOLD WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION REVIEW UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update in respect of the Household Waste Review by the Director of Operational Services.

The implementation of the review had been successful with the new routes going live on 18 October, the crews had actively fed back any issues observed and lessons learned are being implemented. The team are now progressing to Phase 2.

The Committee thanked the team for this successful smooth transition and for the information provided to Councillors in advance of the implementation which had been very useful in supporting residents with any questions.

9 DEDICATION PLAQUES POLICY

Environment Committee received a report from the Head of Property and Asset Management detailing a new policy proposal in relation to dedication plaques. The Policy also identified the proposal for a vase facility to be added to benches in the Gorleston Seafront location. This is a new policy, designed to give clarity and remove the current confusion around items being left on or near benches.

The Committee discussed details in respect of the posy vase and the current issues experienced which this policy is designed to resolve.

RESOLVED

- To approve the policy for dedication plaques and vase provision in the borough.
- To agree the new fee of £70 for the provision of a dedication vase. This fee and charge to form part of the annual fees and charges policy moving forward.

Agreed

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10 PLAYGROUND AND OPEN SPACE AUDIT - UPDATE

The Committee received an update report in advance of the Playground and Open Space Audit which will be presented in full in January 2022.

Councillors were reminded that this was a strategic review of playgrounds and open spaces, it had not impacted on repairs and maintenance which is continuing as usual.

As part of the next steps of this process all Councillors will receive a printed pack for review which will contain detail of the playgrounds and open spaces in their ward and will be asked to provide feedback on the accuracy and any omissions they are aware of. The collated data will form part of the full report.

Councillor Wells asked for a breakdown of the ownership of the play areas, the Head of Property and Asset Management advised that a list will be circulated to Committee members.

The Committee discussed the issues currently being experienced in respect of sourcing spares for equipment and the consequential delays in repairs. They suggested that procurement should be sought in the UK wherever possible to try to prevent these issues impacting in the future.

Councillor Waters-Bunn thanked the Head of Property and Asset Management for this report and particularly drew attention to the requirements for accessible equipment, as provided at Beaconsfield where there is a roundabout which has wheelchair access.

The Committee also discussed the options for play spaces which do not incur significant cost for repairs and upkeep, such as five a side football areas and a move from mechanical to more natural play schemes.

Councillor P Hammond raised a question in respect of the use and repair requirements in respect of the Tennis Courts. The Head of Property and Asset Management advised that these would be included in the Play Pitch Strategy which is not part of this report. The majority of the MUGA will be discussed in the Play Pitch Strategy, only two are included in this report and details of which ones these are will be circulated.

The Committee asked the Strategic Director that the Play Pitch Strategy be reported to Environment Committee rather than to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee as this would align with the Playground and Open Space Audit report.

RESOLVED

To note the update report with a view to considering options on receipt of the full audit in January 2022.

Agreed.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no other matters of business to be discussed.

The meeting ended at: 20:50