



Environment Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 19 July 2022 at 18:30

PRESENT:-

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

Councillor Jeal attended as a substitute for Councillor Martin.

Councillor P Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Cameron.

Councillor A Wright attended as a Ward Councillor for item 7.

Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mr R Goodliffe (Coastal Manager, Coastal Partnership East), Mr C Bye (Senior Advisor, Coastal Partnership East), Mr D Zimmerling (IT Support) & Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cameron & Martin and James Wilson (Head of Environment & Sustainability).

Councillor Jeal attended the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Martin and Councillor P Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Candon).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jeal declared a personal interest in item 7, South Denes Sea Wall. However, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, was allowed to both speak and vote on the item.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022 were confirmed with an amendment that Councillor Fairhead had not attended the meeting but had sent her apologies and Councillor Jeal had attended the meeting as her substitute.

4 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Councillor Talbot asked for confirmation as to whether the reminder recycling leaflet had been printed and distributed to remind householders what could be and could not be recycled. The Strategic Director to take away and provide a response.

(ii) The Chairman reported that the smoking of cannabis in homes in and around the town centre had been highlighted at the last meeting and a joint partnership initiative with Norfolk Police would be undertaken to combat this issue. The Strategic Director reported that an officer meeting would take place on 22 July 2022 to discuss the scope and terms of reference of this group and a report would be presented to Committee in September 2022.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

(i) Playgrounds.

Councillor Robinson-Payne requested an update on Playgrounds as Members were unaware of what was happening to the play areas in their wards. The Strategic Director informed the Committee that a report would be presented to Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee in September 2022 and members of this committee would be invited to attend. The Chairman reported that he shared the committee's concerns but playgrounds now came under the remit of the H & N Committee. Councillor Robinson-Payne questioned whether the reporting of playgrounds to this committee, as opposed to H & N, should be at the discretion of the Chairman. The Strategic Director reported that Environment committee had set the base line for this piece of work but it was now over to H & N to develop and approve it.

Councillor Waters-Bunn informed the committee that this committee was responsible for the open spaces in the borough but the play aspect had been taken away and given to H & N.

Jane Beck informed the Committee that an update on open spaces and play had been taken to H & N last week with a report due in September 2022.

The Chairman reported that he would contact the Monitoring Officer for confirmation

of this issue.

(ii) Councillor Fairhead requested that a link be made between the two Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Committee to allow Members who sat on the IDB to provide feedback to the committee. The Chairman agreed that this be added to the Forward Plan on the proviso that both IDB reported back at the same meeting.

(iii) Councillor Waters-Bunn requested an update on Trees for Cities and the tree planting undertaken by GYBS as it had been already agreed that it be added to the Forward Plan.

6 GREAT YARMOUTH SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director.

The Strategic Director reported that Members of the Environment Committee took part in an action planning workshop held on 28 April 2022. Subsequently to that, a series of twelve sustainability workshops were held involving all council staff. This took place on 19 & 20 May 2022 as part of the council's staff conference. Feedback received has informed the development of the Action Plan provided in Appendix 1. This initial plan, for three years, is designed to help the council, its partners organisations, suppliers and communities to galvanise resource and efforts to support the borough to become more sustainable.

The action, projects and initiatives contained in the Action Plan have been prioritised across the three years of the Plan to ensure it is deliverable in a timely manner but is also realistic. Some of the inter-dependencies for example, impact its delivery including the wider work being undertaken by the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, Norfolk County Council and New Anglia LEP. It is proposed that the Action Plan is kept as a live document and updated as each project/action is progressed and reported back to this Committee 6 monthly.

The Committee has already supported the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer to co-ordinate and support delivery of this Action Plan. The 3-year Action Plan indicates which actions/projects can be undertaken within existing resources, and which may be dependent upon other funding streams being made available. This includes opportunities to seek external funding.

Councillor P Carpenter referred to paragraph 8.6 of the Action Plan and requested that all Members have more input and/or engagement as they could be important in driving the message forwards. The Strategic Director agreed that the importance of Member involvement would be included and highlighted in the Action Plan covering report.

Councillor Waters-Bunn reported that importance of Member involvement in the Nature Challenge and Waste Challenge as Ward Members were the first port of call for the public in these areas and Members were often unaware of so much of what happens in the town which was instigated by the Council and to be pre-warned is to be prepared.

Councillor D Hammond reported that it was vital to get the residents on board with this journey to help us to improve the borough and for residents to take pride in where they lived and worked.

The Strategic Director reported that once the Climate Change Officer was in post, that a full marketing campaign would be launched, the Sustainability Forum would be strengthened to be engrained within everything the Council did and more Member engagement would be sought.

Councillor Annison reported that he fully endorsed the strategy and highlighted that social media would play a vital role in its success.

Councillor Talbot highlighted that Members had still not received their reusable cups and that the sustainability message must be got across to young children at school so they grew up accepting it and practising it as the norm. The Strategic Director reported that this matter had been chased and Members would receive their cups shortly.

Councillor P Hammond asked if the Council could collect and compost the grass cuttings which would provide an additional revenue stream to the Council if the compost was then sold on to local residents to use in their gardens. The Strategic Director reported that no composting took place but that tree bark was mulched. This activity would need to be licensed but she would request that the new LATco look at this suggestion further. The Strategic Director reported that she would prefer to encourage home composting.

Councillor Waters-Bunn informed the committee that GYBS used a composting site at Bure Park. Councillor Waters-Bunn asked why it was proving difficult to recruit a Climate Change Officer. The Strategic Director reported that the advert had resulted in 3 applicants, 2 were short-listed for interview, 1 of these subsequently withdrew and the remaining interviewee did not meet the Council's needs.

RESOLVED:-

That Environment Committee : -

- (a) Agrees the Action Plan for 2022-2025 as set-out in Appendix 1; and
- (b) Recommends to Council the adoption of the Great Yarmouth Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.

7 SOUTH DENES SEA WALL

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

The Senior Coastal Advisor gave a presentation to Committee.

The Senior Coastal Advisor gave an overview of the project and reported that following salient areas as follows:-

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the high-level technical and economic assessment which has been completed for the deteriorating sea wall frontage at South Denes, Great Yarmouth. The objective of the report is to investigate options for maintaining the 'hold-the-line' policy. High-level coastal management options have been compared against agreed criteria to identify a preferred option. A

Partnership Funding Calculator has been used to determine the high-level maximum eligible grant in aid funding for the preferred option. The next steps have been identified to move the preferred option forward to the detailed economic justification and design stages.

Councillor Jeal reported that the degradation of the seawall was the result of Peelports tarmacking up to the seawall over the top of sand and they should be asked to contribute to the remedial works. Councillor Robinson-Payne agreed with Councillor Jeal. The Senior Coastal Advisor informed the Committee that the main cause of the failure was the quick succession of 3 storms which had generated wave damage in that area combined with the weight of material behind the wall. Councillor Jeal reported that the Council should aim for funding to undertake the 400m scheme if at all possible.

Councillor Jeal questioned why Peelports had been able to erect a security fence on top of our seawall which was not in their possession. The Head of Property & Asset Management informed the committee that this is being investigated.

Councillor Robinson-Payne asked why Peelports had tarmacked the area when the land did not belong to them. The Head of Property & Asset Management informed the committee that Peelports had a long lease on the land and had only tarmacked 3 metres back from the seawall.

Councillor Fairhead asked for clarification as to the proposed size of the boulders to be used in the project.

Councillor P Hammond suggested that the sea wall should be raised as part of this project to future proof if for the predicted 1 in 200 storm event.

Councillor P Carpenter endorsed Councillor Jeal's suggestion that the Council should try and secure funding for the 400m of coastal protection as opposed to 200m and asked what the timescale for completion was. The Senior Coastal Advisor reported that the indicative timeline, if funding was secured, was to start on site in 2024. The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that this will depend on availability of funding.

Councillor Waters-Bunn asked for confirmation as to where exactly the rock would be placed. The Senior Coastal Advisor informed her that it would be placed on the front of the existing sea wall at the base.

Councillor Bird reported that this was disappointing news as there used to be a very good public beach at the Harbours Mouth and he would hate this project to result in what had happened at Lowestoft; a pile of rocks covered in green, slimy, foul smelling algae. Councillor Bird asked if rocks could be put at the bottom of the bases of the groynes to provide additional protection. The Coastal Advisory Manager reported that there would not be enough funds to undertake both schemes.

The Head of Property & Asset Management informed the Committee that the Council would approach private businesses in the area, for example, the Power Station, to see if they were willing to add to the funding pot to protect their assets.

Councillor Bensly reported that he fully supported the scheme but was jealous that this scheme might be delivered before the Hemsby coastal protection scheme.

Councillor Talbot asked what the Council was doing in the interim period to protect the seawall as 2024 was a long way away. The Senior Coastal Advisor reported that remedial works had been undertaken and the wall was being monitored.

Councillor A Wright was concerned that the proposed area of seawall was located in the Enterprise Zone and heavy engineering works might damage the area as it was built on a sand spit. Remedial works could further undermine the integrity of the seawall leading to more trouble and suggested that the area needed piling. Marram grass on the sand dunes stretching from the Pleasure Beach to the Outer Harbour provided a natural sea defence.

Councillor Wright asked whether any funding for the Enterprise Zone could be utilised as part of this project to fund the 400m proposal. The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that all funding avenues would be explored during the next phase of the project which included putting together a robust business case and considering Pot B funding opportunities.

RESOLVED:-

That the Environment Committee :-

1. Notes progress on this work to date.
2. Approves that the Head of Property and Asset Management procures under delegated powers using funds from the existing Coast Protection Reserves Budget, the production of an outline business case and other necessary preconstruction assessments such as those outlined below to support an anticipated submission for capital funding from the Environment Agency for construction of a rock revetment.
 - a. detailed condition survey of the existing sea wall at South Denes,
 - b. detailed economic assessment of the potential impact of coastal flood inundation and coastal erosion related to the deteriorating sea wall frontage at South Denes
 - c. economic review of future construction, operation and maintenance costs of the proposed rock revetment, within the context of inflationary pressures facing the wider economy under present economic conditions.
 - d. scoping and screening of environmental designations for the proposed rock revetment scheme, to inform the requirement for environmental impact assessment and consents as deemed necessary; and
3. Approves that Great Yarmouth Borough Council utilises the local government SCAPE framework to procure the production of the outline business case and necessary supporting pre-construction activities.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Councillor Waters-Bunn asked that, in future, the agenda goes out on time, i.e. five working days prior to the meeting to enable Members to have enough time to read the agenda pack and prepare for the meeting. The Democratic Services Officer apologised to Members.

(ii) Councillor D Hammond requested that all the hard work carried out by GYBS staff members who emptied bins in and around the borough to be recognised. The Chairman agreed that a letter would be sent from the Environment Committee thanking the GYBS staff for all their hard work which was much appreciated.

(iii) Councillor P Carpenter asked that more fans and jugs of iced cold water be provided for Members at all future Committee meetings during a heat wave. The Council had a duty of care to employees of the Council and this should be extended to Members.

(iv) Councillor Talbot asked if the requested letter regarding the upkeep of Vauxhall Bridge had been sent to Sustrans. The Chairman reported that he had spoken to Councillor Candon, Chairman of Economic Development Committee, and a joint letter would be sent, signed by both Chairmen, in the next few days.

The meeting ended at: TBC