

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth

Held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom at 9.30 am on Wednesday 23rd February 2022

Present:-

Members

Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair)
Councillor Dez Dell

Councillor Jennie Bone
Councillor Anne Lee

Also in attendance

George Candler	Executive Director, Place and Economy
Catherine Clooney	Team Leader Environmental Protection
Esme Cushing	Principal Transport Planner
Rob Harbour	Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration
Greg Haynes	Climate Change Officer
Graeme Kane	Assistant Director of Highways and Waste
Councillor Graham Lawman	North Northamptonshire Council
Carol Mundy	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Max Nancarrow	Principal Air Quality Consultant
Amy Plank	Interim Strategic Lead for Private Sector Housing
Iain Smith	Assistant Director of Regulatory Services
Raj Sohal	Democratic Services Officer

34 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Allebone and Jan O'Hara.

35 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

36 Minutes from Meeting held on 19 January 2022

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

37 Air Quality - Progress Update

The EAP considered a report by the Interim Strategic Lead for Private Sector Housing, which provided a position statement regarding air quality in North Northamptonshire, recommendations arising from the AECOM external review and Public Health funding.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried how many other local authorities measured particulate matter.
- Members queried how much more vulnerable children were to poor air quality and whether additional monitoring was required around school areas.
- Members queried how expensive automatic continuous monitoring was.
- Members queried when the repositioning of diffusion tubes would be carried out in Corby.
- Members queried whether there existed a historical correlation between a reduced green bin collection service and an increase in local pollution, due to residents burning waste.
- One member supported the recommendation, by the local authority, to work in partnership with Public Health England and emphasised the significance of continuing to monitor air quality.

In response, the Principal Air Quality Consultant clarified that:

- Not many local authorities measured particulate matter as this was usually centrally funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Measuring air quality through diffusion tubes was often easier and more cost effective.
- Children were more vulnerable to poor air quality as their lungs were still developing – causes of medical conditions such as childhood asthma had been linked to air pollution. Other local authorities had carried out additional monitoring around schools to investigate air quality in these areas.
- Automatic continuous monitoring was considerably more expensive than diffusion tubes. Continuous monitoring sites costed around £30-40k to establish, with considerably high running costs. These sites were often also difficult to install however, they could provide a higher resolution of data.

The Interim Strategic Lead for Private Sector Housing clarified that:

- Repositioning diffusion tubes in Corby would be a considerable piece of work, as the last time this had been done was in 2017. Since 2017, the locations of tubes had been reviewed annually. The local authority would also consider installing more diffusion tubes in Corby in the imminent future.
- It was possible that with reduced collections, a greater number of households would burn waste. The local authority hoped that residents would adopt more pragmatic approaches for waste disposal.
- The local authority consulted Public Health England annually, regarding the monitoring of air quality across North Northamptonshire.

RESOLVED that: The EAP noted the report.

The EAP considered a presentation by the Principal Transport Planner, which provided an update regarding the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried what assistance had been provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) in formulating the LCWIPs and questioned what commitment the local authority had received from the DfT regarding continued support.
- Members queried whether there was an end date for the commonplace consultation, running in Kettering.
- Members queried whether there would be scope for working with developers, to construct walking and cycling infrastructure in new housing developments.
- Members requested information concerning timescales for establishing LCWIPs across areas of wider North Northamptonshire, such as Higham Ferrers and Rushden.

In response, the Principal Transport Planner clarified that:

- The DfT had provided strategic advice to the local authority, in line with guidance, as the LCWIP process was relatively new to most local authorities. North Northamptonshire Council would be more reliant on the DfT for the future implementation of routes and capital funding.
- There was no end date for the commonplace consultation in Kettering, as this was an ongoing piece of work.
- The local authority would work with housing developers to ensure that they would be compliant with schemes, to fit into the walking and cycling network across North Northamptonshire.

The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste clarified that:

- The local authority did not yet have timescales for implementing LCWIPs in additional areas, as the Highways and Waste service continued to seek to fill resource gaps. Nevertheless, Officers sought to achieve progress as quickly as possible and considered additional work around LCWIPs as a key priority.

RESOLVED that: The EAP noted the report.

39 Carbon Literacy Training (verbal update)

The EAP considered a verbal update by the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration, regarding the procurement of carbon literacy training, for an initial cohort comprised of elected members and senior management. Following this initial programme of training, Officers would then seek to establish a mechanism to enable training to be cascaded across the organisation.

The Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration clarified that:

- The procurement process for training was concluded in January 2022, with the organisation 'Speak Carbon' appointed as training providers for the carbon literacy training.
- Training would be provided on the 28th March and the 30th March 2022. There would be 6 training sessions, covering a total of 128 participants (78 members and 50 senior managers, across key service areas). There would be potential opportunities for further training dates to be identified.

Members expressed support for the local authority's commitment to provide carbon literacy training.

RESOLVED that: The EAP noted the report.

40 Update on Carbon Management (verbal update)

The EAP considered a verbal update by the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration, regarding the local authority's programme of work around carbon reduction and validation of the calculation of its carbon footprint.

Following a procurement exercise, the Council did not receive any bids from external providers, for the work concerning carbon management.

Officers had considered feedback from suppliers following this procurement process and sought to adjust its request, by dividing work into more focused areas.

RESOLVED that: The EAP noted the report.

41 Close of Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday 16th March at 9:30am.