

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

Held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday 22nd November, 2022 as a Remote Meeting via Zoom

### Present:-

#### Members

Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair)

Councillor Tim Allebone

Councillor Jennie Bone

Councillor Dez Dell

Councillor Jan O'Hara

Councillor Lyn Buckingham

Councillor Kevin Watt

#### Officers

George Candler

Greg Haynes

Carol Mundy

Iain Smith

Raj Sohal

Jonathan Waterworth

Executive Director – Place and Economy

Climate Change Officer

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Assistant Director – Regulatory Services

Democratic Services Officer

Assistant Director – Assets and Environment

Also in attendance – Councillor Graham Lawman

### 13 **Apologies for Absence**

None received.

### 14 **Members' Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

### 15 **Minutes from Meeting held on 26 October 2022**

#### **RESOLVED that:**

The minutes from the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October were approved as a correct record.

### 16 **Carbon Management Plan - to follow**

The Panel considered a report by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, which outlined North Northamptonshire Council's Carbon Management Plan.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried how Officers viewed the Council's Planning Committees and local Eco Hubs feeding into the Carbon Management Plan.
- Members queried whether community energy factored into the district energy schemes.

- Members queried how the Carbon Management Plan would influence the Local Authority's climate funding of £1M, for the next three years.
- One member emphasised the significance of promoting residents' behaviour change to achieve carbon reduction, as the most cost-effective measure of the plan.
- One member expressed concern that alternative power for HGV vehicles should not be prioritised within the plan, as technology in this sector would likely continue to advance at a fast rate and a move to hydrogen power would commit the Local Authority to this energy source.
- One member acknowledged the efficiency of vegetable fuel in reducing emissions by 80% as an encouraging development, despite its expensive cost.

In response, The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment clarified that:

- He imagined that several of the proposals outlined in the plan would require planning consent and Officers would maintain a close working relationship with planners. The plan would continue to evolve and develop.
- The community energy aspect would be dependent on who would have control over the energy bill. Other than this, the wider Council climate strategy would not factor in the community energy schemes.
- Council funding was viewed as 'seed funding', to determine where capital could be most effectively invested to achieve the greatest possible reduction in carbon. A number of schemes would be supported by this funding - the plan would be utilised to determine which schemes would take priority.
- It would be difficult to predict the evolution of technology to power HGV vehicles. The opportunity existed for the Local Authority to pilot new technology, to reduce emissions.

**RESOLVED that:**

The report be noted.

**17 Asset Disposal Policy**

The Panel considered a report by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, which outlined North Northamptonshire Council's Asset Disposal Policy.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member noted that in the past, Asset Management Groups had been established to look at Council assets. They suggested that the future disposal of assets should again be brought to elected members for consultation.
- One member queried whether the policy would also apply to Council allotments.

- One member queried whether it might be beneficial for Council community centres to be designated and registered as assets of community value.

In response, The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment clarified that:

- This policy would not allow for a 'fire sale' of assets but was more concerned with ensuring that Council assets were value for money and utilised appropriately.
- The list provided in the report covered buildings that were general fund assets. Business cases would form part of the review process for disposing of such assets. While the Council May received expressions of interest for assets from commercial operators, it would carry out an open-market review process to determine best value.
- The Asset Disposal Policy would include allotments, as part of the general fund. Allotments were generally Town and Parish Council functions and most in North Northamptonshire were in the process of being transferred to these authorities.
- The asset of community value process was different to that of asset disposal.

**RESOLVED that:**

The report be noted.

**18 Air Quality Annual Status Report 2022**

The Panel considered a report by The Assistant Director of Regulatory Services, which outlined the Air Quality Annual Status Report.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member suggested that local air quality could not be improved if incineration plants operated within North Northamptonshire.
- Members requested further information concerning factors which influenced air quality and queried why areas with the poorest air quality were affected in such a way.
- Members expressed encouragement at the recognition within the plan that air quality had improved during the COVID-19 Pandemic, due to reduced travel, and that the Local Authority should provide an environment for local residents which reduced reliance upon car travel.
- Members queried how many air quality offices were employed by the Local Authority.

In response, The Assistant Director of Regulatory Services clarified that:

- The location with the poorest air quality was in Rothwell. Nevertheless, this remained 6.4 micrograms per metre cubed below the annual mean air quality objective for North Northamptonshire. This was largely due to increased traffic

congestion in the area. Officers would continue to work in partnership with highways colleagues to implement measures to reduce levels of traffic congestion in such areas.

- Funding had been secured to employ two air quality project officers, who would most likely be recruited and in-post before the beginning of the next financial year.

**RESOLVED that:**

The report be noted.

**19 Close of Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Climate Change, Environment & Growth Executive Advisory Panel would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 9:30am.