

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth
Held at 2.00 pm on Thursday 4th August, 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

Michael Bailey	Waste Management Officer
George Candler	Executive Director – Place and Economy
Liam Faulkner	Senior Works Supervisor
David Garrett	Head of Knowledge Transfer – Garden Organic
Greg Haynes	Climate Change Officer
Graeme Kane	Assistant Director – Highways and Waste
Carol Mundy	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Brian Ogden	Senior Tree and Landscape Officer
Raj Sohal	Democratic Services Officer
Jonathan Waterworth	Assistant Director – Assets and Environment

Also in attendance – North Northamptonshire Councillors:

Councillor Matt Binley
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury
Councillor Emily Fedorowycz
Councillor Jim Hakewill
Councillor Clive Hallam
Councillor Barbara Jenney
Councillor Graham Lawman
Councillor Lora Lawman
Councillor Paul Marks
Councillor John McGhee
Councillor Russell Roberts
Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Chris Smith-Haynes
Councillor Malcolm Waters

68 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

69 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

70 Minutes from Meeting held on 11 July 2022

RESOLVED that:

The minutes from the meeting held on the 11th July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

71 Members' Awareness Session - Home Composting

The Panel, as well as wider elected members of North Northamptonshire Council, considered a presentation by The Head of Knowledge Transfer (Garden Organic), regarding home composting and ecological gardening.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

72 Tree Management and Care Policy

The Panel considered a report by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, which outlined the North Northamptonshire Tree Management and Care Policy.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members expressed desire to see an expanded planting policy, identifying areas of urban land for additional trees.
- One member expressed concern that the local authority's policy to plant one replacement tree, for every existing one removed, would not be adequate. The member requested that additional detail be provided regarding the size and ages of potential replacement trees and posited that a ratio of ten trees for every one removed should be implemented; since the smaller size of new trees would require a larger volume, to offset carbon emissions.
- Members queried how the local authority could encourage partnerships with land developers, planners and farmers to strengthen tree management.
- One member suggested that floors of woodlands should be well-maintained to prevent the likelihood of wildfires and also to encourage pollinators.
- Regarding the local authority's intention to seek compensation from any organisation responsible for significant damage to council-owned trees, members queried whether this enforcement action could also be applied to individuals.
- One member expressed concern around the removal of dead trees. The member explained that dead trees could be a hive for insect and wildlife activity and queried whether this policy could be adjusted.
- Members suggested that sufficient tree aftercare and the promotion of community engagement/awareness would be essential following planting.
- Members queried how many insurance claims the local authority received, in relation to trees damaging private property.

- One member expressed disappointment where healthy trees had been removed by the previous legacy authority in Corby. The member hoped North Northamptonshire Council would use this tree policy to do proper analysis in future for tree removal.
- Members emphasised the importance of merging the Tree Policy with planning policy, to preserve open areas for tree development.
- Members queried whether any consideration had been taken to inform members of the public in advance of when trees were due to be removed.

In response, the Senior Tree and Landscape Officer clarified that:

- Officers sought to explore expansion opportunities for tree-planting by identifying existing areas of Council-owned land for such activity, within financial reason. The local authority had also submitted an expression of interest for the Woodland Accelerator Fund, which looked to give grants to Councils to employ resource staff to deliver local tree-planting.
- The policy had outlined a one-to-one tree replacement ratio as Officers had felt this would be more realistic to deliver. Nevertheless, the local authority would maintain flexibility to plant the right trees in the right places.
- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy would be significant in encouraging biodiversity to re-establish itself in places and flourish further. This strategy would be supported through partnership-working with developers, planners, farmers etc.
- The policy would be amended to include individuals to be liable for compensation, when damaging trees.
- The local authority would not seek to remove any trees which did not require removal and desired to maintain standing timber where it would be beneficial. TP14 of the Tree Policy was structured to deal with street trees and trees in parks, where there was high public access.
- Officers would provide further detail regarding trees and insurance claims following the meeting. Damage to private property was an issue where trees had previously not been planted in the right locations.
- Planning Officers had looked at supplementary planning documents to support tree development. The implementation of another planning document would be explored, to look at the requirements for trees on new development sites. Other local authorities had adopted documents whereby if trees had been removed as part of development, there existed a standard for number and sizes of replacements.
- As part of The Environment Act, the government placed a requirement on local authorities to consult members of the public before removing street trees. As tree management plans were developed, Officers had carried out surveys of trees, to build a tree management database. The Senior Officer suggested that this management database could also potentially be made public.

RESOLVED that:

The report be approved.

73 Pollinator Strategy

The Panel considered a presentation by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, which outlined the North Northamptonshire Pollinator Strategy.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member posited that the Pollinator Strategy needed to be strengthened around biodiversity and that references to local waterways and their own ecosystems should also be included. The member also suggested that maintenance and littering prevention should be more closely looked at.
- Members queried whether a timeline had been established to reduce the use of pesticides and phase out blanket spraying.
- Members suggested that the local authority should explore greater public collaboration through partnership-working with voluntary groups, to allow them to carry out their own pollinator projects and empower members of the public to run such projects.

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

- The strategy was in place to focus on land management however, much of the local water management did not fall under the Council's responsibility. Nevertheless, the local authority would look at water management holistically as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, to address water pollution and maintenance issues.

The Senior Works Supervisor clarified that:

- North Northamptonshire Council had already begun to reduce its use of pesticides and blanket spraying, by adopting more sensitive approaches to weed spraying. The local authority had continued to work with subcontractors to carry out weed spraying and reduce use of pesticides.
- The local authority had also worked with volunteer groups and schools to create forest school areas and reuse trees, which were damaged during Storm Eunice, to be repurposed as natural play equipment.

RESOLVED that:

The report be approved.

74 Climate Impact Assessment

The Panel considered a presentation by the Climate Change Officer, which provided an update regarding the development and next steps of the North Northamptonshire Council Climate Impact Assessment.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member acknowledged that the Council's largest usage of Carbon Dioxide was for gas boilers in social housing and queried that preparations the local authority had put in place for air source and ground source heat pumps and insulation of properties.

In response, the Climate Change Officer clarified that:

- There had been challenges relating to the collection of Carbon Dioxide information, in sourcing and structuring data to inform the Carbon Management Plan. Technology for air and ground source heat pumps was costly and the local authority did not find itself in a funding position to request such resources.

The Executive Director of Place and Economy reassured the Panel that Officers had almost finalised the baseline figure concerning Carbon emission figures. Regarding Carbon emissions from social housing, The Executive Director explained that this formed a key strand of the Carbon Management Plan, which was being developed and would be brought back to future Panel meetings.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

75 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 31st August at 9:30am.