

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Sustainable Communities

Held at 9.30 am on Wednesday 1st March 2023 as a Remote Meeting via Zoom

Present:-

Members

Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair)
Councillor Tim Allebone
Councillor Dez Dell
Councillor Jan O'Hara
Councillor Kevin Watt

Officers

George Candler	Executive Director – Place and Economy
Graeme Kane	Assistant Director – Highways and Waste
Carol Mundy	Senior Democratic Services Officers
Elaine O'Leary	Chief Executive – Northamptonshire ACRE
Sean Silver	Groundwork Northamptonshire
Raj Sohal	Democratic Services Officer
Jonathan Waterworth	Assistant Director – Assets and Environment

Also in attendance – Councillor Anne Lee

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alison Dalziel. Councillor Anne Lee was in attendance, as a substitute.

2 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3 Terms of Reference and Scope of the EAP

The Executive Director of Place and Economy presented the proposed terms of reference for the Sustainable Communities EAP.

RESOLVED that: The terms of reference be approved.

4 North Northamptonshire Sustainable Food Network

The EAP considered a presentation by The Chief Executive of Northamptonshire Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), relating to the North Northamptonshire Sustainable Food Network.

During discussion, principal points were noted:

- One member emphasised the importance of encouraging North Northamptonshire residents to home-grow food. He suggested that this would also reduce the need for intensive farming.
- One member expressed concern regarding the decrease in local food self-sufficiency and attributed this to demand for out-of-season food.
- Members queried whether the provision of allotments would fall under the remit of ACRE.
- Members queried how the Council could support ACRE in its management of the North Northamptonshire Sustainable Food Network.

In response, The Chief Executive of Northamptonshire ACRE clarified that:

- The 'Leaf' organisation worked extensively with schools to educate young people around food production.
- Allotment provision did fall under the remit of ACRE and the Groundwork maintained interest in promoting local growing spaces but had not yet been resourced to explore this.
- It would be helpful if North Northamptonshire sustainability officers worked with ACRE as part of the steering group, to assist with linking in with the Council's wider sustainability strategy. ACRE also sought funding to employ a full-time project officer for the Sustainable Food Network.

RESOLVED that: The presentation be noted.

5 Carbon Management Plan

The EAP considered a report by The Assistant Director of Assets and Environment, relating to North Northamptonshire Council's Carbon Management Plan.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried whether new key performance indicators (KPIs) had been implemented against the Carbon Management Plan, since the 4th February.
- Members queried when procurement work would commence surrounding the plan.
- Members queried whether 'unnecessary assets' which were due to be removed from the plan would no longer be used by the local authority or simply no longer reported on.
- Members queried whether the 940 new trees proposed in the plan would be wits or standards, since whips would require significant aftercare.
- One member acknowledged the carbon sequestration of hedges and posited that they should also be referenced within the plan, despite the sometimes high cost of their maintenance.

- One member expressed concern that Methane produced by landfills had not been reported within the plan and queried why this had not been included.

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

- Additional KPIs had been implemented to manage and monitor the progress of the plan.
- Procurement work, around appointing contractors, would begin in April 2023.
- The removal of assets from the plan related to highway assets which were no longer be deemed to be necessary, such as excess lighting.
- The 940 new trees would be standards however, the authority would also plant thousands of wits, which would also feed into the reporting. The Council would also seek to secure funding for an additional 1,000 trees, through 'Treescape' funding.
- Carbon Dioxide 'equivalents' had been referenced within the reporting section of the plan. This included Methane. The Council sought to explore how Methane could be captured and sequestered/offset.

RESOLVED that: The report be noted.

6 Future provision of Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Waste Disposal (verbal update)

The EAP considered a verbal update by The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste, regarding the future provision of Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Waste Disposal.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- One member suggested that the local authority could involve local community groups to assist in repurposing/recycling waste.
- Members queried whether the Council had considered energy production from waste.

In response, The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste clarified that:

- The disposal contact already in place utilised energy from waste facilities to treat general household waste.

RESOLVED that: The verbal update be noted.

7 Sustainable Communities EAP Forward Plan

The Democratic Services Officer presented the Sustainable Communities EAP Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that: The forward plan be noted.

8 Close of Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Sustainable Communities EAP would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday 26th April at 9:30am.