

## **Executive Advisory Panel: Climate Change, Environment & Growth**

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 – 09:30am – Remote Meeting Via Zoom

### MINUTES

Attendees: Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair), Councillor Tim Allebone, Councillor Jennie Bone, Councillor Dez Dell, Councillor Anne Lee, Councillor Zoe McGhee, Councillor Elliot Prentice, George Candler, Councillor Emily Fedorowycz, Rob Harbour, Graeme Kane, Emma Robinson, Iain Smith, Raj Sohal, Jonathan Waterworth

#### **1. Apologies for non-attendance**

- Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillor Jan O'Hara.

#### **2. Members' Declarations of Interests**

- None received.

#### **3. Notification of requests to address the meeting**

- The Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) received a request from Councillor Emily Fedorowycz to address the meeting.
- In her address, Councillor Fedorowycz highlighted that:
  - It would be important for North Northamptonshire Council to consider its climate change strategy and action plan, and how the Executive would translate this plan into action.
  - This strategy would need to be well-researched and put into place as soon as possible.
  - Environmental priorities of the Executive should include banning the use of Glyphosate - a harmful pesticide which costs the authority around £80k per year, as well as a crackdown on unnecessary plant/tree removals.

**ACTION:** The Chair thanked Councillor Fedorowycz for her contribution to the meeting and assured her that the EAP would consider her suggestions when formulating its work plan.

#### **4. Approval of the Terms of Reference**

- The Chair invited George Candler (Executive Director, Place and Economy) to introduce the report, who highlighted that:
  - The EAP had been established as a body for inclusive decision-making and to provide guidance to the Executive on matters of climate change and the environment, in North Northamptonshire.
  - The rhythm of meetings should precede Executive meetings - monthly.
  - The EAP would allow for cross-party involvement and provide the opportunity to consult with the Executive on forthcoming matters, to reflect on advice – although, the EAP would have no formal decision-making power.
  - Meetings would be informal in nature, to stimulate healthy debate.
  - The EAP would not be subject to the full Local Government Act.
  - Within the terms of reference, potential areas of concern were listed, for the consideration of the EAP. Nevertheless, its remit would not be exclusive to these areas and the EAP could determine its own work plan.
- One Councillor acknowledged that when the EAP's action plan had been formulated, this work had benefitted from the strong subject knowledge of its officers. Therefore, the Councillor questioned whether these same officers would continue to work with the EAP, to assist on climate change and environmental matters? Rob Harbour (Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration) explained that these officers, who had previously worked with the EAP in formulating an action plan, had now left the employment of the authority. Therefore, it would be imperative for the authority to consider how these lost resources would be replaced, by recruiting new staff to drive the EAP's agenda forward.
- The Chair supported the continuation of virtual meetings, held via Zoom, for the EAP. She posited that by continuing to hold meetings virtually, this could serve as a way for the EAP to reduce its own carbon footprint, by not encouraging members to physically travel to meetings in-person. Nevertheless, the Chair acknowledged that, if necessary, future meetings could be attended in-person, to ensure greater productivity.

ACTION: The EAP agreed to amend the terms of reference, to allow the Chair to have discretion over whether future meetings would be held virtually or in-person.

#### **5. Overview of Place and Economy**

- The Chair invited George Candler to introduce the report, who highlighted that:
  - The four key functional areas across Place and Economy included: 1) Highways and Waste, 2) Growth and Regeneration, 3) Assets and Environment, 4) Regulatory Services.
  - The net budget for Place and Economy was £55.7M (19% of the overall Council budget).

- Strategic priorities to focus on included: *“enabling sustainable growth, enhancing the environment, connecting our communities and transforming the way we work.”*
- It would be crucial that work on matters concerning climate change, environment and growth would be led and driven by elected members, working in partnership with other key stakeholders.

ACTION: The EAP noted the report.

## **6. Key areas of focus of four service areas across Place and Economy**

- George Candler invited the four Assistant Directors in attendance to introduce information on each of their respective services; the first of which was Graeme Kane (Assistant Director of Highways and Waste), who highlighted that:

Highways and Waste managed a range of services, including:

- Highways maintenance
- Home to school transport
- Strategic transport planning
- Street-lighting
- Active travel
- Highways development management
- Recycling and waste collection
- Street cleaning
- Bulky waste collections
- Enviro-crime
- Disposal and household waste and recycling centres
- Closed landfills

Some Highways services would be hosted and delivered by West Northamptonshire Council across North Northamptonshire.

In turn, services such as disposal and household waste and recycling centres and closed landfills would be hosted by North Northamptonshire Council and delivered across the West also.

These services would eventually be disaggregated for each authority to deliver independently.

Key priorities for Highways and Waste in 2021/22 would include:

- Bus strategy (to go to the Executive on 22nd June)
- Strategy to tackle litter
- Highways procurement
- Future recycling services: Government Environment Bill
- Active travel and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

- The next Assistant Director to introduce their service to the EAP was Rob Harbour (Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration), who highlighted that:

Growth and Regeneration managed a range of services, including:

- Planning management
- Planning enforcement
- Planning policy
- Minerals and waste planning
- Street naming and numbering
- Growth and investment
- Regeneration
- Economic development
- Digital infrastructure
- Climate change
- Flood risk management

Key priorities for Growth and Regeneration in 2021/22 would include:

- Economic recovery framework
- Integrated growth strategy
- North Northants strategic plan
- Climate change strategy and action plan
- Central area growth deal
- Community renewal and levelling up funds
- Digital infrastructure

- The next Assistant Director to introduce their service was Jonathan Waterworth (Assistant Director of Assets and Environment), who highlighted that:

Assets and Environment managed a range of services, including:

- Facilities management
- Property estates management
- Energy management
- Capital projects (property)
- Fleet vehicles
- Grounds maintenance
- Parks and open spaces
- Country parks
- Car parks
- On-street parking
- Archives

Key priorities for the Assets and Environment in 2021/22 would include:

- Asset review and strategy
  - Accommodation strategy
  - Grounds maintenance and country parks
  - Car parking strategy
  - Fleet strategy, including electric vehicle charging
  - Investment strategy
- The next Assistant Director to introduce their service was Iain Smith (Assistant Director of Regulatory Services), who highlighted that:

Regulatory Services managed a range of services, including:

- Trading standards
- Emergency planning (hosted by NNC)
- Travellers United (hosted by NNC)
- Environmental health
- Licensing
- Bereavement services
- Building control
- Local land charges
- Business continuity planning

Key priorities for Regulatory Services in 2021/22 would include:

- Hire vehicle licensing policy
  - Emergency planning disaggregation
  - Regulatory services business support offer
  - Traveller unit review or policy and operation
  - Business continuity strategy and action plan
  - COVID response and recovery
- One Councillor expressed concern that climate change had been added to an already busy Growth and Regeneration portfolio with insufficient resources, as officers within this service had left employment of the authority. The Councillor stated that the climate change action plan and strategy could not be implemented without the proper funding and appropriate resources.
  - Regarding Graeme Kane's remarks concerning waste contracts, one Councillor suggested that it would be a great challenge for the authority to end its contracts around the same time, with Wellingborough's waste contract due to be the first to expire in March 2022. The Councillor also posited that central government should support local government with stricter legislation regarding fly tipping and other enviro-crime.

ACTION: The EAP noted the report.

## **7. Forward Plan**

- The Chair invited George Candler to introduce the report, who highlighted that the agenda items for the forthcoming meeting in July would include -
  - Strategy for litter (Highways and Waste)
  - Bus strategy action plan (Highways and Waste)
  - Climate change action plan - progress of activity (Growth and Regeneration)
  - Feedback from EAP (Place and Economy)
  - Delivery of updated forward plan
- The Chair again acknowledged Councillor Fedorowycz's earlier comments regarding the need to evaluate the use of Glyphosate in the county by NNC services; as neighbouring authorities, such as Cambridge, had already begun to phase out the commercial use of such pesticides. She concluded that it would be valuable for the EAP to explore advising the Executive on this matter.

ACTION: The EAP noted the report.

## **8. Next meeting date**

- The next meeting of the Climate Change, Environment and Growth Executive Advisory Panel would be held virtually, via Zoom, on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July at 09:30am.