

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

9.30 am on Wednesday 19th January 2022

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Present:-

Members

Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair)

Councillor Jennie Bone

Councillor Jan O'Hara

Councillor Tim Allebone

Councillor Dez Dell

Councillor Lyn Buckingham

Officers

George Candler

Rob Harbour

Greg Haynes

Carol Mundy

Raj Sohal

Chris Wragg

Executive Director of Place and Economy

Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration

Climate Change Officer

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Democratic Services Officer

Transportation and Development Manager

27 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Anne Lee (Councillor Lyn Buckingham was in attendance, as a substitute).

28 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.

29 Minutes from Meeting held on 8 December 2021

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2021 were approved as a correct record.

30 Discussion on key topics for 2022 to help develop the Forward Plan (Verbal)

The Executive Advisory Panel considered a verbal update from the Executive Director of Place and Economy, who outlined the terms of reference of the EAP and asked members for topics they would like to consider, within their remit, for the 2022 Forward Plan.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members considered areas they wished to explore in future meetings of the Climate Change, Environment and Growth EAP, including topics such as:

- Partnerships maintained by North Northamptonshire Council with external organisations, to protect open spaces and public access to green areas.
- Bus services, in remote areas, where older residents may depend on public transport.
- The assignment of the £1M climate change budget and how much of this amount would be allocated to recruit experts, for commissioning investigations.
- Recycling and waste contracts – to see how much waste was recycled across North Northamptonshire, the progress made by the local authority and the ‘direction of travel’.
- Flooding affecting North Northamptonshire and the authority’s planned response to these issues, including whether ‘reparian’ responsibilities should be enforced.
- The Council’s preparation for outcomes from government report, relating to the Environment Act 2001 and waterways.
- An update on the ARG and the Community Renewal Fund.
- How climate change/environmental principles tied into planning policy.
- Whether sufficient funding was made available for officers to produce conservation reports, to invest in bringing properties up to standard with ECPs.
- PFI streetlighting and whether the unitary authority would be taking ownership of all lighting across North Northamptonshire.

The Executive Director of Place and Economy assured members that officers would bring agenda items to future meetings, relating to the topics identified by the EAP, for the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

31 Outcomes from commissioned work

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration, which outlined the process of commissioning work and provided an update regarding where the authority was within the process of procurement.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members were pleased to see that a £1M budget had been allocated for climate change work. It was queried whether training referred to in the report

related to carbon literacy and when this programme would be rolled out to North Northamptonshire Councillors.

- Members queried whether the Carbon Management Plan was a living document, to be regularly updated by consultants.
- Members queried whether the Carbon Management Plan would have an impact on other directorates and if the EAP would possess the ability to set carbon targets for planning policy.

In response, the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration clarified that:

- Carbon literacy training would be subject to a separate piece of commissioned work, a clearer picture of which would be made available to officers once a provider could be procured. The deadline for bids from suppliers for this training would be the 21st January, with a cohort of 50 officers and all elected members. This programme would likely be rolled out in March 2022.
- The Carbon Management Plan would need to be regularly reviewed, as a living document. These reviews would be undertaken internally.
- Climate Change and carbon reduction would need to be taken seriously by the whole of North Northamptonshire Council and other areas would have parts to play in this work. Timelines and milestones would have to be set for achieving carbon reduction, to ultimately achieve this goal.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

32 Bus Strategy - progress update

The Panel considered a report by the Transportation and Development Manager, which outlined the bus strategy and features of the enhanced partnership, such as legal requirements of the consultation.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members expressed concern that the bus service could suffer if government funding was decreased. It was queried how operators would be able to afford new vehicles and how electric vehicles could be operated.
- One member highlighted issues within the bus service in Corby, concerning driver shortages and the rising cost of fuel. The member queried what could be done by the authority, within the boundaries of the enhanced partnership, to overcome these issues.
- Regarding CO2 emissions from car use, members posited that the authority needed to incentivise more people to use public transport. One member acknowledged a popular model, used successfully by other local authorities, to charge local businesses for more than 10 car parking spaces and reinvest this

money in local infrastructure. The member queried whether the implementation of such a model had been considered by North Northamptonshire Council.

In response, the Transportation and Development Manager clarified that:

- Bus operators could implement electric vehicles more easily, due to the fact that electric charging for buses was easier than for cars – as buses could be charged en masse at depots.
- Stagecoach was the largest bus operator in North Northamptonshire and anticipated a large number of people to join them and train as drivers. The most effective way to stabilise the network would be to encourage people to travel on buses again following the pandemic, which could be affected by a plethora of factors, including local residents continuing to work from home.
- Kickstart funding had been requested by the authority, to establish more bus routes. If bus routes had access to more residents, then a larger portion of the population would in turn use public transportation. Measures such as parking levies had not been considered by North Northamptonshire Council, since one of the key challenges had been the threat of businesses moving premises, if such a charge was to be introduced.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

33 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 23rd February at 9:30am.