

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Climate Change Environment & Growth
Held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom at 9.30 am on Wednesday 16th March 2022

Present:-

Members

Councillor Harriet Pentland (Chair)
Councillor Jennie Bone
Councillor Jan O'Hara

Councillor Tim Allebone
Councillor Dez Dell
Councillor Anne Lee

Officers

George Candler
Beth Gordon
Rob Harbour
Greg Haynes
Graeme Kane
Carol Mundy
Raj Sohal

Executive Director Place/Economy
Operations Manager
Assistant Director Growth/Regeneration
Climate Change Officer
Assistant Director Highways/Waste
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance – Councillor Graham Lawman

42 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

43 Members' Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

44 Minutes from Meeting held on 23 February 2022

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

45 Garden Waste - Process and Recycling Rates and Impact (to follow)

The EAP considered a presentation by the Operations Manager, which provided members with an update concerning garden waste collection services in North Northamptonshire. The presentation also outlined the objectives of the ongoing consultation, regarding garden waste collection, and the potential impacts of this consultation.

During discussion, members queried:

- How much influence the responses from the consultation would have on the authority's decision making, if it were to provide clear opinions of the majority of local residents?

- What the 'take-up rate' was in east Northamptonshire, regarding the collection of funds from the paid subscription garden waste collection service, and how this varied between seasons?
- whether the authority had considered to have an opt-in process for residents, regarding garden waste collection services
- Whether people with no gardens, such as those residing in flats, were allocated, or had access to, garden waste bins anyway?
- If garden waste collection was a legal obligation of the local authority, under the Environment Act?
- Whether the authority had considered to implement electric vehicles into the service, since current waste collection vehicles achieved a fuel economy of 5 to 8 miles per gallons?

In response, the Operations Manager clarified that:

- At the time of meeting, east Northamptonshire had 12,000 subscribers for its garden waste collection service. During the winter period, the amount of garden waste collected decreased significantly, in comparison to the spring and summer seasons. Green waste being placed in black waste bins was prohibited under the council's policies.
- To manage garden waste collection as an opt-in service would generate a huge amount of data, which would have to be processed and relayed to collection crews, who would most likely be collecting from all streets regardless.
- Residents with no garden access were not allocated waste bins. Although, in some instances, bins were provided for communal garden areas.
- The Environment Act required authorities to collect garden waste as a separate material. Therefore, North Northamptonshire council had this legal responsibility.
- Electric vehicles had been considered for implementation into the garden waste collection service however, the service covered a large area and concerns existed around the travel range of such vehicles. The capital cost of supporting electric vehicles would also be substantial. Nevertheless, North Northamptonshire council would continue to consider electric vehicles for future use, when feasible.

In response, the Executive Director of Place and Economy clarified that:

- The consultation would not be a direct vote but rather, an opportunity for the authority to consider the views of local residents, balanced against the financial cost of the service, when making decisions.
- The results of the consultation would be brought back to the Climate Change, Environment & Growth EAP before July 2022.

RESOLVED that:

The EAP noted the report.

46 Council Paper - 31st March (verbal update)

The EAP considered a verbal update by the Executive Director of Place and Economy regarding a report, which would be going to full council on 31st March. This report was drafted in response to North Northamptonshire's declaration of a climate and environmental emergency in July 2021 and its commitment to provide a progress update, concerning work being undertaken around carbon neutrality.

Agenda Item 6 – Bus Strategy Update (Additional Item)*

The EAP considered a presentation by the Team Leader for Transport Planning, which provided an update regarding the funding announcement of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, results of the Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Consultation and the continuation of the Bus Recovery Grant.

During discussion, members queried:

- What the capital cost of electric buses would be and if a full trial of electric buses was to be run, whether this would be carried out solely by private operators or if the local authority would also have to contribute financially towards this?

One member posited that with continued rising fuel costs, more residents would use bus services for local transport. The member also suggested that the authority could consider the use of hydrogen or methane powered buses in the future.

In response, the Team Leader for Transport Planning clarified that:

- Electric buses were significantly more expensive to purchase than diesel ones and also more costly to run and maintain. This was primarily due to the fact that it was unknown when the batteries of such electric vehicles would need to be replaced.

The executive member clarified that it was the operators' decision which buses to use and also that electric vehicles were better suited to urban routes.

47 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 Wednesday 27th April at 9:30am.