

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Tuesday, 27th February, 2024 at 4.30 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Collop (Chair), Bartrum, Bhondi, Bland, Bullen, Colwell (substitute for Ratcliffe), Devulapalli, Sandell and Ware.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:**

Councillor de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity and Climate Change

Councillor Rust – Portfolio Holder for People and Communities

Councillor Squire – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal

**OFFICERS:**

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director

Barry Brandford – Waste and Recycling Manager

Claire Wiggs – Ecology Officer

**BY INVITATION:**

Representatives from Freebridge Community Housing

Representatives from the RSPB

EC74: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barclay, Humphrey, Kunes and Ratcliffe.

EC75: **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EC76: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

EC77: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC78: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

**EC79: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

**EC80: UPDATE FROM FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING ON FUTURE PLANS IN RELATION TO DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube.](#)

Representatives from Freebridge Community Housing gave a presentation to the Panel, a copy of which is attached.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Colwell commented he was excited about the plans for Dairy Way as it was in his Ward, and he would like to be involved as required. He suggested consideration of a Dementia Trail for Dairy Way.

In response to a question from Councillor Colwell, it was explained that 50% of the Freebridge Housing Stock homes currently met energy efficiency standard B and C.

Representatives from Freebridge explained that they had additional support available for tenants such as winter warmer packs and details of the wider offers and initiatives were available upon request.

Councillor Bullen asked for further information on the improvements to vehicle systems and it was explained that a smart scheduling system to reduce journey times and group jobs together by location was being used.

Councillor Bullen referred to bat, bird and bee boxes and asked if these were used by Freebridge. Officers from Freebridge were certainly interested in this idea and agreed to liaise with Councillor Bullen.

Representatives from Freebridge Community Housing explained that they would be engaging with Stakeholders and carrying out consultation on the plans for Dairy Way. They were also keen to engage local Schools.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli, referred to retrofitting insulation and asked if Freebridge would consider retrofitting insulation to all homes in one go. It was explained that it was more efficient and less disruptive to tenants to complete one house at a time and there was a limited budget to carryout insulation throughout the stock, so the priority was on the worst performing homes first.

In response to a question, it was explained that for new builds, options such as rainwater harvesting could be looked at alongside available technology for dealing with surface water.

The Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, Councillor Rust, thanked Freebridge Community Housing for attending the meeting and looked forward to seeing more information and being involved in the plans for Dairy Way.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel noted the update.

EC81: **RSPB PRESENTATION ON EAST ATLANTIC FLYWAY UNESCO SHORTLISTING**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube.](#)

Councillor de Whalley, the Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity and Climate Change introduced the representatives from the RSPB.

Representatives from the RSPB gave a presentation to the Panel, a copy of which is attached.

The Chair thanked the RSPB for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bullen asked what the Borough Council could do to support the process. He was also concerned about the Wash Barrage proposals and the effect this could have on the World Heritage Site shortlisting. It was explained that the East Coast Flyway covered lots of Local Authority Areas and it was hoped that a declaration of support could be drawn up that organisations could sign up to. The RSPB were also optimistic that, because of the funding available, organisation contributions would be quite modest.

Councillor Colwell asked if the project could be at risk if affected by habitat destroyers such as the Wisbech Incinerator, Wash Barrier and Sewage Storm overflow. It was explained that the biggest threat to the designation was the Wash Barrier as the installation of this would destroy the habitat and mean that the area would not become a World Heritage Site.

In response to further questions, it was explained that designation would bring many opportunities, including tourism, and this would need to be managed to ensure that the landscape remained valuable. It was explained that there would be consultation and engagement processes to go through.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel noted the update.

EC82: **WASTE UPDATE**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube.](#)

The Waste and Recycling Manager provided an update on waste management and recycling for the Borough and the Government's 'Simpler Recycling' reforms.

The Panel was provided with information on the impact Covid had on collection rates. It was explained that the food waste collection service was disrupted during Covid and had restarted in July 2021. Levels were now coming back to normal, post Covid, with the exception of food waste collection. Work was being carried out to promote and increase take up of the food waste collection service.

The Waste and Recycling Manager circulated the revised bin calendar that would be circulated and included additional information on the food waste collection service. He explained that in March the Council would be promoting Food Waste Collection Week and would carry out engagement in schools, distribute caddies, starter kits and provide information to residents.

The Chair thanked the Waste and Recycling Officer for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Colwell explained that customer habits had changed post-Covid, and with the cost of living crisis, people were being more savvy, meaning they may be wasting less. He also asked if consideration could be given to placing recycling bins in the town centre next to waste bins so visitors to the town had the option to recycle.

Councillor Colwell also commended the small electrical items and battery collection service and hoped that this would continue to be promoted.

Councillor Colwell also referred to the Wisbech Incinerator and explained that more of our waste needed to be diverted away from this, so it was important to promote recycling opportunities in the Borough.

In response to a question from the Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli, it was explained that the Council had a good relationship with the company that processed food waste for the Borough.

In response to questions from Councillor Ware, it was confirmed that food waste did need to be presented in the caddy for collection, but any bag could be used as a caddy liner, it did not have to be recyclable.

Councillor Ware asked for clarification on what was recyclable, and the Waste and Recycling Manager explained that packaging was often printed with recycling information on it.

The Waste and Recycling Manager informed the Panel that 16% of recycling collected wasn't recyclable and this included a large amount of used nappies, which had to be removed by hand. Any contaminants not removed could impact the price received and could result in prosecution if contaminated recycling was exported.

Councillor Collop asked if food waste caddy liners would be made available to residents. The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that a small amount would be made available for Food Waste Recycling Week, but the Council would encourage residents to use left over packaging or bags found around the house, to line their food caddy.

In response to a question from the Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli, the Waste and Recycling Manager explained that garden waste was collected separately to food waste and garden waste was composted locally.

The Waste and Recycling Manager also provided information on glass recycling and explained that it was separated well at the MRF and much of the glass such as Wine Bottles were exported to Countries that produced large amounts of Wine.

Councillor Colwell asked for confirmation if disposable vapes counted as small electrical items and the Waste and Recycling Manager confirmed that they could be recycled via this scheme.

The Panel discussed Deposit Return Schemes and it was explained that these were included in the Government Proposals. The Panel discussed the impact schemes could have on small village shops. It was noted that simple processes were important to increase take up.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli encouraged deposit return schemes and refill schemes in supermarkets as a way to reduce the use of single use plastics. She commented that it was all about mindset and culture change and education and promotion was important.

Councillor Bhondi suggested that the Food Waste Scheme should be promoted to Parishes via their newsletters and magazines. The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that a range of communication channels would be used to promote the Food Waste Week in March.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal, Councillor Squire thanked the Waste and Recycling Manager for the report and agreed that ways to reduce single use plastics should be investigated. She also explained that a range of promotional material was being prepared for Food Waste Week.

Councillor Squire commented that her aim was to reach over 50% recycling levels in the Borough.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel noted the update.

EC83: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

**RESOLVED:** The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC84: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

**The meeting closed at 6.24 pm**