

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 November 2023

COUNCILLOR SANDRA SQUIRE - CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & COASTAL

For the period 19 October to 23 November 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Contractors have been on site in Hunstanton since half term undertaking repairs to the prom, these are scheduled to be finished by early December.

The Environmental Health team have been busy managing the effects of the recent poor results on shellfish beds have caused. The team have been trying to balance the public health need, whilst ensuring that parts of the fishing industry are able to time their fishing, to avoid the risk of poor sample results requiring official controls such as detention or recall or already processed product.

We are continuing to assist UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency) with a review of cases of Cryptosporidium - a parasitic water and food borne infection. There has been an upward national trend in cases of Cryptosporidium over the last five years and we are working with UKHSA to identify any common factors linking our cases to others nationally.

A recent notification by the Food Standards Agency on the listeria risk of Enoki mushrooms promoted visits to premises that supply the product, to ensure that suitable controls were in place for cooking and labelling. In addition, we have been closely working with Port Health at Suffolk Coastal who had detained a significant load of Enoki mushrooms due to Listeria concerns. The mushrooms were delivered to a distributor within the borough. We are currently working with the Port and the distributor to have them destroyed as our officers have determined that they are unfit for consumption.

Private water is continuing to cause considerable work with the increased sampling requirements of the Private Water Regulations, with a large number of failures causing some difficult investigations to establish the cause and identify suitable long term control measures.

The government has set out plans for simpler recycling, moving away from the suggestion that householders should have multiple recycling bins. The requirement is that all local authorities will be required to collect the same recyclable waste streams in a standardized approach, which aims to avoid the confusion of what can go in which bin. It would also mean that what can be

recycled will be the same at home, at work and in schools, all across England.

It is hoped this will increase recycling rates in England by having all dry recycling collected in one recycling bin. It is also proposed that all councils will introduce a free food waste collection scheme and offer a garden waste collection scheme. These new plans will be implemented by the end of March 2026. In practice these changes to policy will have very little effect on us as for example, this council introduced food waste collections over 10 years ago. (April 2013)

The government will be providing funding to assist those councils who will have extra burdens as a result of these changes, however unfortunately they will not be providing funding retrospectively. Information on funding changes to recycling credits and EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) will be forthcoming at a later date.

Last month I reported on plans to set up a group to look at Natural Flood Management and River Restoration. However, I can now shelve those plans as the Norfolk Rivers Trust have set up the North West Norfolk CaBa (Catchment Based Approach) Partnership group with representatives from the EA, Kings Lynn Drainage Board, Norfolk Rivers Trust etc, so rather than duplicate work, it seemed more sensible to join their group. The first meeting was on 23rd October with a discussion about funding available for natural flood management. There has been some incredible landscape recovery work in North Norfolk around the chalk streams there, so it is quite exciting to be at the start of a journey that could do the same for ours here in West Norfolk.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

I have been invited by Eastern IFCA to their office to discuss their work locally, I am currently awaiting confirmation of a date.

Given there is a lot of publicity at the moment regarding the proposed wash barrier and also regarding water quality issues, it is my intention to speak to local coastal stakeholders and land owners to discuss any coastal issues they would like to raise directly. If anyone would like to contact me to discuss any specific issues or ideas, get in touch. I would particularly like to speak to all those councillors who have coastal wards, to discuss any issues you feel are specific to coastal wards.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Various portfolio briefings
North West Norfolk CaBa Partnership Meeting
Cabinet Briefing
Heacham Bathing Water Quality Meeting

Cabinet sifting
Cabinet
Wash Barrier Talk at Hunstanton
Equality Training
LGA Cabinet Workshop
LGA Coastal SIG Water Quality Briefing
Cabinet briefing
Corporate Performance Panel
Environment & Community Panel
LGA Coastal SIG Water Quality Working Group
Special Cabinet
NEWS Board Meeting
Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance Meeting