

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, 14th November, 2023 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor S Collop (Chair), M Bartrum, J Bhondi, P Bland, A Bubb (substitute for H Humphrey), R Colwell (substitute for J Ratcliffe), P Devulapalli, P Kunes, S Sandell and A Ware.

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillor Everett

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL ATTENDING REMOTELY (did not take part in any votes): Councillor Bullen and Barclay

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor M de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor T Parish – Leader of the Council

Councillor J Rust – Portfolio Holder for People and Communities

Councillor S Squire – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal

OFFICERS:

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director

Ged Greaves – Corporate Performance Manager

Honor Howell – Corporate Governance Manager

Mark Whitmore – Assistant Director

Jo Russell – Care and Repair

Stuart Ashworth – Assistant Director

Claire Wiggs – Senior Ecologist

Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive

BY INVITATION:

Andy Millar – Norfolk and Suffolk County Council

Dr Sarah Taigal – Gaywood River

Jonathan Ward – Net Zeros Innovation and Delivery Manager

EC50: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Humphrey and Ratcliffe.

EC51: MINUTES

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

EC52: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Colwell declared an interest in item EC56: Gaywood River and Habitat Restoration as a Member of Gaywood River Revival.

EC53: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

EC54: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Bullen (remotely) and Councillor Everett.

EC55: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EC56: GAYWOOD RIVER AND HABITAT RESTORATION - PRESENTATION FROM NATURE RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER FROM NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

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

Dr Sarah Taigel GIS and Fluvial Specialist helping develop citizen science projects on the Gaywood River presented information to the Panel relating to research conducted, what was causing issues with the river, channel morphology and the impacts on wildlife. She explained that evidence was being collated to highlight issues and action that could be taken and provided detail of the role that the Borough Council could play. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Andy Millar, Nature Recovery Partnership Manager for Norfolk and Suffolk County Council presented information to the Panel relating to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). He explained the Government legislation and the need to work to find a solution to restore and deliver nature whilst maintaining flood management requirements. Information was provided on what nature recovery could achieve and options to restore ecosystems.

Andy Millar provided information on the tools that Local Authorities had at their disposal including influence through Planning Policy and during the consideration of planning applications and he reminded the Panel of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which were soon to be introduced in 2024.

The Chair thanked Andy Millar and Dr Sarah Taigel for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Colwell thanked Andy and Sarah for attending the meeting and hoped that Members had found the presentations informative. He explained that his takeaway from this presentation was that it was crucial for Councils to know where the problems in the catchment were so that they could focus on these areas. He also commented that the ten step plan was useful and there was a need for flood modelling.

Councillor Kunes asked about contamination issues and Councillor Colwell commented that investigations were ongoing.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, Councillor Rust, it was clarified that the landscape had historically been dredged but this year there had been a change in management and procedures and it was likely that de-silting had been carried out by the Internal Drainage Board.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal, Councillor Squire, clarified that the Council did have representatives on Norfolk Rivers and assumed that the Council and other related organisations would be engaged in the Nature Recovery Work being undertaken by Norfolk and Suffolk County Council. She asked how far along the mapping work was, as the Borough Council had not been invited to take part as yet. Andy Millar explained that all Norfolk and Suffolk Districts would shortly receive a formal invitation to be involved in the process. Currently project planning work and engagement strategies were being worked on, although the LNRS was unlikely to be adopted until early 2025.

Assistant Director, Stuart Ashworth informed the Panel that the LNRS would be crucial to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements that were being introduced, and made reference to the timescales. Andy Millar explained that there were still areas and projects that could help inform BNG without the LNRS in place, and he agreed that the full guidance on BNG was still awaited.

Councillor Bubb referred to the state of the water at Gaywood River and in The Walks and commented that it was often of good quality when entering the sea, so work should be carried out to work backwards from there to see where the problems were.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley commented that the Borough Council had established a Biodiversity Task Group and he hoped that this work would be part of the Task Groups considerations. He referred to the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan and that it had last been updated in 2010 and may require a review.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli asked how the Panel could be engaged and kept up to date in the process. Andy Millar commented that he was happy to be contacted as needed. The Norfolk and Suffolk

wide engagement process would be commencing soon and the Borough Council would be involved as a stakeholder.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Parish commented that environmental implications were a priority in the Councils Corporate Business Plan and he encouraged Members to engage in the process as required.

Dr Sarah Taigel agreed to share information on protected species on the Gaywood River with the Borough Council's Senior Ecologist, Claire Wiggs.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the information.

EC57: **NET ZERO COMMUNITIES UPDATE**

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

The Climate Change Manager presented the report which provided an update on the selection process and Norfolk project for the Norfolk Net Zero Communities pilot project.

The Net Zeros Innovation and Delivery Manager, Jonathan Ward, provided members with a presentation on progress with the project. A copy of the presentation is attached. He reminded Members that the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership had been successfully awarded funding from the Fast Followers Fund to deliver a community themed project focussing on citizen preparedness and clean growth. Information on project governance and delivery was outlined in the presentation and the project would be delivered through Norfolk Climate Change Partnership who had established a Project Steering Group and Advisory Group to oversee the project.

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership had been carrying out a selection process for one community in each of the seven Norfolk Districts for the pilot project. Selection decisions would be informed by themes including community and households, routes to engagement and the potential for Carbon reduction.

The Corporate Performance Manager explained that information had been sent to all Parishes and 22 responses had been received. Background data for each area was then looked at as part of the shortlisting process. An announcement on the preferred option would be made to Councillors soon.

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

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley thanked officers for their work on bringing this opportunity

forward and commented that this was an exciting project and the beginning of the journey in carbon reduction in communities.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, Councillor Rust, it was confirmed that there was a link with Borough Council's Energy Efficiency Officer.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli commented that all communities needed to work to become net zero and asked if this project would be sustainable going forward. Jonathan Ward explained that this pilot project would create a template which could be rolled out further across communities and other funding opportunities were being looked at through the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.

Councillor Kunes commented that he was disappointed that only 22 Parishes had responded.

Councillor Bullen commented that it was vital to engage with isolated and rural households that were not part of a community.

RESOLVED: The Environment and Community Panel noted progress with the project and would receive periodic update reports.

EC58: **CABINET REPORT - ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

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

The Corporate Governance Manager presented the report which considered the approval of an amended policy and statutory process for Assets of Community Value and the Community Right to Bid. It was explained that the refresh was required following the transfer of Legal Services back in-house and it was hoped that the revised document was now more user friendly and less technical. The document had been completely rewritten, however the fundamentals had not changed.

The Corporate Governance Manager highlighted the amendments to the delegations to authorise Assets of Community and make non-material amendments to the policy, as set out in the recommendations.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Governance Manager for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bhondi commented that this policy was a good tool to protect community assets and he had used it to protect an asset in his Ward. He encouraged Councillors to consider protecting assets of community value as required.

In response to a question from the Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli, the Corporate Governance Manager explained that religious use was not a criteria and the definitions were cultural, sporting and recreational uses that provided social value. The Corporate Governance Manager agreed to confirm if religious buildings fell into the definition of social value within the scheme.

Following the Meeting the Corporate Governance Manager confirmed that any land or building could potentially be listed as an Asset of Community Value and it is for the nominating group to make the case, provide the evidence and proof as to how the particular piece of land or building meets the criteria of the act.

Councillor Bubb asked if there were limitations on what could be included and it was confirmed that it had to be an asset that was in current use for the benefit of the community and needed to be protected for social wellbeing.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel supports the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

- a) Cabinet is recommended to agree the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk policy and statutory process for Assets of Community Value, as attached and recommend to Council for approval.
- b) The material update to the policy is changing the delegation to authorise Assets of Community Value from council officer to Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and relevant ward members.
- c) Cabinet is recommended to give delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to make future non-material updates to the policy (non-material definition – amendments which will not significantly change the policy by will update in line with legislative changes or will achieve improvements to the process).

EC59: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Decision List was noted.

EC60: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on **Wednesday** 3rd January 2024 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

EC61: **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

EC62: **EXEMPT CABINET REPORT - FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR CARE AND REPAIR HANDYPERSON PREVENTION SERVICE**

Officers presented the report, as included in the Agenda which set out the Framework Agreement for the Care and Repair Handyperson Prevention Service. It was explained that the tender process had been carried out and contractors would be appointed from January 2024.

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

The Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, Councillor Rust commented that this was an important service that the Council provided to help with independent living and enabling people to stay in their homes for longer.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel supports the recommendations to Cabinet as set out in the report.

The meeting closed at 6.11 pm