

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environmental Excellence Panel** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Thursday 16 January 2020** at **6pm** when there were present:

Mrs J Leggett – Chairman

Mr D J Britcher	Mr K S Kelly	Mr G K Nurden	Mr J M Ward
Mr J F Fisher	Dr K E Lawrence	Mrs S M Prutton	

Mr Brennan, Miss Lawn and Mr D Thomas also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Director of Place, Assistant Director Regulatory, Assistant Director Community Service, Environmental Protection Manager, Private Sector Housing Manager, Contracts, Policy and Partnerships Manager, Environmental Management Officer, Recycling and Partnerships Officer, Waste and Recycling Strategy Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

15 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mrs Cook.

16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

The Director of Place advised the meeting that further work on the Environment Strategy was being undertaken at the request of the Cabinets of both Broadland and South Norfolk. As this would entail a significant amount of work the six sections of the Strategy were being revised in turn and would be brought to Members as the work progressed.

The first section to be revised was the Clean and Safe Environment, which was presented to the Panel for their views. As requested, this now included baseline information to better understand the current position and allow for progress to be monitored and targets set. This data looked at air quality, the energy efficiency of housing, renewable energy production, tree coverage, recycling, environmental crime and sustainable transport.

As well as the baseline data the section highlighted key considerations to be taken into account when addressing these issues, as well as a summary that set out what the Council was going to do and what residents and businesses could do to help the Council keep the District clean and safe.

In respect of environmental protection and crime prevention Members were informed that although there were very few formal actions being taken there was considerably more informal activity being carried out officers to address this issue.

A Member noted that much of the baseline data was from Friends of the Earth, who looked at the national picture, and she suggested that more local data should be accessed as well, if possible. She also suggested that water meadows and wetlands should also be monitored, as they could contributed more benefit to the environment than trees.

It was also noted that Energy Performance Certificates were only issued when a house was constructed, sold or let. It was, therefore, likely that a significant number of properties in the District had improved energy efficiency, but that the data to confirm this was unavailable.

A Member suggested that the effectiveness of the measures being taken should recorded, in order to demonstrate the value of the work being undertaken. In response, it was confirmed that impact data would follow on as the Strategy developed.

The Panel suggested a number of actions that could be taken to promote a Clean and Safe Environment in the District these included:

- Awards for tree planting.
- Encouraging parishes to recruit Tree Wardens (who could access saplings for planting free of charge).
- Publicise the current activities of the Council, as well as what it aimed to do in the future and provide support to bring communities along with it.
- Promote the use, maintenance and involvement of the community in Council owned green infrastructure
- Advertise how communities could help to keep the District clean and tidy in *Broadland News*.
- Support and encourage Town and Parish Councils to help keep the environment clean and safe.

It was confirmed that the Panel's suggestions had been noted and would be used to inform the remainder of the document.

The Director of Place confirmed that it was recognised that there was a

tension between drafting the Strategy and the delivery of the Actions within it. The Council was mindful of this issue and continued to push ahead with delivering environmental initiatives in as many areas as possible, such as recycling and the acquisition of green infrastructure. An Action Plan would also be developed in partnership with the County Council for the Bure Valley Railway Footpath in due course.

18 SMART METER PROJECT

The report summarised the delivery of the Smart Meter project, which was delivered between September-December, 2019.

The Council had been awarded £15,849 in April 2019 by Smart Energy GB to deliver a project in partnership with Citizens Advice to provide information on smart meters to people over the age of 65.

In total, 42 community events were attended by the Energy Team and Citizens Advice. These included seven flu clinics and eight community group meetings.

The funding provided the opportunity to engage with 7,614 residents, which was far more than would have otherwise been possible and it also allowed other Council services to be promoted at the same time, such as the Handyperson plus scheme, Broadly Active and Housing Benefits.

To encourage people to engage with officers 650 LED lightbulbs with an energy rating A+ were handed out for free. These were estimated to last 25,000 hours and each bulb had the potential to save 1.25kw over its lifetime.

Members did express some concerns that it could be difficult to switch provider, if one had a smart meter, but were reassured that this was no longer the case with newer versions of the smart meter. It was also noted that some of the most attractive tariffs also required the householder to have a smart meter, so there were significant advantages to be had.

Members were also advised that attending flu clinics had been an especially effective means of engaging with a large number of residents and would be a method that would be used in the future.

Members endorsed the proposal that the Council continue to apply for third party funding for such schemes, as they were made available.

19 BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE RECYCLING PROJECT

The Panel was informed that the Recycling Team were to trial a behaviour change project, which aimed to reduce levels of contamination in kerbside recycling bins.

The trial target area was the White House Farm estate in Sprowston (which had been identified as an area where contamination levels could be improved). The site was also one round on one day, so the data could be easily isolated.

Common contaminants found in kerbside recycling bins included soft plastics, bagged items, textiles, food waste, tissues, sanitary pads and nappies and mixed materials like takeaway cups, Pringles tubes and pill packets.

The project was specifically designed to target indoor recycling behaviours and would consist of completing a questionnaire with residents, providing them with an indoor container to sort their recycling, sending weekly infographics to increase their understanding of the recycling process, and an email campaign that focused on recycling education.

In order to make the project as accessible as possible a variety of methods of communication (door-to-door, email, letters) would be used.

Officers would monitor the individual and communal bins again after the 12-week period, and compare the results to see if a difference in contamination was detected. The work would then be evaluated with the aim of replicating the project in other areas of Broadland and South Norfolk.

The Panel was informed that the project was being funded from Government money that was available from a previous project. Members were also informed that providing a recycling information pack for new properties was being considered.

20 WASTE MONITORING REVIEW – RECYCLING TARGETS AND

The Panel was informed that the recycling contamination rate in Norfolk in 2018/19 was 22.92%. However, this was showing signs of decreasing due to increasing public awareness.

Contamination rates for Broadland were not available, as the Materials Recycling Facility collected recycling from across the County.

It is difficult to compare quarters of the same year as significant variations could occur naturally due to the weather, especially in connection with garden

waste and the growing seasons.

Data was, therefore, compared using the same period for the year before. However, this would still have variations due to natural factors, such as the weather.

For example, over July to September 2018 the recycling rate was just over 50.3% due to a heatwave, whilst in comparison over the same period in 2019 the recycling rate was 52.6% due to wetter weather increasing the weight of garden waste.

Over Quarter 2 residual waste collected per household decreased by half kg per head (0.57kg) over the same period the previous year. However, such a small change as this could simply be in line with natural variations.

An expansion of the food waste collection service to a further 1500 households in June 2019, had produced a further 29.06 tonnes for the quarter. Whilst, brown bin numbers had increased by 1263 bins over October to December 2019.

Overall, Broadland was the top performing Council in Norfolk in terms of the overall recycling rate.

There has been a Norfolk wide increase in contamination rates, largely due to stricter markets, that had impacted recycling rates. This was a trend seen throughout Norfolk and the UK as a whole.

Work was ongoing to increase recycling and reduce contamination and with the increase in public awareness in recycling, especially in connection with plastics, it was a good time to undertake projects and campaigns.

21 NORSE JVC CONTRACT

There was no information to report to the meeting on this item at this stage.

22 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The following items were confirmed for the Future Work Programme:

5 March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waste Monitoring Review• Environmental Strategy Update• Norse JVC Contract
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Environmental Excellence Panel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Protection Integrated Approach
28 April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waste Review• Norse JVC Contract• Environmental Action Plan Review• Behaviour Project Update (early on Agenda)

The meeting closed at 19.53