

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environmental Excellence Panel** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Thursday 19 July 2018** at **4.00 pm** when there were present:

Mr J F Fisher – Chairman

Mrs J K Copplestone
Mr R F Grady

Mr G K Nurden
Mr D Roper

Mr V B Tapp
Mr J M Ward

Also in attendance were the Environmental Protection Manager, Private Sector Housing Manager and the Committee Officer (JO).

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Leggett and Mr Mackie.

12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute no: 6 – Feedback Following Visit to Food Waste Disposal Facility Biogen

It was confirmed that the Council encouraged the reuse of ordinary plastic packaging for food waste disposal and would also be supplying cheaper polypropylene bags for residents.

Minute no: 7 – Request for support from a resident

Following the meeting the Committee was resent an email which explained the level of assistance that the Council was able to provide for the student.

13 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES – CHANGES TO CHARGING

The report examined if the introduction of charges for the disposal of DIY waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres had led to an increase in fly tipping and/or an increase in the amount of DIY waste being placed in residual waste bins.

In April 2018, Norfolk County Council lifted a limit of 80 litres per week free disposal of DIY waste and introduced a charging scheme. Disposal of all

other waste types remain unchanged.

The DIY waste price list was for one 80 litre sack, or the equivalent and included the following:

- Rubble and timber: £3
- Flat glass: £5
- Plasterboard: £9
- General Waste (including roofing felt, plastic guttering, fibreglass insulation, baths and soil): £5
- Tyres: £4 per tyre

Since the charges were introduced the Environmental Protection Team had been monitoring fly tipping data and the tonnage of residual waste to identify any trends.

The analysis showed an increase in fly tipping of 15 percent in April when compared to last year and an increase in June of nearly 45 percent. However, whether these increases could be attributed to the introduction of fees was unclear, as there was too little data to identify if these variances indicated a trend that related to DIY fees. This was supported by an analysis of the fly-tipped waste that showed that it was mainly general household waste, which remained free to dispose of.

Similarly, there was a six percent increase in tonnages of residual household waste collected in April and May. However in January a six percent increase was also seen when compared with 2017, suggesting that these fluctuations could be normal.

Although increases in both fly-tipping and residual waste had been identified, officers were of the opinion that it was too early to say whether any increases were due to the introduction of charges for the disposal of DIY waste and that more data was needed over a longer period in order to confirm any trends.

A Member suggested that it might be more useful to look through data going back further than one year. It was also noted that residual waste should have seen a marginal reduction given the further rollout of food waste collection.

A Member suggested that the increase could also be due to a mistaken belief that all waste was being charged for.

In response to a query, the Environmental Protection Manager advised Members that DIY waste was accepted in quantities of 80 litres bags or the

equivalent. He emphasised that staff at the Household Waste Recycling Centres took a flexible approach and did not expect residents to break up waste to fit in 80 litre bags.

The Chairman also advised the meeting that the rationale behind charging was that the 'polluter pays' and that generally fly-tipping was reducing in the district by a proactive, targeted approach to hotspots using dummy cameras and signage etc. This was bucking the national trend. However, it was accepted that it could lead to the problem being moved elsewhere. He advised the Panel that the best assets in prosecuting fly-tipping could be observant members of the public.

Members were informed that the Council liaised with multiple agencies to pursue prosecutions against fly-tippers. However, Broadland only recorded incidents of fly-tipping on public land, unless it was pursuing a prosecution.

A Member suggested that subsequent reports should include the tonnage of fly-tipped waste and the cost of its collection and that waste dumped on private land should also be recorded, if possible. Figures for waste fly-tipped on private land might be available through Police records.

The Chairman advised the meeting that there was a debate to be had with the County Council about an equitable share of the money being made by charging for DIY waste to offset any increase in fly-tipping, which was being covered for by the district councils.

A Member also observed that an increase in the tonnage of residual waste was also the result of growth in the district.

RESOLVED

to receive a further update, including the additional information, as requested above in the New Year.

14 WARM HOME FUND – UPDATE

The report was an update on the progress that has been made to date in delivering the Warm Homes Fund to support fuel-poor households in Norfolk.

Broadland had acted as lead partner to secure funding for a programme worth £3.1m over the next two years. The scheme would be delivered in partnership with the seven Norfolk councils, Public Health and community and health sectors and would include the installation of:

- 150 gas boilers to private sector residents

- 250 oil/LPG boilers to private sector residents
- 118 air source pumps to social housing tenants
- 15 gas boilers to social housing tenants.

The Programme Manager had been appointed and she was currently recruiting the team that would deliver the programme. The newly formed Warm Homes Fund Team would process all grants for new central heating systems, as well as providing community support and advice for the most vulnerable residents.

In respect of a query regarding improvements to private sector housing, Members were advised that the Government were considering amendments to legislation to allow local authorities to fine landlords letting a property below the minimum levels of energy efficiency. In anticipation of this, the Council had recently adopted a policy that would allow it to impose a fine where works to meet the minimum standards were not carried out.

Private landlords could, nevertheless, also be offered up to 75 percent of the cost of a new boiler. The Council could then claim 100 percent of the cost from the fund which would allow this source of funding to go even further.

The programme should start to be rolled out as soon as early August and would include working in partnership with Clarion Housing and Saffron Housing Trust, who were contributing a further £500,000 to help install central heating for Broadland and South Norfolk social housing tenants.

Press releases would be issued shortly with details of how to apply for the fund.

The Chairman congratulated the Team on their successful bid.

RESOLVED

to note the progress on the Warm Homes Fund.

15 SOLAR TOGETHER NORFOLK 2018

The report provided details of a proposed collective purchasing project to secure competitive pricing for those interested in installing solar photovoltaic panels.

The process was organised by iChoosr who had carried out a similar project with the Council in 2015. However, since then the Feed in Tariff (FiT) rate

had dropped dramatically making solar panels less financially attractive. The scheme was therefore aimed at people who preferred to generate green energy, rather than those making a financial investment, although by buying collectively, it should be possible for residents to purchase the panels cheaper than it would be possible to do individually.

A Communications Plan had been drafted for the programme and would include:

- A flyer to 5,000 residents
- Website article
- Broadland News article
- Parish newsletters
- Press releases targeting local media.

The participating Norfolk councils would receive a referral fee of £25 per install for the first 100. For every following the 100th install, the fee would increase to £30.

A Member advised the meeting that the Council should remain cautious about promoting solar panels, as they could be detrimental to a householder's property. She explained that solar panel had a limited lifespan and generated less electricity as they got older. They also contained environmentally hazardous materials that could prove to be expensive to dispose of when they came to the end of their life. In response, the Private Sector Housing Manager emphasised that the Councils endorsement of the scheme was simply giving residents the opportunity to acquire a quality product at a competitive price.

RESOLVED

to note the scheme.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 13 September 2018.

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm