



## ENVIRONMENT EXCELLENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Environment Excellence Policy Development Panel of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 6.00pm.

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillors: K S Kelly (Chairman), N J Brennan, (Vice-Chairman), D J Britcher, A D Crotch, J F Fisher, K E Lawrence, G K Nurden, S M Prutton, J M Ward.
<b>Cabinet Member Present:</b>	Councillors: J Leggett, TM Mancini-Boyle.
<b>Other Members in Attendance:</b>	Councillor: M L Murrell.
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	The Assistant Director Community Services, Assistant Director Regulatory, Recycling and Partnership Officer, National Management Trainee and Democratic Services Officers (JH, JO).

### 60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Cook and Cllr Nurden.

### 61 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

### 62 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Assistant Director Regulatory advised the meeting that officers from across the Council were being brought together on a regular basis to deliver many of the wider objectives set out in the Environmental Strategy. This was also providing the opportunity to further develop the Environmental Action Plan. More detail of the work that was being done would be brought to the Panel, as it was progressed.

## Environmental Excellence Policy Development Panel

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Members were also advised that interviews had taken place for the Environmental Coordinator post and it was anticipated that an appointment would be made shortly.

The National Management Trainee informed the meeting that the tree planting project was progressing well, with trees being planted in public open spaces across the District. The Chairman of the Council had also met with the tree planting contractor last week.

Other related activities were:

- The Norwich Fringe Project had been clearing invasive vegetation in woodland understorey, so that further planting could take place, which would help increase bio-diversity and tree diversity.
- A new Local Authority Treescapes Fund had been announced by the Government to increase tree planting and natural regeneration in local communities. This scheme would be coordinated through Norfolk County Council.
- The Broadland Tree Wardens had recruited their highest ever number with 42 Wardens now in place. This showed the level of community interest in the importance of conserving and planting trees.

To seek to enhance local green spaces and following a successful trial last year, some public green spaces in the District would be mown just twice a year, instead of 18 times, to allow long semi-natural grass to grow and encourage flower and insect diversity. Signs would explain the purpose of the project and also encourage residents to leave a patch of long grass in their own gardens. This rewilding project would be cost neutral and could be a good project for incorporating in the Environmental Action Plan, as it had received very positive feedback when an article was published about it in *Broadland News*. The Council would also be following up on the suggestion that parish and town councils be contacted to encourage similar projects on their own green spaces.

Work was also being undertaken to raise the profile of the Environmental Strategy by sharing sections of it on the Council's social media pages.

To help reduce emissions and address the staff travel section in the Environmental Strategy, the Council was to use Liftshare, a car sharing system provider, to help maintain the levels of emissions in lockdown post pandemic.

The Assistant Director Regulatory advised the meeting that Abigail Langley (the National Management Trainee) was coming to the end of her placement and that he would like to thank her for all the hard work that she had put into initiating the delivery of the Environmental Strategy.

The Chairman concurred with these sentiments and thanked Abigail for her excellent work.

A member suggested that it would be useful for the Panel to have some graphic representation of the Environmental Action Plan, as well as more consistency in what was reported to the Panel, so that progress could be identified more clearly. It would also benefit the Panel if they could know what exactly was meant by terms like 'bio-diversity gain', 'environmental gain' and 'rewilding', so they could place them in context for Broadland. In respect of using social media she also noted that with the COP26 climate change conference being held in Glasgow in November that an opportunity had been missed to demonstrate how Broadland could contribute to it through its Environmental Strategy.

In response, the Assistant Director Regulatory confirmed that these points had been noted and would be considered, but he reminded the Panel that the implementation of the projects in the Action Plan were at a very early stage and that a lot of the more detailed structural work, including budgets, would follow once the Environmental Coordinator was in post. It was hoped that the successful applicant would be in place within four to six weeks.

Members were informed that a presentation that explained what was meant by 'rewilding' and what the Council was aiming to achieve by it could be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

In respect of tree planting a member noted the importance of nurturing young plants until they were established, as many of the trees that had been planted last year were dead through neglect.

In response to a query about encouraging parish councils to plant trees, the Panel was advised that this would be a major piece of work that could only be undertaken once the Environmental Coordinator was in post.

The Assistant Director Regulatory advised members that the Council was developing fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour policies and enforcement sanctions, as part of a wide range of measures that were being drafted.

The Chairman noted that the Panel would be busy with numerous items to consider in the coming months.

### **63 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **RESOLVED**

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government

Act 1972, would be disclosed to them.

### **64 CONSULTATION ON REVISIONS TO THE COURTAULD COMMITMENT**

The report sought to establish the Council's ongoing commitment to Courtauld 2025, which was currently being revised and to conclude if the Council wished to remain a signatory.

The Courtauld Commitment was a voluntary agreement aimed at improving resource efficiency and reducing waste within the UK grocery sector.

The Council originally became a signatory to the Courtauld Commitment 2025 on the 16 September 2019 and had joined over 150 organisations ranging from manufacturers to retailers and local authorities.

Targets were based on collective action, with signatories agreeing to work towards the following three targets by 2025:

- A 20 percent per person reduction in food and drink waste associated with production and consumption of food and drink in the UK, post the farm gate.
- A reduction in impact associated with water use and water stress in the supply chain.
- A 20 percent per person reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions associated with production and consumption of food and drink in the UK.

Members were asked to note that the content of the review was for signatories only and could not be shared in the public domain.

It was confirmed that each signatory was required to submit an annual report, but were under no obligation to submit data, as it was a collective commitment.

It was noted that the collection of food waste was clear evidence of the Council's commitment to reducing food waste.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance also noted that the commitment gelled well with the aims of the Food Innovation Centre to reduce transportation emissions and promote low carbon technology and processes to support businesses to innovate and reduce their carbon footprint.

The Chairman noted that by remaining a signatory the Council would be aligning its ambitions with the Environment Protection Act that was expected to enter into legislation later in the year.

A vote was undertaken by a show of hands and it was unanimously

### **AGREED**

to support the current Courtauld Commitment 2025 /revised Courtauld 2030 and recommend to Cabinet that the Council remains a signatory, providing support through existing work streams and publicising the messages where appropriate.

### **65 WASTE SERVICES PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

The Panel were advised that the procurement for the Waste Contract was at the initial tender evaluation stage. The deadline for submitting bids for the contract was 19 March 2021 and these were now being assessed with a view to making a recommendation to Cabinet in June 2021.

Members were also advised that a consultation was underway on changes to the Resource Waste Management Strategy. Key areas were plans for a deposit return scheme and an extended producer responsibility for packaging. It might be necessary for an informal meeting of the Panel, if members were to consider the Council's response prior to the close of the consultation on 4 June 2021. It was confirmed that officers would liaise with the Chairman regarding this issue.

(The meeting concluded at 6.52 pm)

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Chairman