

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Economy and Environment Policy Committee of South Norfolk District Council, held on Friday 28 January 2022 at 2pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: J Knight (Chairman), C Brown, D Elmer, G Francis, K Hurn, S Nuri-Nixon and R Savage

Apologies for Absence: None

Officers in Attendance: The Assistant Director of Community Services (S Phelan), the Assistant Director for Regulatory (N Howard), the Contracts, Policy & Partnerships Manager (P Leggett), the Senior Environmental Management Officer (A Old), the Recycling & Partnerships Officer (N Noorani) and the Democratic Services Officer (J Hammond)

27 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Economy and Environment Policy Committee held on 19 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

28 RECYCLING PROJECTS UPDATE AND FUTURE PLANS

The Recycling and Partnerships Officer introduced the report, which provided an update on the various campaigns and activities undertaken over the past year in order to contribute to the Council's priority of increasing the recycling rate to 60% by 2025. Proposed projects for the upcoming year were also outlined with the aim of increasing recycling and decreasing residual waste.

Currently the Council's recycling rate was 41.8%, a reduction from 42.5% in 2019/20. The pandemic had resulted in higher levels of residual waste, which impacted on the recycling rate even though the tonnage of material being recycled actually increased. This was a national trend with England's recycling rate down 1.2% compared to the previous year.

Projects undertaken in the past year included:

- Food waste reduction campaign
- Side waste reduction project
- Phase 1 of a Norfolk-wide waste compositional analysis
- Christmas recycling communications
- Home composter promotion
- Garden waste contamination campaign
- Winter garden waste contamination campaign
- Campaigns supporting Food Waste Action Week (FWAW) and Recycle Week

Projects proposed for the next 12 months included:

- Garden waste/composting participation and contamination
- Dry recycling contamination (including communal recycling bin contamination)
- Rubbish prevention campaign
- Phase 2 of compositional analysis
- Reduction of food being wasted at home
- Collect and collate information on recycling and waste behaviour via a district-wide resident survey

Further ahead in 2023/24, the report proposed a targeted trial replacing the 240L residual waste bin with 180L residual waste bins. Some members were concerned that reducing the bin size would not reduce the amount of residual waste produced but would instead increase the number of individual trips to household waste recycling centres, or worse increase the number of fly tipping incidents. Another member welcomed the proposal for smaller bins and noted the benefits it would have not only in reducing residual waste but in lowering the environmental impact of the service by reducing the number of times the waste vehicles needed to be emptied at the depot.

Members discussed the Council's current collection of residual side waste; it was noted that this was a 'premium service' offered by the Council free of charge. Some members felt that collecting additional residual waste went against the Council's aim of reducing waste, but in turn they did not want services to be reduced in an effort to increase the districts recycling rate. The Assistant Director of Community Services explained that the Council's aim was to reduce excess residual waste with a view to stop side waste collections in the future. He added that Cabinet had requested officers investigate this further. Members asked that any findings be brought to the Committee at a future meeting.

Members were advised that an additional 2500 householders had subscribed to a garden waste bin, which meant that roughly 50% of the district were now subscribed to the service. Members discussed the costs associated with the service and the fee charged to subscribers. The Assistant Director of Community Services explained that the Government was considering a free

garden waste collection service across the Country as part of their consultation.

It was noted that Broadland District Council had previously trialled a food waste service and was due to roll the service out district-wide later in the year. The Assistant Director of Community Services explained that Broadland's trial had shown a 65% 'put out' rate for food waste in urban areas. Most members felt that the service would be unviable in rural parts of the district where the 'put out' rate would be lower in favour of at home composting, however they felt that it should be considered in urban areas of the district.

Discussion turned to dry recycling and the main issues faced with regard to the contamination of recycling material. The Recycling and Partnerships Officer informed the Committee that Government was considering whether co-mingled recycling should be stopped, with the aim of increasing the quality of recycled paper. It was felt that a variety of awareness campaigns were needed to educate householders on what could and could not be recycled. Members discussed methods of promoting recycling and it was suggested that incentives and/or community recycling champions be considered.

The importance of continuing recycling side waste collections was highlighted by members in light of the Council's aim to stop residual side waste collections in the future. It was also explained that the recyclable side waste should only be left out with the recycling bins, as otherwise it would be treated as residual side waste and not recycled.

The Committee discussed the disposal of batteries and the confusion regarding how they could be recycled. It was suggested that officers investigated how these could be collected by the waste fleet alongside the dry recyclables bin.

After further discussion, where members discussed the potential use of HVO fuel, it was

RESOLVED

To note and support the proposed programme with the goal of increasing the recycling rate to meet the Council's 60% recycling rate target by 2025.

(The meeting concluded at 3.13 pm)

Chairman