

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
11 MARCH 2016**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C L STRANGE (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A M Austin, A Bridges, M Brookes, J R Marriott, C R Oxby, C Pain, R A Renshaw, C E D Mair and Mrs J M Renshaw

Councillors: D Brailsford, C J Davie, Mrs M J Overton MBE, S L W Palmer, R A Shore, A H Turner MBE JP, Mrs A E Reynolds, S M Tweedale and R L Foulkes attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Sean Kent (Group Manager, Environment Services) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer) and Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer – Development Services)

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C J T H Brewis, Mrs V Ayling, N M Murray and R G Fairman.

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 he had appointed Councillor C E D Mair in place of Councillor Mrs V C Ayling and Councillor Mrs J M Renshaw in place of Councillor N M Murray for this meeting only.

61 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Councillors' interests, however Members asked that the following be noted:-

Councillor M Brookes advised that he held the Portfolio for Waste Services at Boston Borough Council.

Councillor A Austin confirmed that she resided within one mile of the Boston Household Waste Recycling Centre which would be discussed at agenda item number five.

Councillor J R Marriott indicated that he used the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Whisby.

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Councillor R A Shored advised that he was the local Member for Whisby and would also be making the final decision in relation to agenda item number six as the Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling.

Councillors C L Strange and A H Turner MBE JP advised that they were the local members for areas under discussion on the agenda.

62 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee held on 29 January 2016 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

63 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND SENIOR OFFICERS

The Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism made the following announcements to the Committee:-

- The Prime Minister had made supportive comments about tourism in Lincolnshire, in particular Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve being described as "*tranquil*" before adding that "*.... the Lincolnshire Coastal Observatories project has £1.75 million to deliver two stunning new visitor centres in key places: The Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve and Chapel St Leonards*". The Prime Minister also mentioned Lincoln Cathedral before stating, more generally, "*I love Lincolnshire*". The Committee welcomed the comments;
- A meeting of the Coastal Developers Forum had been held with the Environment Agency in attendance. A workshop session to consider the long term ambitions of the tourism sector and flood defences was to be organised for June 2016. An update would follow.

There were no further updates received.

In order to give time for a local member representation and full debate in relation to item 6 – *Changes to the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres and Voluntary Recycling Credits*, the Chairman proposed that item 9 – *Update on Lincolnshire Energy Switching Scheme (LESS)* and item 11 – *District Heating Project Progress Report* be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That Agenda Item 9 (Update on Lincolnshire Energy Switching Scheme (LESS)) and Agenda Item 11 (District Heating Project Progress Report) be deferred to the next meeting of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

64 BOSTON HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided the Committee with details of the following recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Waste & Recycling and the Executive Councillor for Finance and Property:-

1. Approval from the Executive Councillor for Waste & Recycling for the Council to fulfil its duty under Section 51(1)(b) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 through the construction and operation from 1 April 2017 of a Council-owned Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in Boston rather than to contract for the provision of such a centre from a third party as at present; and
2. Approval from the Executive Councillor for Finance and Property of the scheme appraisal for the capital expenditure in accordance with paragraph B9 of the Financial Regulations forming part of the Council's Constitution.

Sean Kent, Group Manager – Environmental Services, introduced the report and invited the Committee to consider the recommendations and make any comments which would be considered by the relevant Executive Councillors.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- There were five elements to consider for the proposed new site which included the access road, compaction and transport of containers. The costings for the proposed site were currently unknown but the Committee was assured that it would need to be operationally viable in order to proceed;
- The current site would require considerable operational work undertaken to bring it up to the required standard. All the options would be considered alongside a potential new site and a cost comparison provided;
- If the site on Nursery Road was chosen as the preferred option, the Committee was advised that access to the site would be signed and an access road included within the developers costs. Service users would, therefore, be signed along Bittern Way;
- Although Boston currently operated seven days per week and the proposal was to reduce this to four days per week, further consideration would be given to the opening hours through contract negotiations, following which it would be presented to the Committee for further discussion;
- Although there would be four day opening over the weekends for domestic use, consideration may also be given to additional opening hours during the week for trade use. There were legal issues around this type of opening, including health and safety, but all options would be considered;
- Building of new sites could take up to a year to become operational taking in to consideration the required purchase length, granting of planning permission and building. A decision would need to be taken quickly to ensure that all of these processes were complete prior to the end of the current contract;
- Savings were already in place in regard to staffing and the changes had improved the effectiveness of each site;
- The owners of the site were confirmed as FCC Environment, further explained as Fomento de Construcciones y Contratas, and formed part of one of the world's largest environmental services companies, based in Spain;

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- In regard to the recent flooding in Boston, it was confirmed that the risk had been reduced as much as possible but this may not provide 100% protection from flooding. Lessons had been learned from previous flooding experience and it was thought that the defences implemented were sufficient;
- The Committee agreed that it would be better to establish a new site but acknowledged that serious consideration would be given to the existing site should the offer from the current owners be beneficial;

RESOLVED

1. That the recommendations to the Executive Councillors as set out within Appendix 1 to the report be supported;
2. That the comments of the Committee, as noted below, be passed to the Executive Councillors:-
 - a. It was queried whether the cost for the purchase of the existing site from FCC Environment was included in the proposal and if there were any issues with the proposed road access to the site;
 - b. Concerns regarding the proposed four day opening hours of the site and the possible wider impact this could have were highlighted. Concerns were also raised regarding the wider impact of the green waste service provision introduced by Boston Borough Council on the HWRC. Members sought clarification that additional consideration be given to these points and further information presented to the Committee in future;
 - c. Support for the proposed new site was agreed and the Committee thought that the decision should not be held up by discussions with the present contractor regarding the sale of the current site;
 - d. Support for the 'invest to save' proposal was noted. The advantages to Lincolnshire County Council would be the benefit from greater economies and operational efficiencies from revised contracting arrangements at all LCC owned sites;
 - e. Concern was raised in relation to possible delays of the purchase of a new site and further delays in opening the revised service in time for the current contract end for April 2017, due to the tight timescales and a risk of potential delays;
 - f. Clarification was given that Boston HWRC had been reported as the most expensive facility in the county. Members gave support to the proposals in light that the payback period for the proposed new HWRC would be 5.3 years.

65 CHANGES TO THE PROVISION OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES AND VOLUNTARY RECYCLING CREDITS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided the proposed changes to the provision of Household Waste Recycling Centres and Voluntary Recycling Credits prior to the decision of the Executive Councillor on 11 March 2016.

Councillor R A Shore, Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling, introduced the report and confirmed that the recommendations reached following the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the savings the Council were required to make as a result. This position had been presented to the Committee at recent meetings and, in addition, discussions had been held with the Parish Councils of the affected sites and Member briefing sessions had been held to discuss the proposals in more detail. It was reported that 21 representations had been received and responded to during those consultations and that District Council's had also raised their concern in relation to the potential increase in fly tipping as a result of the closures.

Councillor Shore stressed that the recommendations were necessary in response to the budget cuts as there were no other options available and asked the Committee to be mindful of this when considering the report.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Shore for his frank explanation of the situation. Five Councillors attended the meeting to make representations on behalf of their divisions and the Chairman advised that he would allow each Member five minutes to address the Committee and to ask one question. These questions would be addressed once all Members had spoken.

- Councillor D Brailsford addressed the Committee on behalf of his division in Stamford and the proposed discontinuance of the supplementary service at Stamford. Previous discussions had resulted in locating a suitable site for a dedicated HWRC in Stamford as this was deemed to be high on the agenda for this area. It was acknowledged that this had proved difficult and only 18 months later the proposal was to remove the supplementary service and have all residents travel to Bourne despite the town having more than 20k residents and further plans to build 2k additional homes. The Committee were invited to visit Stamford when the supplementary service was operating as there was, on average, 50 cars waiting to utilise the service. Councillor Brailsford acknowledged the position of the Council and supported many difficult decisions which were to be made as a result of the budget cuts but he stressed that this service was essential for the town of Stamford and urged the Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling to reconsider this decision;
- Councillor Mrs M J Overton MBE addressed the Committee on behalf of the residents of Leadenham and surrounding areas. It was proposed that alternatives may be possible in order to keep the site at Leadenham open, for example allowing the Parish Council to run the facility. 1500 people signed a petition to retain the site and it was reported that 20k vehicles used the site each year. Further concern related to the impact on the road network of increased travelling distances to the nearest HRWCs in Lincoln and Sleaford. The suggestion of public funding was also mentioned but this would not be possible whilst the site was a formal County Council facility. Councillor Mrs Overton felt that it was nonsensical to close a rural site which was cost effective and popular and urged the Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling to delay making the decision until further options could be provided;
- Councillor S L W Palmer addressed the Committee on behalf of residents within his Alford and Sutton division and also in his capacity as Town

Councillor for Mablethorpe. A number of residents along the east coast of the County were unable to travel further to dispose of their waste as they simply did not have the money to do so. The service in Mablethorpe was considered supplementary but it was thought that this should not be deemed supplementary as it was the only service these residents had access to. The 12 mile radius policy guidelines to the proposed site to was "as the crow flies" but for over 20k residents in those areas this could mean a round trip of up to 35 miles. The Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling was asked to reconsider the discontinuation of the supplementary service in Mablethorpe;

- Councillor Mrs A Reynolds addressed the Committee on behalf of residents in Mablethorpe. Mablethorpe was reported as the poorest area in Lincolnshire with 50% of residents without access to a car. The Committee were asked to consider how these residents could transport their waste to Louth. In addition, concern was raised about the ability of the EU to fine countries if recycling targets were not met. It was suggested that the decision of the Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling be delayed until the impact of the potential level of fines could be assessed;
- Councillor R L Foulkes addressed the Committee on behalf of residents in Stamford. It was suggested that Members in the affected divisions had not been personally informed of these proposals and Councillor Foulkes asked that his disappointment that he had not been notified of something this crucial to residents be noted in the minutes. The Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling and the Group Manager – Environmental Services were invited to Stamford to address both service users and Stamford Town Council to seek their views.

The Chairman thanked Members for their comments and invited officers to address any issues raised during Members' address.

Maps of the relevant areas were projected for Members' information. It was noted that it was 12 miles "as the crow flies" between Stamford and Bourne and, although 5% of residents fell outside of the 12 mile radius, this was acceptable within the current policy. Despite the supplementary service being well utilised and supported for a number of years, additional budgets cuts were necessary and the proposals had been made in line with the current policy in order to deliver those cuts.

In relation to Leadenham, there would be a cost involved for the capital improvements required to keep the facility open. Additionally, the permit for this site would cease on 31st March 2016 which presented a further cost implication.

EU recycling targets were evolving and, as yet, the Council were unsure of the approach to be taken but this would be done through the relevant Government departments.

A number of budget workshops and Committee meetings had addressed the issues as part of the consultation to these items. This had been deemed an acceptable amount for Member engagement but apologies were given if Members felt this was insufficient.

Concern about travel to different facilities was addressed. Sleaford was noted as having good road access and modelling had been done in relation to additional traffic to the Lincoln facility. Future facilitation of infrastructure for increased households would be discussed as and when the need arose.

It was stressed that the proposals were as a result of the recent level of budget cuts and officers had started from the premise to deliver what was statutory and then give consideration to where cuts could be made elsewhere in the service.

The Chairman thanks officers for clarification and opened the debate to the Committee.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- The contract for the supplementary service in Stamford had been competitively tendered which was won by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) and operated on behalf of LCC. The cost involved was for SKDC to provide the service but this contract did not include the disposal cost of the waste;
- It would be unlawful for the local authority to charge residents to use the facilities, however, charges could be implemented should these sites be privately owned;
- The discussion had predominantly been around the cost of the services provided and the savings which would be made as a result of the proposals, but concern was also raised about the Council's carbon footprint as a result of the proposed reduction in service. For example, emissions from increased car journeys and traffic levels in areas where HWRCs would be closed and longer trips would be required to access the nearest site;
- Cross-border agreements were suggested to give residents access to nearer facilities, such as Newark Recycling Centre as an alternative to Leadenham;
- It was suggested that consideration be given to review other methods of funding the HRWCs and supplementary services through Parish or Town Council precepts or through the textile recycling partnership with the Salvation Army;
- In relation to the proposed cessation of the recycling credits, concerns were raised regarding the impact on voluntary organisations currently making use of the scheme and whether this would have an impact on levels of material sent to landfill;

The Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling thanked the Committee for the comments and confirmed that, in order to give the correct notice period to each facility, the latest opportunity to make the decision would be Tuesday 15 March 2016.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee supported the recommendations to the Executive, as set out in Appendix A of the report, but urged the Executive Councillor for Waste and Recycling to reconsider the recommendation for the termination of the supplementary services in Stamford and Mablethorpe; and

2. To provide additional comments to the Executive as noted during the discussion.

At 12.15pm, the meeting was adjourned to allow a comfort break.

Councillors D Brailsford, A H Turner MBE JP, Mrs A Reynolds and R L Foulkes left the meeting and did not return.

At 12.25pm, the meeting reconvened.

66 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES - FUTURE CHALLENGES

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Executive Director for Environment and Economy, which provided information on the future challenges of Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Steve Willis, Chief Operating Officer – Development Services, gave a presentation to the Committee which provided the following key points:-

1. Background (LCC owns eight Household Waste Recycling Centres in Lincolnshire and building another in Bourne);
2. Project Scope (Considerations to be given to the future provision of HWRCs);
3. Exclusions (The project would not consider opening times; number and location of facilities; provision of additional facilities; HWRCs not owned by LCC; and LCC owned Waste Transfer Stations);
4. Milestone Schedule (Final documentation – May 2016; commencement of tender process – June 2016; end of tender process – August 2016; Contract Award – September 2016; and Contract Start – 1 April 2017);
5. Proposed Waste Management Savings (including cessation of voluntary recycling credits; supplementary services; cessation of Lincolnshire residents utilising HWRCs in North Lincolnshire; closure of Leadenham HWRC and Whisby HWRC; long term countywide HWRC provision; and consideration of 'invest to save' opportunities for non-LCC owned HWRCs);
6. Waste Management – Challenging the Service Further (review of staff and operations at five Waste Transfer Stations; collaboration project with LCC and District Councils; developing statutory Joint Waste Strategy with District Councils; consider a Lincolnshire-wide Materials Reclamation Facility; consider the provision of the HWRC in a countywide contract);

The presentation would be circulated to the Committee and added to the website.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Explanation was given that all waste streams were received in to a recycling centre. The recycling centre did market testing with contractors to ascertain their requirements. It was reported that Mid UK had that knowledge and were looking to take this forward;

At 12.30pm Councillor Mrs M J Overton MBE left and did not return.

- It was clarified that kerbside recycling was a separate contract with the Districts and was not a public service.

RESOLVED

That the presentation and comments be noted.

67 CLIMATE LOCAL ANNUAL REVIEW 2015

RESOLVED

That this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

68 UPDATE ON LINCOLNSHIRE ENERGY SWITCHING SCHEME (LESS)

RESOLVED

That this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

69 STREET LIGHTING TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report by the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided an update on the Street Lighting Transformation Project, commenced following an evaluation of budget reduction options to ensure that street lighting in Lincolnshire was more efficient, sustainable and relevant for the county.

Richard Hardesty, Senior Project Leader, introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Committee which covered the following items:-

1. Purpose and Content (LCC have approximately 68k street lamps; costs in the region of £5m to operate and maintain; currently use approximately 26,500,00Kwh per annum or 16% of LCCs carbon baseline; not to be confused with other lighting initiatives within District Councils);
2. The Challenge (unable to continue due to budget cuts; Started as 'Save £1.2m per annum' which has increased to £1.77m per annum; included 'switch off 6000 street lamps');
3. Our Options (convert 68k lamps to LED c£18m; introduce Central Management System c£4m; switch everything off; combination of LED upgrades, switch offs and part night lighting at c£6.4m);
4. Proposed Solution (Circa 17k LED conversions with dimming; Circa 38k part night lighting in residential areas; up to 3k switch offs on non-urban trafficked routes; combined with a list of exceptions);
5. The Expected Benefits (£1.77m revenue savings via a 3.6 year payback based on £6.4m investment; 12.5m Kwh annual reduction in energy; 6250 tonnes carbon reduction; Achieve 1/3 of LCC's 5 year target of 18k tonnes of Co2 reduction; reduced light pollution; reduced ongoing maintenance);
6. Next Steps (Finalise on site assessments for switch offs; communications plan; roll out LEDs/Part Nights/Switch offs from April 2016; changes implemented and savings made by April 2017);

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It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to the Committee and added to the website.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Concern was raised in regard to extra-curricular activity and events held in schools during the evening, particularly in winter, and asked if there was provision to switch off certain lights later. It was explained that the majority of lights were switched off by street and 10pm would be the earliest a street light would be turned off. New equipment gave the choice to switch off at 10pm or midnight and was therefore not as flexible as sounded. It was unlikely, however, that any street lights in the vicinity of school grounds would be switched off before midnight;
- The team were aware of which street lights were the responsibility of LCC and those of the District Councils. These were all logged on a GPS system which would allow cross-referencing of lighting, for example on highways;
- There were stickers which would assist Parish and Town Councils in distinguishing the difference between lights and their ownership i.e. County or District Council;
- Any request for lighting of a cycleway would result in the lights being over the highway itself and this was due to the policy advising that the purpose of a street light was to light the highway. The distance of the columns were also designed for new installations;
- As part of the 'exceptions' lighting would be maintained in town centres. This was identified on the website as part of the Street Lighting policy. Town Centres were those as referred to LTP4;
- The Committee were advised to presume that lights would be switched off through part night lighting unless they were listed in the exceptions listed on the website;
- Further explanation was given that lights after the final junction of the highways network would be turned off at 10.00pm. The majority of lighting in villages like Nettleham, for example, would remain lit until midnight. This was based on the reduction of traffic flow at those times;
- A suggestion was made to ensure that trees branches which obstructed lighting be cut to ensure lights were as effective as possible;
- It was agreed that the Committee would be circulated an electronic link to LTP Number 4 which provided this detail;

RESOLVED

That the report and comments be noted.

At 1.00pm, Councillor A Austin left the meeting and did not return.

70 DISTRICT HEATING PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

RESOLVED

That this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

71 COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2015-2016 PERFORMANCE REPORT,
 QUARTER 3

Consideration was given to a report by the Executive Director for Environment and Economy which provided the key performance information for quarter three which was relevant to the work of the Committee.

Sean Kent, Group Manager – Environmental Services, introduced the report and invited the Committee to comment.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- It was agreed that the figures in relation to Customer Satisfaction were excellent and that a formal compliment to the HWRC teams be conveyed on behalf of the Committee;
- Consideration of turning green waste in to a green moss replacement would be given at some point in the future.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and comments be noted; and
2. That the compliments of the Committee be conveyed to the HWRC teams.

At 1.10pm, Councillor M Brooks left and did not return.

72 ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from the Director responsible for Democratic Services which invited the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year.

Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report and advised that the site visit referred to on page 130 of the report should read 29 July 2016 rather than 1 June 2016.

It was also noted that the items deferred during this meeting would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2016:-

1. Climate Local Annual Review 2015;
2. Update on Lincolnshire Energy Switching Scheme (LESS); and
3. District Heating Project Progress Report

RESOLVED

That the work programme, with the amendments noted above, be agreed.

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm