

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 13 JANUARY 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C L STRANGE (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs V C Ayling (Vice-Chairman), A M Austin, A Bridges, M Brookes, J R Marriott, N M Murray, C R Oxby, C Pain and R A Renshaw

Councillors: R G Fairman, R A Shore and W S Webb attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Michelle Grady (Head of Finance (Communities)), David Hickman (Environment Commissioner), Sean Kent (Group Manager, Environment Services), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Mark Welsh (Flood Risk and Development Manager) and Rachel Wilson (Democratic Services Officer)

30 ANNOUNCEMENT

It was reported that following the notification of a civil emergency due to adverse weather conditions affecting the east coast of Lincolnshire, officers from the Emergency Planning team would be unable to attend the meeting for item 7 on the agenda (Community Resilience and Emergency Preparedness in Lincolnshire). Due to this, the Chairman proposed that this item should be deferred to the next meeting on 3 March 2017.

RESOLVED

That item 7 on the agenda be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 3 March 2017.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C J T H Brewis.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Development.

32 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

33 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2016

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During consideration of the minutes, the following corrections were made:

- That Councillor J R Marriot's apologies be noted.
- Minute number 26, bullet point number 2 – the word 'not' be inserted as follows *'it was reported that this was **not** due to the works, but from cake.....'*
- Minute number 27, first bullet point – the word 'new' be inserted as follows *'A **new** bridge on the river steeping.....'*

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the above amendments being noted.

34 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND SENIOR OFFICERS

There were no announcements by Executive Councillors or Senior Officers.

It was noted that a letter would be sent to Councillor Mrs Bradwell, as the Executive Councillor responsible for Children's Services, on behalf of the Committee in relation to the importance of the SCoRE programme.

Councillor W S Webb, Executive Support Councillor for Development expressed his thanks to all the staff who had been working through the night to prepare for the storm surge that was expected along the east coast on the morning and evening of 13 January 2017.

35 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

The Committee received a report which described the budget proposals arising from the Provisional Local Government Settlement, announced on 15 December 2016 and the implications for the commissioning strategy 'Protecting & Sustaining the Environment' which included the following activities:

- Reducing Carbon Emissions
- Flood Risk Management
- Protecting & Enhancing the natural and built environment
- Waste Management
- Sustainable Planning

Members were guided through the report and were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was queried whether there had been any assessment of the impact of the closure of the two waste sites on the budget. Was there evidence that a saving had been made, particularly in relation to whether there had been an increase in fly tipping. Members were advised that districts had not noted any significant increase in fly-tipping since the closure of the sites. The cost of disposal of the fly-tipped waste would be the responsibility of the county council. The costs of maintaining these sites had been removed from the

budget. Members were advised that the closure of these sites did not affect the Council's policy.

- The increase in budget costs was due to the amount of waste which was being presented for disposal.
- It was queried why the council was only setting a one year budget, as some of the districts were putting in place medium term financial strategies. Members were advised that the Council had been balancing its budget with the use of reserves, as the Executive did not want to make decisions about cutting services if they could find other ways to make savings. The Council did have a model as it had signed up to a four year funding deal from government, and so knew what income would be coming into the authority. However, there were still some very big unknowns, such as the Better Care Fund, which would not affect the districts.
- It was clarified that the Street Cleaning teams in Lincoln were paid for by the City of Lincoln Council, but disposal of the waste collected was paid for by the County Council.
- A large cost in terms of waste disposal was the haulage to transport the material to processing facilities.
- Concerns were raised about the possibility of delays to the Boston Barrier project, as there was already a public inquiry scheduled. It was clarified that the £11m the Council had set aside for this project was for improvements in addition to the Barrier itself, but the barrier itself had attracted 100% funding from the government due to the number of residents who would be affected by flooding. It was also noted that the public inquiry should not affect the programme as it was in relation to how people use the river.
- It was noted that the cost of non-pay inflation had not been applied as a cost pressure for a number of years, only pay inflation was being included in this budget.
- Members commented that they would have liked to see another table alongside Table A that provided more information on the budget for each of the activities. Members were advised that the budget book which would be prepared for Council on 24 February 2017 would be very detailed.
- Members commented that there was a lot of good work going on, such as the Energy from Waste facility. It was noted that in relation to the Energy from Waste Facility, at the end of the 25 year contract it would be completely refitted by the operators and so the Council would be handed back a new facility to contract again.

RESOLVED

That the Environmental Scrutiny Committee supports the proposed changes for the commissioning strategy 'Protecting and Sustaining the Environment'.

36 LINCOLNSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP AUDIT REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Environmental Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to consider the final report of an audit undertaken on

the present Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) and the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS).

It was reported that the scope of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership Audit was to provide independent assurance that there were strong governance arrangements in place for the LWP as well as ensuring that the JMWMS was an up to date and relevant document. The report contained an action plan which outlined the risks identified during the audit as well as findings, implications and recommendations for addressing each risk. The Committee was informed that there was now an agreed management action against each of the 12 findings, along with a proposed completion date and a responsible member of staff.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- It was positive that representatives from all eight authorities, portfolio holder and senior officer, and the Environment Agency regularly attended the LWP meetings.
- It was a legal requirement for an authority to have a Waste Strategy
- There was a need for a clear strategic direction
- One of the actions (recommendation 7) had already been completed as a paper had been taken to the meeting of the LWP in November 2016 in relation to future governance arrangements, and an option agreed.
- Members were reassured that although many actions were rated as red or amber, they should all become green when the new Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy was completed in April 2018. It was noted that a lot of the actions were interlinked and dependent on the completion of the strategy.
- It was confirmed that there would be regular updates to the Committee in relation to the progress of the Strategy.
- It was commented that there would be a small team undertaking the large task of preparing a revised strategy.
- It was queried whether there were league tables for the most successful recycling authorities and if there was any merit in carrying out a desk top survey on whether the most successful authorities were unitary. However, it was reported that usually high performing authorities were those that had kerbside collections and whether the authority was two-tier or unitary did have some effects.
- The LWP was looking at identifying the six valuable types of recyclables that should be collected in bins.
- It was noted that one of the drivers for the districts to reduce contamination in recycling was the TEEP (Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable) Regulations.
- Lincolnshire was a high performing authority in terms of recycling, even though performance was not at target level (it was noted that this was an aspirational target). However, the LWP had written to support Hampshire County Council in their letter to the Government to look at whether IBA (Incinerator Bottom Ash) could be collected as recycling. It was noted that if IBA could be included as recycling, Lincolnshire's recycling rate could increase by around 6%

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- Recycling rates had dropped due to legislative changes such as street cleaning not being able to be classified as composting.
- It was clarified that OWG referred to the Officer Working Group
- It was noted that the document referred to an Appendix 3 which wasn't included. It was agreed that this would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting.
- It was queried whether the way that districts operated their collections made a difference to the amount of recycling collected. It was also queried whether there was less contamination in recycling which was collected weekly. Members were advised that every 120 tonnes of recycling was sampled as part of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) regulations.
- There was a need to engage with districts on how contamination in recycling could be tackled, and there was a need for a resource to be put into this.
- One member advised that he also represented Boston Borough Council on the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership and confirmed that there was buy-in from the Partnership to get some of the actions completed. However, the difficulty was always when the Partners went back to their own authority and needed to persuade others to agree.
- The audit had helped the Partnership to focus in what it should be doing, and was now in a position to be able to move forward.
- It was accepted that there was a need for uniformity in terms of recycling, as when different areas had different messages it was confusing for the public.
- It was recognised that some districts had a tougher job than others in terms of tackling contamination. It was agreed that there was a need for more education, or a move to kerbside collections, as the better the quality of the recycling, the more valuable it was.
- One member suggested that the future was in kerbside collections, as well as the need to be clear on what recycling would be collected. There was also a need to be clear about which materials were the most valuable, and therefore most cost effective to collect. It was also suggested whether a second energy from waste facility should be considered to handle the commercial waste as well as that from the additional homes which were planned for the county. Members were advised that these points would be dealt with through the Waste Strategy.
- There would be efficiencies from the operation of the Energy from Waste facility, if it was burning the right balance of materials, for example yoghurt pots and margarine tubs. These items were very light but they burned well, but often were put into the recycling. It was noted that the facility occasionally needed to burn oil to keep it at the right burning rate, if the mix of waste was not right, for example if there was a lot of green waste in the mix.
- It was also confirmed that there was buy-in to the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership from the City of Lincoln Council who really wanted to see it improve.
- How district councils collected recyclables was a matter for each district to decide.
- It was suggested that the different types of recyclables should be bagged up at the doorstep, however, members were advised that the use of bags would mean that a bag splitter would be needed at the MRF, which had an additional

cost. Also collection vehicles had been fitted to be able to empty wheelie bins. Changes to collection methods would have further impacts. However, the issue of kerbside collection and sorting would be addressed by the new Strategy.

- It was noted that as a disposal authority, the County Council had to deal with whatever waste was presented. It could not dictate how districts collected their waste.
- It was commented that there used to be a recycling business in Boston which collected newspapers. However, members were informed that this collected newspaper was from commercial properties.
- Members were advised that waste should start to be seen as a resource which could provide income.
- It was suggested that the LWP needed to start from 'ground zero', with clean paper, clean cardboard and clean tins, with the rest going to the Energy from Waste Facility.
- It was suggested whether stickers on bins to show what could be recycled should be introduced, and members were advised that there would be a range of educational material available if a standardised mix was agreed, and hopefully clearer labelling would be part of this.
- What was very clear from the discussions with the LWP was that everyone was on the same page, and wanted to make things better. The Partnership was now in a much better place, and the audit was seen as a positive first step.
- Closer working between this Committee and the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership would be supported.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in relation to the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership Audit report be noted.

37 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

This item was deferred to the meeting due to be held on 3 March 2017.

38 ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report which provided an opportunity to consider and comment on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

It was noted that the Community Resilience and Emergency Preparedness in Lincolnshire would be added to the agenda for the 3 March 2017 meeting, as it had been deferred due to the adverse weather conditions on the east coast of England on 13 January 2017.

It was suggested if there could be an update to the next Flood and Drainage Management Committee if the expected flooding did become a serious incident.

It was noted that although there were no items scheduled for the April meeting, the date would be held in the diary in the event of any pre-decision scrutiny or urgent items which needed to be considered.

RESOLVED

1. That the Work Programme as attached at Appendix A to the report be noted.
2. That the addition to the March meeting as highlighted above be agreed.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am