

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

Statement from: Councillor E J Poll, Executive Councillor for Commercial and Environmental Management

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP)

The continuing impact of the Covid-19 crisis has been the focus of all partnership members since lockdown began. The increased levels of waste and recycling that have been collected from households has put more tonnage in the system and our waste transfer stations have managed to deal with increased throughput and more collections for delivery to the Energy for Waste (EfW) and Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).

The recycling centres opened in mid-May and have been available for a full range of services since July. The creation of a booking system to control the number of vehicles on site to protect staff and visiting residents in accordance with Government guidelines was done quickly by Waste Services working with other LCC teams (Comms, IT). Staff really went the extra mile working weekends and nights to get the booking system from concept to reality and implemented. The team worked with the recycling centre contractors to reopen the sites as quickly as possible.

The EFW has successfully completed its annual maintenance shutdown and is now returned to full operational status.

The first annual report of the partnership was formally published in July. This was a major success and was enthusiastically supported by all the partnership members at the AGM. It looked back over the first year of the partnership's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and how it has performed against its ambitions and objectives. The overarching picture was success on many fronts.

The Government have resumed their timetable for introducing the new policies contained in the Resources and Waste Strategy. The second round of consultations that will inform the drafting of the legislation is now promised for March 2021. It is hoped that there will be clarity about their promises of future funding given the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis and the recession.

Sustainability

Work continues to create and implement the Council's Green Masterplan, with regular updates being reported to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee. A work programme is being developed, designed to link into and support the Council's Transformation Programme, and we remain on target to see the first draft masterplan by October this year. In addition we are actively engaging with our district partners in supporting and developing their approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the next few years.

Public interest remains very high in this area of the council's work, and we have also been supporting the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership in their preparations for

what is expected to be a year of great opportunities, but also of significant challenge. This includes careful consideration of recent Government announcements of changes to the planning and development system, as well as creating a nature strategy for the county that dovetails with the Council's Green Masterplan and Transformation programme.

Planning

The Planning Services team has continued to operate normally during the Covid pandemic with applications being received and processed in a timely manner. The Planning and Regulation Committee has met virtually and has conducted business in a transparent way enabling the public to speak at the meeting. Compliance and monitoring visits to minerals and waste sites were suspended initially and then re-started again in May as lockdown restrictions were eased.

The work of the Historic Places Team was subject to an initial lull due to the impact of the pandemic, development work has since picked up significantly and the archaeological advisers have been very busy. A number of quarries are preparing for an extension of their operations and work on a number of road schemes is starting with archaeological works. On the route of the Spalding Western Relief Road enabling works have commenced on site, which includes archaeology investigations, some vegetation clearance, utility diversion preparation and property demolition.

At a quarry on King Street in West Deeping archaeologists have discovered a Roman feature which began life as a simple cistern for the collection of fresh water but later became a ritual site and contained all sorts of symbolic objects.

The historic towns project continues apace. Such is its success that we are being asked to engage across the county in a number of high street funding initiatives. The economic impact of online shopping and now the health crisis is likely to be dramatic and the team are helping to find sustainable solutions. We have applied to Historic England for funding for a project to improve our understanding of the historic pubs across the county. A pilot study is expected to start along the coastal area to test the methodology. This will be the first such project to be undertaken in England looking at this increasingly at risk group of buildings. The agricultural activity across the county continues to disturb significant remains from time to time. Following up on some finds made by metal detectorists last year we are commencing a project north of Lincoln to investigate an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery before it is lost to the plough.