

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2020**

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

### **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

#### **Planning**

The Planning Services team has continued to operate normally during the summer and autumn with applications being received and processed in a timely way. The Planning and Regulation Committee has met virtually and has conducted business in a transparent way enabling the public to speak at planning meetings. In addition, a site visit by the Planning and Regulation Committee took place in September which enabled a controversial minerals planning application to be determined without delay.

Compliance and monitoring visits to minerals and waste sites have continued throughout the summer and winter months.

The Historic Places team has continued the historic town's project. While community engagement is not happening as would have been preferred, online and virtual connections are still possible. A number of educational resources have been created which will be helpful in supporting curriculum delivery in schools. Nine towns are now substantially completed and their reports produced. It is hoped the reports will benefit from design input and that resources will be available to allow printed versions of the reports to be produced.

Responding to new developments, the team seeks to ensure that archaeological evidence is recorded wherever the threat to the loss of such remains cannot be avoided. Large infrastructure projects like the Viking Link require monitoring to ensure the appropriate systems are in place for adequate recording. A financial contribution has been secured from National Grid towards this work. Early work on the Spalding Western Relief Road has also revealed remains of archaeological significance, which are being recorded well in advance of the main construction contract starting.

The 'Searching for Saxons in Lincolnshire' project undertook field evaluations in September. This project was initiated following a discovery by a group of metal-detectorists of material which indicated the presence of early Anglo-Saxon graves near the village of Cammeringham, north of Lincoln. After being there for over 1500 years deep ploughing had begun to bring to the surface highly ornate brooches, beads and spearheads indicating high-status male and female burials dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. In September, during a two week excavation, a team of archaeologists investigated the limits of the cemetery, to gather information to allow us to reconstruct the life of the early inhabitants. Some of the graves contained Roman antiquities including some fragments of a glass vessel and a Roman terret ring.

While the pandemic meant that the local community could not be directly involved in the dig as had been hoped, alternative means for community engagement interaction with their local heritage has been identified. The project team produced daily blogs, photographs and video clips of new discoveries and a live virtual Open Day on the 'Searching for Saxons in Lincolnshire' Facebook page. With 3K followers and 2.5K page likes, people in Lincolnshire and globally watched as the investigation unfolded and talked to the archaeologists on site. In fact over there were over 141,000 interactions with the page over the period of the dig which has highlighted Lincolnshire's hidden historic assets and will encourage some of these people to visit Lincolnshire in the future.

When it is safe to do so, the findings will be exhibited at a local venue and at The Collection. As part of the project we will be running virtual educational workshops for local schools.

### **Waste and Recycling Services**

The continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in increased levels of waste and recycling being collected from households and going through the disposal system through our waste transfer station network to the Energy from Waste (EfW) plant and our other end contracts. We continue to carefully monitor and actively manage the situation.

We are pleased that the recycling centres have remained open for a full range of services since July and this continued through the second national lockdown thanks to working closely with our contract partners and through the customer use of the booking system which helps to manage the number of vehicles on site at any one time, to protect staff and residents. Whilst Covid-19 continues to present a challenge, we are confident that access for residents and services will be maintained through the winter and spring periods. The booking system continues to be developed to improve and enhance the customer experience.

The countywide partnership project to introduce separated collections of paper and cardboard across the county is progressing well and we expect delivery of new bins in readiness for this new collection to begin rollout in Spring 2021.

Work is underway to be able to respond to the second round of consultations for the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy that are expected in Spring 2021. The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership continues to be future focussed and is looking creatively to ensure that the aims and objectives are mindful of the environment, of achieving best value for money, and providing residents with a sustainable, efficient waste service.

New projects are underway to identify waste and recycling solutions that can support the Green Masterplan by separating out more recyclable materials from mixed collections, maximising the collection of reusable items and putting them back into use through community channels, generating sustainable sources of alternative vehicle fuel and local generation of electricity to provide charging points to reduce carbon emissions.

## **Sustainability**

The Council's first draft Green Masterplan has been completed and is currently being refined and developed along with its action plan. We anticipate bringing forward the final version of the Plan for approval in February next year.

As well as demonstrating how the Council will meet its commitment to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, the plan will also outline key areas of service delivery and partnership working that will contribute to this target, as well as providing a framework to work with and support our partner authorities to meet their own commitments in this area.

The Council is already on track to meet its carbon reduction targets for 2023, set out in the Carbon Management Plan in 2019, and this will form a core on-going activity through the Green Masterplan. Other activities will include encouraging green community initiatives, improving energy efficiency, reducing the use of plastics and improving recycling and waste management practices.

In addition, the development of the Green Masterplan has now been brought into alignment with the Council's transformation programme, so strong links can be created across the programme, including embedding sustainable working as a principle within all the Council's priority activities.

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