

BROADLAND ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Broadland Environmental Excellence Policy Development Panel of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday, 20 October 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: K Kelly (Chairman), N Brennan (Vice-Chair), A Crotch, J Davis, K Lawrence, G Nurden, S Prutton and J Ward

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: J Fisher

Substitute: Councillors: S Lawn (In place of J Fisher)

Cabinet Member in Attendance: Councillor: J Leggett

Officers in Attendance: N Howard (Assistant Director for Regulatory), A Sommazzi (Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager), K Burns (Environmental Coordinator) and J Hammond (Democratic Services Officer)

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from the following members:

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Cllr Davis	10 – Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan	Other Interest – Company Secretary for Norwich Community Solar
Cllr Nurden	10 – Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan	Other Interest – Accountant for an energy company

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Fisher, with Cllr S Lawn substituting.

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Assistant Director for Regulatory introduced the report which presented to members the proposed new overarching Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Policy.

He explained that Housing Associations and the Police had been consulted as part of the development of the Policy and that both consultees were in support of the Policy. The Police had made three comments about operational working between the Council and the Police and, meetings had since been held to discuss these comments.

There was no legal or statutory obligation to put in place a formalised ASB Policy but as the primary agency responsible for dealing with ASB and exercising enforcement powers, it was felt that a formalised ASB Policy would clarify what communities could expect from the Council, and clarify how intervention/enforcement approaches would be pursued. In response to a query, the Assistant Director for Regulatory advised that there were currently two ASB and/or statutory nuisance cases being brought before the courts.

Members were advised that, if adopted, the proposed ASB Policy would:

- Be a new addition to the Council's broad policy framework.
- Set out the Council's principles and broad policy for ASB investigation, intervention and robust enforcement.
- Support both informal early intervention and efficient enforcement where it was needed.

A number of members raised concerns that the proposed policy and the Council's website were not clear on what residents could expect in terms of timescales and what action would be taken by the Council. The Assistant Director for Regulatory confirmed that officers were currently updating the Council's website with information covering these concerns. He further clarified that the early intervention approach meant the Council aimed to provide a doorstep response within 48 hours. It was noted that in a large number of cases, the expectation from residents was for the Council to talk to the offender as opposed to legal action such as enforcement notices or court cases.

In response to a query on the number of incidents reported, the Assistant Director for Regulatory explained that between the two Councils approximately 50 cases had progressed to enforcement. It was explained that officers had seen a 60-70% increase in the number of reported incidents compared to the previous year, which indicated that public tolerance was decreasing. The Assistant Director for Regulatory drew attention to the pilot scheme for an early intervention ASB officer and it was noted that the scheme had been effective with good levels of satisfaction from the public. However, as the pilot had only been funded for one year, the team was looking at how the scheme could be funded in the future.

One member queried whether there was a risk of the Council handling cases which should be dealt with by the Police. The Assistant Director for Regulatory advised that in reality, the Police were likely undertaking cases on behalf of the Council, especially in terms of out of hours calls. Members were informed that at present six Police officers were based within the Council's offices.

Discussion turned to the range of unacceptable activities which would be covered in the ASB Policy. It was noted that activities relating to bonfires and green fires was not covered within the policy. The Assistant Director for Regulatory explained that in the majority of cases it was the smell of the fire which impacted on residents in the first instance, and so cases would be dealt with under statutory nuisance powers.

Cllr J Davis left the meeting for the remainder of this item.

After further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet recommends to Council that it agree the adoption of the proposed Anti-social Behaviour Policy

10. ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN

Cllr J Davis returned to the meeting before the consideration of this item.

The Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager presented the report which outlined the changes made to the Environmental Strategy and invited the Committee to recommend to Cabinet the approval and adoption of the updated Environmental Strategy and associated Delivery Plan.

Members were reminded that the current strategy had been adopted in 2020. The strategy had been revised to include two new key commitments which were, the 2030 Net-Zero target for organisational emissions and a commitment to align to the Government's 2050 target for wider district decarbonisation.

Officers explained that a delivery plan had been created as a companion document to outline the activities which would take place over the next two years to support the two new commitments. The Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager informed members that the delivery plan would be published on the Council's website and continue to be updated regularly in line with local and national changes/requirements. In response to a question, officers explained that the delivery plan would be brought before the Committee twice a year to update members on specific measures and highlight any changes made.

Discussion turned to the objectives outlined within the strategy and delivery plan and the Environmental Coordinator explained that the Council intended to switch its energy supply to a certified renewable electricity tariff, which would help the Council to reach net zero by 2030 as it would enable the Council to remove electricity emissions from its carbon footprint.

One member requested clarification on Energy Performance Certificates (EPC). The Environmental Coordinator clarified that EPCs had to be obtained when a property was sold, rented out or when energy efficiency works were carried out. In Broadland 48% of properties held an EPC, 37% of which were rated as C or above. Members noted that the number of properties with an EPC would continue to increase year by year.

A question was raised as to how the NzC3 objective – *to embed a 'whole Council' approach to reducing carbon emissions by ensuring that all decisions take into consideration the issues presented by climate change*, would impact on planning decisions. The Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager advised that the Council would create a carbon literacy training board to ensure that service areas and decision making processes were onboard with the target to reach net zero by 2023.

The Committee discussed measures which could be put into place to promote sustainable travel planning and it was suggested that the Council investigate the reinstatement of rural bus routes and support the business case for the Postwick park-and-ride to be offered year-round as opposed to the current seasonal service. The Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager added that the Council would be implementing a lift-share scheme for officers.

A number of additions and alterations to the Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan were suggested by the Committee, these included:

- The expected Nutrient Neutrality Strategy should be referenced within the plan;
- Inclusion of water meadows alongside wetlands, as these added value to flood defence measures, but were vulnerable to planning developments;
- Green roofs should be mentioned within the plan and highlighted as an option for residents and developers;
- Rainwater harvesting and wildlife gardens should be clearly referenced and promoted;
- The timescale for the 5% increase in the area of re-wilding on Council owned amenity land should be amended to 2024 in line with the timescale of similar measures.
- Officers were requested to consider the removal of references to the development of a financial package on page 76 of the report, as it was felt that the package would be a finance support measure not an environmental measure

After further in-depth discussion, it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That subject to the amendments requested at the meeting, the Environmental Excellence Policy Development Panel recommends to Cabinet that it:

1. Approve and adopt an updated Environmental Strategy (Appendix 1)
2. Approve and adopt the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2)

(The meeting concluded at 7.24 pm)

Chairman