Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Thursday 12 September 2019 at 10.00am

Committee Members Present:  
Councillors: A Dearnley (Chairman), J Knight (Vice Chairman), C Brown, F Curson, D Elmer, G Francis, K Hurn and T Laidlaw

Apologies:  
Councillor: R Savage

Cabinet Member in Attendance:  
Councillor: K Kiddie

Other Members in Attendance:  
Councillor: V Clifford-Jackson

Officers in Attendance:  
The Director of Place (P Courtier), the Environmental Management Officers (A Old and D Baillie-Murden), and the Environmental Protection Manager (S Bruton).

10 CHAIRMAN’S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and explained the objectives and remit of the Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee. He stressed that with the right investment, the Council’s policies to protect the environment could be consistent with continued economic growth and achieving the necessary improvements to infrastructure. To illustrate the potential compatibility of these objectives, he quoted a statistic that Britain’s greenhouse gas emissions had reduced by 44% since 1990 whilst its GDP had increased by 75%.

11 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee held on 9 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN AND POLICY STATEMENT

The Environmental Management Officers presented the report which sought to gain the support of members for a single action plan and joint overarching policy statement for both South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils, setting out their commitment to the environment.
The Committee firstly considered the Environmental Policy Statement and stressed the importance of raising the awareness of environmental issues to residents and businesses throughout the District. Members discussed the remit and duties of the Councils and the need to remain focussed on the work which the authorities could and were empowered to undertake.

The Committee generally felt that a 25-year plan was perhaps too lengthy, and it was suggested that the document should contain shorter timescales for actions and campaigns within its commitment.

Members turned to the Action Plan and requested that officers simplify the document by expanding on various acronyms and abbreviations. The Committee agreed that more targeted measures and outcomes were required within the Action Plan and that more specific and measurable actions with indicators of success were needed to ensure the Councils’ aims were clear and demonstrated high standards.

It was suggested that the Councils support local initiatives, i.e. composting schemes, food waste programs such as community fridges, fair trade schemes and other such local projects. It was also suggested that the Plan should contain more detail, such as how and when re-use and upcycling could be implemented rather than merely focussing on waste minimisation.

Members discussed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies and the Director of Place clarified the practice and procedures around town and parish spending of this funding, advising that although district councils were not permitted to control how this was spent, Broadland District Council had developed a means of assisting and advising towns and parishes of appropriate and effective ways of utilising their CIL monies, and by enabling them to draw down funds in advance of CIL to aid with their plans.

The Committee considered sustainable procurement and agreed that the cheapest tender was not always the most environmentally friendly. In response, officers reassured members that tenders were rarely just evaluated on cost but on overall value for money and quality. The Environmental Protection Manager agreed that environmental issues were not always a contributing factor in procurements but that this should be a consideration in the future.

Members discussed community transport and agreed that this was an important issue in the rural area, although accepted that district councils had little control over public transport other than through working alongside Norfolk County Council to support more sustainable and healthier transport systems.

In response to a member’s question regarding whether there had been any noticeable increase in fly-tipping since charges had been increased at recycling centres, officers advised that there had been no significant change and that most items which had been fly-tipped would have been free to dispose of through the recycling centres.

The Committee were generally in support of the Action Plan and Policy Statement but suggested that officer make alterations and add more detail, as noted above. It was agreed that officers would email the updated documents to all members of the Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee who could then feed any comment.
back through the Chairman and Vice Chairman, prior to Cabinet and Council’s consideration of the report.

It was then;

**RESOLVED:** To recommend that Cabinet recommends to Council:

1. The proposed Policy Statement and Action Plan (subject to the suggested amendments as detailed above, with the final wording to be agreed by officers in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee);

and

2. That the Action Plan is reviewed 6-monthly, following its implementation.

13. **GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Place advised that there were some items in the pipeline which would be considered by the other South Norfolk Council policy committees but, as these impacted on environmental issues, members were welcome to attend and speak at these meetings.

Members were advised that the Waste Services Review would be discussed formally by the Policy Committee, at a date to be confirmed, before its consideration by Cabinet in December.

It was noted that the Inclusive Growth Strategy, which had recently been considered by Cabinet, would need further consideration by both the Growth, Infrastructure and Environment and the People and Communities Policy Committees, so members would be notified of this, once a date had been set.

The Committee noted that the date for the next meeting would be communicated to members in due course.

(The meeting concluded at 12.00pm)

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Chairman