

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Stevens (Chair), Kilbride (Deputy Chair), Ashraf, Birch, Fuchshuber, Haque, Holland-Delamere, Joyce, Meredith and Miah.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** MS Ruth Austen (Assistant Director of Regulatory, West Northamptonshire Council), Ms Fiona Unett (Deputy Director of Waste and Recycling Services) & three members of the public.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None were submitted.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were submitted.

### **3. BRIEFING ON WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S NORTHAMPTON TOWN CENTRE WASTE AND RECYCLING POLICY**

- Ms Austen stated they were hoping to address the key issues presented in the Town centre relating to waste and recycling. Proliferation of waste bins and the associated spillages, obstructions, smells and vermin.
- Neighbourhood wardens and the Northampton BID have assisted with reporting waste issues.
- Campaign has been in action across West Northants promoting communications, enforcement activities, ways to report and there has been some funding from the Police, Fire and Crime commissioner has released some funding to tackle fly-tipping on private land.
- Dog fouling has come into force and operation.
- Targeted pilots in mix of residential and commercial residents that can pose an issue as businesses were responsible for their own waste collection.
- Commercial waste has been a topic affecting many areas and other Local authorities for example South End, Southampton and East Riding authorities have implemented policies to ensure the town looks cleaner.
- There has been work with a discovery phase, engagement with local stakeholders, agree draft policy content and hope to present consultation responses in Spring 2024 and then a soft launch with 3education in Summer 2024 and then full implementation in Autumn 2024.
- Wardens would be sent out across town to gain data on how commercial businesses manage their waste a recycling and residents views as part of the consultation.
- Challenges have been posed where properties have no on-site waste and recycling storage available to them especially, with the change in composition with a larger mix of commercial and residential properties.
- Planning to engage with the main commercial waste collection services providers within the Town Centre.
- Proposed grant funding that can help achieve solutions to prevent fly-tipping that could potentially provide bin stores for areas where no on-site bin storage.

A Councillor asked what were the current enforcement operations for dog fouling as it does not appear to be enforced. In response, Ms Austen stated the Council were hoping to incorporate dog fouling fixed penalty notices within the private contract to assist with the Public Safety Protection Order.

In response to a question posed by a Councillor, Ms Austen stated the Wellingborough Road was not considered as part of the Town Centre Policy however, this initial policy would be a pilot and could be implemented on the Wellingborough Road and Kingsley Park Terrace once completed.

A Councillor commented that majority of bins were not locked when not-in-use and there was a lack signage stating who the commercial waste bin belongs too.

A Councillor raised concerns about units being redeveloped from commercial to residential in the Town Centre and the volume of waste produced. A Councillor added that these issues were prominent especially with the pre-existing residential units around the Market Square. Ms Unett stated if a planning application for 'Change of Use' has been submitted it's difficult for the Waste and Recycling team to be made aware of this and they were generally only notified when a resident complains on the overflow of waste. She added that education was needed as some units have a high-turnover of tenants as this can pose some difficulty.

In response to a question from a Councillor on the implications of adverse weather due to Climate Change, Ms Austen stated that this would need to be considered in the writing of this policy however, it would be down to the commercial waste operator.

In response to a question, Ms Austen stated recommendations have been made on commercial developments via the planning consultation process and request that planning approval only be granted dependent on adequate storage was included within the plans however, this may be overlooked during the Planning Committee or Officer review.

It was explained in response to a question Ms Austen stated during the education campaigns they intend to communicate as clearly as possible and were reviewing how to incorporate translations.

Ms Austen stated the Town Centre Policy was considered as a pilot scheme and recognise that the issue of waste and recycling was a widespread issue across West Northants. She continued the Town Centre Policy would act as a learning exercise and if successful be implemented elsewhere across West Northants.

Ms Austen stated they have been working in cooperation with the CCTV team so it could be used for enforcement purposes and monitor fly-tipping hotspots. She continued that enforcement action has also been taken from the contents such as letter or witnesses who were prepared to provide a statement.

A Councillor requested whether streets could be high pressured hosing could be done weekly and incorporated in future plans. In response Ms Austen stated the enhanced street cleansing programme was done regularly in the early mornings to prevent disruption.

In response to a question, Ms Unett stated that this policy mainly focused on commercial waste.

#### **4. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**RESOLVED:** The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUDGET

### ADVERTISING & MARKETING

The Chair stated there was a summary included within the Chair's report and thought it would be beneficial to review the forward budget developed by the Finance Officer (FO). The Town Clerk advised that the forward budget was an exercise based on variables and therefore a simulation. He added the FO proposed that each Committee should have an advertising and marketing budget to enable greater transparency.

A Councillor raised that £2,000 may not be a sufficient amount for advertising and marketing budget as cost could easily increase. A Councillor stated that Waste and Recycling was the responsibility of West Northamptonshire Council and if leafleting was to be done then it could be done via local groups and organisations and funded via Environmental Grants.

**RECOMENDATION:** It was agreed that a General Environmental Services' Advertising and Marketing Budget be allocated £2,000 for Financial Year 24-25.

### URBAN TREE PLANTING

The Chair stated a protocol could be developed for Urban Tree planting in the Town Council's wards. A Councillor echoed his sentiments as street trees have been in decline and believe further work can be done on this issue. A Councillor stated that there was no tree planting policy at West Northants Council until recently and this document outlines the type of trees suitable with process involved to do this was straight forward. The Councillor added that they had worked with Keir, West Northants and local residents to get trees planted.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Environmental Projects be allotted £25,000 for Financial Year 24-25

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Environmental Grants be allotted £25,000 for Financial Year 24-25.

### ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk stated that overall water costs have totalled to £30,000 across the eight sites however, this does not include any infrastructure, maintenance or repairs thereby the large increase in the forward budget.

A Councillor stated that the income from allotments was small in comparison to the overall costs and posed whether some of these costs could be passed onto the allotment users. The Town Clerk explained the law surrounding allotments and charges was heavily regulated within Government legislation and services users could only be charged within a certain amount.

In response to a question, it was explained by the Town Clerk that it was a statutory requirement for parish councils to be responsible for allotments. In response to a question, the Town Council stated that in theory providing water to allotment was not a statutory requirement from his experience. The Town Clerk added that the Town Council was on budget for water usage however, risks were posed by maintenance and infrastructure costs. It was commented by a Councillor that Allotments be a standing item on the agenda.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Allotments Repairs and Maintenance budget be increased to £60,000 and any underspend be transferred into an earmarked reserve.

## 6. BLOOM UPDATE

The Town Clerk stated Mrs Hanam-Jones (Events and Projects Officer) completed a report on the Northampton in Bloom budget and proposed an increase as outlined within the report to maintain the level of service despite increasing costs due to inflation. He added that these figures included the associated costs of watering, bracket testing.

A Councillor posed that additional funds be added to the proposed budget as outlined by Mrs Hanam-Jones as a contingency. The Chair responded whether a Bloom contingency could be earmarked in General Reserves and funds for smaller environmental project such as the St Katherine's Garden project completed in 2023.

A Councillor stated the £23,000 that had been provided from West Northamptonshire Council would cease from 2023 and therefore more funds would be required from the Town Council to mitigate that shortfall. The Town Clerk stated there has been earmarked reserves since the Town Council's inception to make-up the shortfall of the Bloom Grant.

In response to a question, the Town Clerk stated Mrs Hanam-Jones had utilised her experiences on the costs needed to maintain the current level of service without any enhancements. It was clarified by the Town Clerk that the Bloom Grant received from West Northamptonshire Council was incorporated within the overall budget.

A Councillor posed whether the reserves could be used towards the Northampton in Bloom budget. The Chair stated he had hoped the funds within reserves could be maintained and then used for an Anti-Fly tipping campaign as suggested by a fellow councillor.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Northampton in Bloom be increased to £87,172 for Financial Year 2024-25 as outlined within the report and an additional XYZ

**7. TO DISCUSS PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON'S SUSTAINABILITY, LOCAL INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP AGENDA HUB (SILPAH)**

The Chair explained that was a variety of organisations involved and pledged to be part of SILPAH which does incur some benefits. He added that Northampton General Hospital and West Northamptonshire Council had recently signed up to SILPAH.

**DEFERRED**

**8. CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM UPDATE**

The Chair stated the Climate Change Forum continued and hoped to have further discussions on their work. A Councillor requested if there were any further details on the air quality within the Town Centre, especially on the Drapery. The Chair explained in response that West Northamptonshire Council had installed a number of air quality monitors across the Town and could be accessed via their website. A Councillor explained that Stage Coach had introduced two new electric buses to their fleet and welcomed these.

The Chair stated feedback had been received from South Court Environmental who had received from Climate Change Grant Scheme and circulated this within the Chair's report and some positive work had occurred as a result of the funding.

**MEETING CONCLUDED: 7:37PM**