



Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee. held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 21 June 2022.

PRESENT

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC
Mr. M. Frisby CC

Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC
Mr. M. Hunt CC
Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC

In attendance

Mr. B. Pain – Lead Member for the Environment and Green Agenda
Mrs. R. Page CC - Online

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. T. Pendleton CC be appointed Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2023.

Mr. T. Pendleton in the Chair

2. Election of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. M. Frisby CC be elected Vice Chairman for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2023.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022.

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that three questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5) from Mr. M. Hunt CC.

1. Future Residual waste Strategy

“On 16 January 2020 the Director stated in her report to the committee:
 “Procurement of option(s) for waste treatment, replacing an existing residual waste contract for up to 60,000 tonnes of waste. ...For the procurement exercise commissioning is following a competitive dialogue approach; selection questionnaires have been received and evaluated with clarifications resolved and are now in the outline solutions stage of the tender process. The new contract is due to be awarded in early 2021 with a start date to be confirmed between April 2021 to April 2023”

Has the Contract been awarded and is the start date of such a contract still anticipated by April 2023?”

Response by the Chairman

“Due to the nature and status of the process and the confidentiality associated with this matter, the County Council is limited in what can be disclosed at this point. However, it can be confirmed that once the award information can be made public, a report will be prepared and taken to the Cabinet accordingly.
 There has been no change to the above position regarding the contract start date.”

2. Future Residual waste Strategy

“If the Contract has not yet been awarded yet what impact, if any, has this on our waste disposal costs?”

Response by the Chairman

“The published 2021-2025 Medium Term Financial Strategy accounts for any waste disposal costs associated with the Contract for Post 2020 Residual Waste.”

3. Future Residual waste Strategy

“Does the procurement still set as a minimum requirement that any solution that burns or incinerates the waste (or a significant fraction of the waste) should utilise an R1 compliant facility as defined in the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC, as stated in January 2021?”

Response by the Chairman

“There has been no change to this position.”

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

10. Corporate Climate Change Risk Assessment Review 2021.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which presented the Corporate Climate Change Risk Assessment Review 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion the following points arose:

- i. The report referenced eight risks that required urgent attention from Government within the next two years. These risks related to freshwater viability, soil health, natural carbon stores, crops and livestock, supply of food and goods and human health. These were national issues that the Authority needed to be aware of, however ultimately required Government action.
- ii. It was queried whether future reports could consider issues related to financial investments of the Authority, such as the Corporate Asset Investment Fund, given the Authorities investments also carried risk. Members were assured that the Department would work with colleagues within Corporate Resources Department to ensure the Corporate Risk Management Policy and Strategy was suitable for assessing risks of a complex and long-term nature, as presented by climate change.
- iii. The financial pressure on the Authority would increase as the frequency and intensity of extreme climate events increased. A Member further referenced an additional pressure that could be posed as result of potential migration due to the intensity of climate change.
- iv. The Committee noted that the Authority looked to be prepared as soon as possible, recognising that it would take a few years to put in place a full climate risk plan. Further discussions would be had with service areas, and the Department would keep abreast of global and national developments as well as the latest climate science, to inform what is done locally.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

11. Leicestershire Net Zero Carbon 2045 Strategy and Action Plan.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which presented Leicestershire's Net Zero Carbon 2045 Strategy and Action Plan. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Assistant Director for Environment and Waste introduced the Strategy setting out its long-term goal of net zero by 2045 for Leicestershire. This committed the Authority to demonstrate leadership, collaboration, and influence where appropriate, as it was clear the County Council could not achieve net zero on its own.

Arising from the discussion the following points were made:

- i. A Member questioned the ongoing consultation and how the Authority looked to engage with residents who did not have access to the internet, or who may struggle with the technical detail within the Strategy. Members were advised that the Authority recognised the importance of engaging with all residents and had developed programme of events, which included Road Shows in country parks and libraries. The Strategy had also been signposted within Leicestershire Matters and the Lead Member undertook a live question and answer session on Radio Leicester and on Facebook.
- ii. Furthermore, the consultation was available in different formats, and residents could request paper copies via phone. Youth engagement was taking place via the 'Participation People' to ensure young people's views were represented, and resources had been developed specifically targeted at younger people.
- iii. The Committee were assured that the Authority looked to make the consultation process as accessible and engaging as possible, recognising that it was the first step in a long-term relationship with residents, which would be followed by development of long-term plan to engage with different groups and stakeholders. Members agreed this was key given the journey to Net Zero required behavioural change from the community and businesses.
- iv. Members were advised that as of 21st June the consultation had received just under 200 online responses and 60 through the youth service. The Lead Member assured Members that the Authority took Net Zero very seriously, as did the public given views expressed in the lead up to the 2021 election. A view on the outcome of the consultation would need to await its end prior to any judgement. The Lead Member added that it was a testament to the Authority that it had declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set up the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor and scrutinise the Authorities progress.
- v. It was understood that some costs towards net zero were as yet unknown and would need to be considered in future, Examples of such unknown costs included information on costs related to electric vehicle infrastructure and vehicle and battery disposal. It was noted that most electric vehicle charging points would most likely be funded privately.

- vi. The Strategy was net zero, rather than zero carbon as it was impossible to plan for a future without carbon. As a result, once the Authority had reduced its carbon emissions as much as possible through its own action and influence, it would need to look at sequestration and carbon offsetting. It was noted that the Council would look to lead on projects and improvements not only to offset carbon but improve the environment within Leicestershire as a place for education, work, and recreation. Officers would ensure that the Strategy was clear about carbon capture and offsets.
- vii. A Member highlighted the point within the consultant's report that even the most ambitious policy pathway would not align with a Paris Agreement compliant pathway, given the major policy gap between current targets and the required pace of action. It was recognised that the Authority could not wait until a clear trajectory had been formed, as by then it would be too late. Instead, the Strategy looked to recognise the ambition of the County Council and set interim targets, and high priority areas to focus on so the Authority could look to maintain and develop its ambitions.
- viii. Members felt the Strategy could be simplified, though recognised the complex concepts that needed to be put across. Members were assured the engagement plan had been developed, and that the document to Committee would not be used with all groups, instead the Authority looked to use the appropriate tools for different audiences.
- ix. On the issue of how the Strategy would align with the Highways and Transport areas of the Department given conflicting demands, Members were advised that the need for development and new roads needed to be recognised and this would necessitate an increase in carbon reduction to keep up with the net zero 2045 goal.
- x. The Assistant Director for Development and Growth assured the Committee that a lot of thought was being put into the development of the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) regarding reduction of carbon and vehicle mileage. As part of the development of the Plan the County Council would ensure it did not inequitably reduce access to services, education, and work, but encouraged general reduction in mileage across Leicestershire. It would look to work closely with planners to ensure that new developments were planned in a way to minimise additional mileage. Furthermore, the Department was committed to lobby at government level to introduce schemes that looked to reduce mileage and emissions nationally, as the Council could not on its own influence such a significant change.
- xi. It was noted a significant level of emissions arose from journeys by people travelling through Leicestershire on the strategic road network, the airport, and the numerous distribution hubs, which would require further partnership working and government support to address,
- xii. The Authority looked for opportunities to improve land holdings through biodiversity net gain and an approach to development and land management that aimed to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. To that end the Authority was working with 50-60 parish councils to

introduce wildflower verges, as well as a pilot at a country park on how the Authority could better use developer contributions to manage land.

- xiii. With regard to encouraging farmers to introduce more sustainable farming practices on County Council leased farms the Committee were informed that contractual arrangements regarding lease of Council land was managed by Corporate Property, and it was not possible to dictate changes to farming practices. Instead, the Council ensured all relevant data and information it held was available to farmers to make informed business decisions. Where possible officers worked with willing farmers to look at sustainable farming practices and support farmers to take advantage of funding through governments environmental land management scheme.
- xiv. The opportunities for biodiversity net gain would also be explored with farmers through opportunities for carbon sequestration through tree planting, peatbogs, wetlands, and improved sile treatment.

Members welcomed the update and requested that the information be captured as a future update to the Committee. Officers agreed to consider it as part of the annual Environmental Performance report, which included information on progress in delivering the Environment Strategy.

The Lead Member for the Green Agenda concluded the item reiterating the ambitious nature of the Strategy to achieve Net Zero in the Council's own operations by 2030, and Net Zero for Leicestershire by 2045. It was evident that the Authority could not achieve the ambitious targets alone and encouraged all residents and stakeholders to complete the Consultation which would end 26 July 2022.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the comments of the Committee be considered as part of the consultation.
- ii. That an additional meeting be organised for 20 October 2022 to consider the final draft Leicestershire's Net Zero Carbon 2045 Strategy and Action Plan prior to Cabinet on 25 October 2022.

12. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 20 October 2022 at 2.00pm.

CHAIRMAN

21 June 2022