

CLEANER & GREENER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. McArthur (Chairman)

Cllr. Carroll (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Andrews, Bayley, Dr. Canet, Carroll, Collins, G. Darrington, Griffiths, Nelson and Raikes

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Foster

Cllr. Osborne-Jackson was also present.

55. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee held on 19 January 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

56. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

57. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none.

58. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, expressed her thanks to the refuse collectors and teams who were still collecting high levels of waste. The waste transfer station had been closed due to the fire at the depot last year, and so the crews were having to travel further to empty the freighters. With the easing of lockdown restrictions, the already busy work load of Environmental Health and Licensing was expected to increase further.

59. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit committee

There were none.

60. Net Zero 2030 Update

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) presented the report which updated Members on the progress to achieve the Net Zero 2030 Actions. The Net Zero ambition was relevant for all aspects of the Council and the Officer Working Group continued to identify how the actions would be achieved and monitor progress. Members were updated on a selection of ongoing projects in particular the NetZero 2030 website and the new email address netzero2030@sevenoaks.gov.uk for organisations, landowners community groups or anyone who was interested in partnering with the Council to deliver Net Zero 2030 were encouraged to get in contact by the email address. Work had also begun on the staff travel plan, as well as officers working with North West Kent Countryside Partnership to develop activities and interactive material for National Wildlife Week in April 2021. Due to the current Coronavirus restrictions the project could be delayed until the half term holidays in May to enable to make best use of the project and reach more people.

Members took the opportunity to discuss the report, with particular focus on electric and hydrogen based vehicles. In response to questions the Principal Planning Officer (Policy) advised that the points raised would be considered and addressed within the strategy, but further work and information was needed in regards to the emerging technology.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

61. Street Litter Binrastructure & Draft Project Strategy 2021

The Head of Direct Services presented the report which advised Members on the street litter bin project and draft litter strategy, which was used to enable the council to apply for Government funding. The Draft Litter Strategy was still being developed, however it was a requirement of the Binrastructure funding application, and a full Litter Strategy would be considered by Cabinet at a later date.

The funding application of £25,000 had been successful and would enable a pilot scheme to replace fifty street litter bins in the most rural locations with wood cladded larger bins with sensors. This would enable an automatic notification for the bins to be emptied instead of weekly unnecessary visits. The pilot would also provide special recycling bins at Enysford Riverside which would also be wood cladded.

In response to questions Members were advised that the pilot scheme was to enable smarter working with the resources available but the teams would continue to be responsive to waste problems. The number of crews working over the weekends had increased and as well as looking at the Binrastructure it was also looking at making sure the right bins were in the right place and the strategy would determine this.

The Chairman advised that Cabinet would also be considering the same report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Draft Project Litter Strategy as set out at Appendix A to the report be noted.

62. Emergency Planning Update

The Head of Direct Services presented the report which detailed that under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Sevenoaks District Council was identified as a statutory Category 1 Responder for major incidents and emergencies.

The Council's emergency plans had been tested with multi-agency partners and were expected to work well in live situations. A huge amount of work had been undertaken over the last 12 months regarding the pandemic, EU transition and severe weather along with more localised emergencies. The Council constantly reviewed and improved its major plans, training and development and on-call 24/7 arrangements to ensure being ready to respond at any time.

The Chairman advised that Cabinet would also be considering the same report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

63. Mill Pond Update

The Committee considered the report which provided an update on the work that had been carried out on Mill Pond, Seal Road and a work programme for further maintenance and repair.

The Head of Direct Services advised that despite the restrictions, challenges and reduced resources over the last 12 months due to the pandemic, maintenance work had continued by the Open Spaces team and included; grass cutting; repairs to the damaged boards on the boardwalk; spraying of the footpaths of weeds; removal of litter and objects from the pond; and removal of vegetation growing through the boardwalk.

An exemption licence from the Environment Agency to undertake the desilting works programme had been successfully applied for and these works were expected to take place between June and August 2021 at a cost of around £10,000.

Members expressed their thanks for the continued work at the pond.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

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64. Greensand Commons Project Update 2020 to March 2021

The Head of Direct Services presented the report which updated Members on the activity within the project over the last 12 months. The Sevenoaks Greensand Commons were managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust and the project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and started in Autumn 2018 and ends on 30 June 2022. Despite restrictions the project had continued in a limited way with work around access, conservation, the landscape and social heritage virtual schools programmes, activities for young and excluded people and heritage interpretation.

Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund were taking place to see how the pandemic would affect the overall project and how to move forward. It was hopeful that there would be a small extension to the project.

Members took the opportunity to ask questions and expressed their thanks for the continued work on the project.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

65. Work Plan

The work plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.43 PM

CHAIRMAN