

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

18th November 2020

COUNCILLOR NIGEL LLOYD - CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

For the period October 2020

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Officers from across Environmental Health continue to support the response to Covid19, both within the Council and across the Norfolk wide resilience structures. Examples include:

Proactive engagement and compliance with businesses across the District on Covid19 control measures and compliance, the announcement of the second national lockdown has led to a significant number of calls from businesses trying to understand the complexities of the regulations. Officers continue to undertake visits to offer advice and ensure businesses are compliant.

Officers continue to provide representation on a number of multiagency groups:

- Tracy Howard leads the 'Business and Public Venues' cell, formed as part of the Norfolk Outbreak Control Plan, for all Norfolk District Councils. The cell works with various stakeholders and businesses to ensure that Covid prevention work and communications are delivered particularly in higher risk businesses.
- Alison Sayer provides ongoing attendance at various multi-agency response meetings including attending Emergency Planners meetings twice a week to progress Norfolk Resilience Forum programme of work and sense-check existing plans re Covid-19. Alison also supports the reporting of NNDC's information into the Multi Agency Fusion Group which has recently increased from weekly to daily, Monday-Friday, in line with the more frequent Tactical Coordination Group meetings.
- Emily Capps continues to lead on the Reopening the High Street initiative and
- Various other officers contribute to the consistent meetings and conversations which occur within the County to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to the advice given to businesses on restrictions and requirements.
- Four members of the ES team have been trained as part of test and trace service and undertaking visits to confirmed Covid cases who have not been possible to contact via other means.

Licensing officers and the Police have been undertaking night-time inspections to ensure businesses have been closing at 10pm and following

Covid19 measures. Recent checks led to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice against a premises which was not following table service requirements in allowing customers to mingle with their drinks away from tables. The same premises was issued with a prohibition notice under the new regulations as they had indicated they were having a lockdown party on the 4th November; this was the first time these prohibition provisions had been used in Norfolk.

Officers from Environmental Health have provided mutual aid support to both Great Yarmouth and Breckland Councils response to Covid19 outbreaks, with officers on the ground advising businesses and tracing those working at the affected premises at their home addresses.

Commercial and Public Protection

Licensing handbook consultation has ended, some objection to the introduction of the 'knowledge' test however, this is contained with the statutory standards. A report recommending approval will go to the next Licensing Committee

Food sampling and shellfish results on the whole have been satisfactory whilst one unsatisfactory result in some raw milk where, following action by the owner, the resamples are now acceptable.

Food hygiene inspections have been undertaken since businesses reopened in a coved safe way. Businesses' that supply food by delivery, takeaway or retail will still be inspected until we are directed otherwise. This is to safeguard the consumers and to manage the overdue inspections that couldn't be undertaken during Lockdown 1.

Environmental Services

The Team have supported the continued mobilisation of the waste contract. Seventeen of the of the new 26t Refuse Collection Vehicles have arrived and are now in service on the contract.

Officers are working with Serco on the proposed collection rounds for the new zonal approach to bin collections.

Discussions with Serco around minor amendments to the target operating model for street cleaning.

The team assisted (with Serco) in the clean-up operation following the Coastal flooding and large build-up of sand at Walcott.

Civil Contingencies

The team have dealt with numerous incidents including:

- Astronomically high tides on the 19-20 September;
- Spring tides, Flood Alerts on western parts of the North Norfolk coast, flood gates closed at Bacton and Walcott for community reassurance

after liaison with Environment Agency Flood Warning Duty Officer, Parish Council and Coastguard on the 19th October

- Severe weather (rain and high winds) – flood alerts on rivers/some overtopping in Horning, Ludham and Potter Heigham, surface water flooding in Fakenham, wind-blown sand issue at Bacton and Walcott, highways issues with downed trees and power outages over the 25-27 of September. An internal debrief of this event is being undertaken.

The Resilience Manager attended multi-agency Zoom meeting re finding a solution to ongoing flooding and drainage issues at Ferry Road Horning

The work of the Safety Advisory Group re events has picked up re both seasonal events and next summer. In the current changing situation this is extremely challenging.

Supporting the EU Exit Transition planning process, collated responses to the Government's Reasonable Worst Case planning assumptions

Environmental Protection

October saw a continuation of the normal complaint response work and sampling (water, air and shellfish) for the EP team.

The Team are also dealing with several more complex cases including a drainage case at Edingthorpe Green and odour and noise complaints relating to an Environment Agency permitted poultry unit.

An abatement notice under the Environmental Protection Act has been served for amplified music which was being played at level which caused a nuisance to neighbours.

The Team dealt with an unauthorised encampment on Station Approach car park in Sheringham, the swift action and partnership working with the Police meaning they stayed only one night, before moving on out of the district.

The project to install the new PSPOs signage relating to dog control measures went well and the media coverage generated some enquiries which were responded to.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The Commercial and Public Protection Team are planning for the new requirement under food hygiene legislation to undertake inspections of fishing vessels

A project planned with the Health and Safety Executive on Covid19 spot checks in businesses has been put on hold but will commence after lockdown ends in December.

3 Climate Change and Environment

This has been a period of consolidation and forward planning for the projects and programmes relating to the Council's Climate Change objectives. During this time, we have identified the resources for two new posts: Environmental Policy Officer and Climate Change Project Officer, both of which I am delighted to say received a huge amount of interest and we have successfully appointed from a very strong field of candidates. Both post holders will take up their roles in the newly established Sustainable Growth team, before Christmas.

Progress on key climate/ environmental initiatives is identified below

Tree Planting initiative

Last winter, as part of the pilot of this initiative, 7441 trees were planted. A multitude of initiative are now in gestation for the current planting season, which include:

- a further 4540 trees to be planted on NNDC land this winter, many of which will be planted by staff as part of volunteer tree planting days
- a tree giveaway, which was planned for November at Holt Country Park but new arrangements are being made due to the current lockdown
- small scale planting projects with local schools and organisations (so far lined up are: Cromer Academy; Smallburgh and Dilham WI; Woodfields School; Weybourne Parish Council and the Felbeck Trust)
- pursuing a range of options will many different town and parish councils
- Potential large-scale planting scheme options in partnership with appropriate organisations and landowners on third party sites

Electric Vehicle Charge Points (EVCPs)

Progress on the installation of ECVPs has been hampered in many technical difficulties. The installations in Holt and Sheringham are complete; those at Fakenham and Cromer are in the pipeline (awaiting resolution of technical matters); Wells is awaiting commissioning; and the North Walsham installations is awaiting the resolution of access to a suitable power connection before it can commence.

Options for installing ECVPs at the new Sheringham Leisure Centre are being evaluated.

Usage of these installations will be monitored and demand will be evaluated by the new staff, once in post.

Energy production

As reported by the portfolio holder for Sustainable Growth, that Council has agreed to contribute funding towards a feasibility study into the potential for Bacton Gas Terminal to become a major location for the production of hydrogen energy, as the U.K. transitions to a “net zero” carbon energy economy.

The ‘Bacton 2.0’ Hydrogen Production Feasibility Study will be led by local cleaner energy experts Hydrogen East, a not-for-profit company, and the Council is matching a £12,500 funding contribution already committed by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. The remaining £25,000 cost of study will be funded by the Oil and Gas Technology Centre.

The Council will be represented on the steering group for the feasibility study

Energy conservation

As reported by the Housing & Benefits Portfolio holder, a consortium of Norfolk Councils, including North Norfolk District, has been successful in securing £1.24 million of Green Homes Grant, which will be implemented by the Norfolk Warm Homes Partnership, to help fuel-poor residents to reduce heating costs and improve the energy efficiency of their homes (and thus carbon emissions). Insulation measures available include solid wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, air source heat pumps and underfloor insulation. Part of the grant funding targets the insulation of Park Home properties, so the Council is approaching residents of the Council-owned Park Home site in Pudding Norton to invite application

Climate Change Officers

A Climate Change Project Officer and an Environment Policy Officer have been recruited. There were a large number of applicants to the advertisements placed, the standard of applicants was extremely high. These new Officers will develop an environmental charter / strategy and support the many strands of climate change activity at NNDC.

4 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The planned tree give-away event at Holt Country Park will be postponed due to covid restrictions.

5 Meetings attended

Waste Contract Review and Development Board
Meeting with Extinction Rebellion Rep

On-line seminars on Trees and Woodlands attended