

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4 July 2023

Attendance:

Councillors
Cramoysan (Chairperson)

Bolton
Brophy
Kurn

Morris
Tippett-Cooper
Wise

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Greenberg and Warwick

Deputy Members:

Councillor Brophy (as deputy for Councillor Greenberg) and Councillor Kurn (as deputy for Councillor Warwick)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency), Power and Wallace.

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

[Full Video Recording](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24**

RESOLVED:

That, Councillor Tippett-Cooper be appointed Vice-Chairperson for the 2023/24 municipal year.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson announced that at the previous meeting held on 1 March 2023, three items had been deferred for consideration at this meeting due to the time constraints. The Chairperson provided an update in relation to these three items which had not been placed on this agenda for the following reasons:

- (i) Air Quality Update – due to timing, this item had now moved onto Cabinet for ratification. This matter was work programme to next come forward for consideration by the committee at its meeting in January 2024.
- (ii) Council Homes Retrofit Programme – following a review, it was decided that this matter be moved to Business and Housing Policy Committee, for consideration in conjunction with other housing policy papers.
- (iii) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Review – this matter had previously been considered by the committee twice and had progressed to the final strategy stage due to time constraints.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 1 March 2023 be approved and adopted; and
- 2. That Southern Water's response to points raised at this meeting, appended to minutes and circulated with the agenda, be noted.

6. **TO NOTE THE DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:

That the timetable of meetings for 2023/24 be agreed, as set out on the agenda

7. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Wallace addressed the committee in relation to items 8 (Future of Waste and Recycling) and 10 (Work Programme 2023/24) and both Councillors Wallace and Power addressed the committee in relation to item 9 (Water Quality in Winchester District) and their comments are summarised under the relevant minutes below.

8. **FUTURE OF WASTE AND RECYCLING (PRESENTATION)**

Councillor Wallace addressed the Committee on this item.

In summary, Councillor Wallace made reference to the following points which were responded to accordingly by Councillor Learney and the Service Lead: Environmental Services:

- New plans provide a great opportunity for Hampshire to improve in its collection of recyclables.
- The mandatory deadline of March 2025 for the start of food waste collections – would this be impacted by the long lead time for the zero emission vehicles required to collect this service and when would an order be placed?
- Use of an anaerobic digester for treating food waste.

Councillor Learney introduced the item highlighting the importance of the waste collection and recycling service to residents, aspirations for increasing recycling collection rates for other materials and products and significant changes to Government regulations regarding waste collection.

The Service Lead: Environmental Services gave a detailed presentation which provided an overview of the council's current waste and recycling collection service and Hampshire County Council's statutory duty as the waste disposal authority. He highlighted the council's current performance as an authority and set out the significant changes expected following national changes to Government waste proposals with the implementation of three new key phases, including extended producer responsibility, the deposit return scheme and consistency in the streamlining of recycling collections across England and raised the evaluation process surrounding the impact of these changes which would assist in improving to collection of recyclables to ensure the council goes greener faster in support of carbon neutrality targets.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and comment on the following matters which were responded to by the relevant Cabinet Member and the Service Lead: Environmental Services:

- (i) With the level of unpredictability of the current position and the scale of funding, was there a method to anticipate the risks from a revenue perspective moving forward. In response, it was noted that following discussions with Defra, regular meetings were taking place remotely with various local authorities to model what costs would be in the future. The council was due to hear in October/November how much money it would receive for 2024/25 from the extended producer responsibility funding.
- (ii) The cost and impact of introducing extra bins throughout the district.
- (iii) The plans for consultation with the public on the waste and recycling programme – the authority to consult would be taken to Cabinet on 18 July 2023.
- (iv) Glass recycling across Hampshire.
- (v) Food Waste funding.
- (vi) Additional recycling opportunities – coffee pods, tetra paks etc – learning from local authorities that have higher collection percentages for recycling and have created successful volunteer groups to engage with residents.

- (vii) Increasing recycling opportunities in communal blocks of flats with shared bin storage areas. Audits were being carried out at these sites to understand existing provision and issues.
- (viii) Behavioural change of residents to ensure recycling is maximised and that adequate education and awareness measures are in place.
- (ix) National changes and consistency – improving and streamlining packaging consistency to aid recycling familiarity.

At the conclusion of debate, the committee supported the need for early ideas and thought processes to feed into the process, welcomed future updates on this matter and thanked officers for the progress carried out to date and for the informative presentation received.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report and presentation be received, and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

9. WATER QUALITY IN WINCHESTER DISTRICT (BRIEFING UPDATE FROM ENVIRONMENT AGENCY)

Councillors Wallace and Power addressed the Committee on this item.

In summary, Councillor Wallace made reference to the following points:

- Welcomed the update report from the Environment Agency and appreciated their honesty with the issues. He queried why Southern Water had not provided a similar written report following the question and answer session that took place at the last committee meeting in March. Their response provided as circulated with the minutes did not address all the points raised and the commitment's they made during the meeting.
- The Environment Agency report continued to highlight issues with water quality – outlining that the chemical status for all water bodies in Winchester district was failing and that ground water was of poor quality.
- The fine to Southern Water referred to in the update covered the period of discharges between 2010 and 2015 and the number of spills is significantly greater now than it was at the beginning of the last decade.
- He made reference to the £54bn debt of water and sewage companies since they were sold off to the private sector which had not been spent to improve the water services. £66bn has been paid in dividends to shareholders. He stated that 20% of current water bills now pay off the interest payments on this debt.
- The significant failure of governance demonstrated by the current system.
- The motion on waterways passed by Council last year is a positive step, particularly in Planning, but the council need to look at this at a local level to see what else can be done to improve the district's waterways.

In summary, Councillor Power made reference to the following points:

- Stated that she had recently attended a visit to the Alresford wastewater treatment plant with Southern Water representatives in attendance. Water engineers and a river keeper so the variety of questions asked was extensive.
- With regard to the phosphate stripper for the smaller wastewater treatment plants – an update was provided at the visit that it would not be known if this would be installed or not until early in 2027 and if it was to be installed, this would not take place until 2030 and would not significantly reduce the level of nutrients in the water.
- Reference was made to Watercress and Winterbournes ‘Septic Smart’ project and the use and management of septic tanks and run off which make a positive contribution to phosphate levels.
- Suggested that further work around water quality, following the motion to Council in 2022, be added to the work programme for the committee going forward and requested that the Salmon and Trout Conservation (Wildfish) and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust be invited to attend and address the meeting at a future date.
- In conclusion, Councillor Power urged the committee to visit the LEAF exemplary farm at Northington Down during an open day if they had the opportunity to do so.

The Strategic Director addressed the committee and referred to the motion passed by Council in December 2022 to request that the committee invite senior representatives from Southern Water, Environment Agency, Salmon and Trout Conservation, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Natural England to attend and allow for a better understanding of the current levels of pollution and remedial action being taken in this regard, and publish its conclusions to inform the local community action groups.

It was reported that Southern Water and Natural England had attended the last meeting and the follow up response from Southern Water had been circulated with this agenda pack. In addition, it was noted that invitations had been issued but no response had been received from the Salmon and Trout Conservation or Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and a written contribution had been received from the Environment Agency in response to the motion which had been circulated with the agenda. The Environment Agency had advised they were unable to resource attendance at local council meetings in person.

The committee sought clarification from the Environment Agency on the following points:

- (i) The five classes referred to in the Environment Agency update and the quantification of what phrases such as ‘good’ and ‘moderate’ etc mean?
- (ii) What are the Environment Agency’s plans to penalise Southern Water over the last eight-year period of discharges?

At the conclusion of debate, the committee expressed their dissatisfaction with the poor response provided by Southern Water following the recent outages and their attendance at the last meeting with the ongoing water quality, discharges and spillage issues experienced.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee request that representatives of the various bodies, as set out above, attend a future meeting to demonstrate the positive work taking place to remedy existing water quality issues; and
2. That the written update provided by the Environment Agency be received, and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

10. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24 (HEP034)**

Councillor Wallace addressed the Committee on this item.

In summary, Councillor Wallace stated that, on behalf of Councillor Lee, he had submitted a work programme request for the committee to provide a local response to the ecological emergency. In response, it was noted that this item would be managed via the work request and added to the work programme for consideration at the next meeting in September.

The committee made a request for various items to be considered by the committee during 2023/24, these included:

- Investigate communication measures to educate residents on informed choices.
- Green faster agenda whilst maintaining social inclusion (EV charging points access and provision gaps, accessible parking and public transport)
- Mental health support interventions.
- Update on progress towards Carbon Neutrality targets.
- Promote and encourage sports/support and engagement with young people eg. facilities for young people/sport for girls and under-represented groups
- Public Conveniences – update on strategy for upgrades and maintenance – It was noted that this strategy report would be taken directly to Cabinet on 13 September 2023
- Home for Ukraine community integration programme – it was noted that this item was already on the work programme for December 2023.

The Strategic Director provided an initial response to the proposed items suggested above and agreed that a substantive update would follow on these proposed matters in due course.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the inclusion of the work request 'ecological emergency response', as set out above, the work programme for 2023/24 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.25 pm

Chairperson