

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 28th November 2017

Present: Councillor Duncan Bain (Chair)

Councillors Jim Hakewill, Mike Tebbutt and Greg Titcombe

Also Present: Martin Hammond (Executive Director)
Shirley Plenderleith (Head of Public Services)
Rob Harbour (Head of Development Services)
Rachel Field (Team Leader Environmental Protection)
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

17.RD.16 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cedwien Brown and Jenny Henson. It was noted that Cllr Mike Tebbutt was acting as substitute for Cllr Henson.

17.RD.17 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 26th September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17.RD.18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Jim Hakewill declared a personal interest in Item A1 as the owner of an electric vehicle.

17.RD.19 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PROJECT (A1)

The Head of Public Services attended the meeting and presented a report that set out the approach taken to developing electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the Borough.

A general overview of the health risks of air pollution related to traffic emissions was provided, and while it was noted that there were no

air quality management areas in the Borough, the Council was mindful of such pollution which, coupled with extra traffic generated from planned urban extensions, could increase further. Accordingly, the Council was supportive of the use of electric vehicles as part of creating a safer and cleaner environment.

The meeting noted that there were currently four charging points in the Borough, all located in Kettering with three of these publically available. It was heard that the government was seeking to ban diesel and petrol cars by 2040, and while the current uptake of electric vehicles was reasonably low, this would rise going forward.

Members heard that as well as developing appropriate planning policy regarding electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the Council was also assessing the feasibility of providing charging units across the Borough. It was anticipated that this would be a phased project, beginning initially in Kettering before rolling out to the A6 Towns. However, there may be opportunities to work alongside planned public realm works in Burton Latimer and Desborough when considering installation.

It was noted that funding opportunities for the required infrastructure could come from a mix of grants, S106 monies and capital funding. Work was ongoing to identify appropriate and accessible funding streams. New grant funding has been announced recently in the budget.

All members spoke in favour of the project and asked a number of questions in relation to grant funding opportunities, vehicle charging times, related planning policy and the Joint Planning Unit, air pollution levels along the A14 and possible local suppliers of electricity.

Cllr Hakewill proposed that a Task and Finish Group be convened to consider that subject; however there was no seconder for the proposal.

It was noted that periodic reports would be brought back to the Committee at key points of the project.

RESOLVED that the Committee approved the approach being taken as set out in the report.

17.RD.20 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT POLICY (A2)

The Head of Development Services attended the meeting and outlined a report to members that set before them a proposed Planning Enforcement Policy for the Borough.

It was noted that the current policy was limited in terms of the information it provided and was considered to be a little disjointed as it was not presented as a single document. Officers considered that it was timely to review the enforcement processes to ensure that they accorded with legislation and best practice and also to take the opportunity to provide a consolidated and more comprehensive policy that would benefit all those users that may come into contact with planning enforcement.

The revised policy set out the enforcement process from the initial complaint through to the investigative conclusion. In addition, the policy detailed what type of complaint could be accepted for investigation and the processes undertaken by officers thereafter. The policy also set out with clarity how the enforcement team liaised with other service areas and external bodies to ensure complaints were completed appropriately using the correct legislation.

Although there were no fundamental changes to the enforcement process as part of the review, timescales within which KBC would seek to take action in relation to a complaint had been tightened. Also incorporated into all levels of complaint was additional assurance in terms of responding to complainants within specific timeframes, something that was absent from the current policy.

Members considered the revised policy and commented positively in regard to the clear and easy-to-read wording used in the document.

Questions were asked in relation to the possibility of introducing timescales for completion of investigations, anonymous complaints, abuse of elected members in relation to paragraph 10 of the policy and cross-referencing within the policy of the Enforcement Process Flowchart that was currently appended to the policy.

Three alterations to the policy were suggested:-

- Amalgamation of paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3
- In relation to site visits and assessment timescales outlined in paragraph 6.3, to include the wording "...as soon as possible" at the appropriate point
- In relation to investigation processes outlined in paragraph 6.4, to include the wording "...and a timescale for the next update" at the appropriate point

RESOLVED

That the content of the report was noted by members and that the Planning Enforcement Policy appended to the report be formally adopted by the Council, subject to the amendments detailed above.

17.RD.21 WORK PROGRAMME (A3)

The work programme was submitted to the Committee for consideration. The following reports would be brought to future Committees:-

- Budget for 2018/19

It was noted that there would be an additional report tabled at the next meeting of the committee, although details of this could not be provided at this stage.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.13pm)

Signed:

(Chair)

DJP