

Environment Sub Committee

Tuesday, 11 January 2022

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, M Green, M Hall, J Harrison,
C Johnston, P McIntyre, J Mole and J Shaw

Apologies: Councillors G Madden

E11/21 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members reported.

E12/21 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

E13/21 Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

There were no declarations or interest or dispensations reported.

E14/21 Working towards a Net-Zero Carbon Future

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the work being undertaken within the procurement section to support the Authority to achieve its aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.

It was explained that the Authority currently spent around £260m per annum on the procurement of goods and services and dealt with over 4000 third party suppliers. Part of the procurement process included an element of social value which covered climate emergency and environmental sustainability and this amounted to 5-10% of the evaluation process along with price and quality.

The National Procurement Strategy set out that all contracting authorities should consider the following national priorities alongside its local priorities during the procurement process:

- Creating new Businesses; new job and new skills;
- Tackling climate change and reducing waste; and
- Improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience.

It was explained that a new buyers guide would be produced which would embrace the principles set out in the National Strategy together with the Council Plan priorities. A clear link would be set between the development of strategies and business cases for procurement. Social value would be aligned to the Council Plan Priorities, monitored, measured and reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.

It was also explained that to support the net zero future procurement would work with current suppliers to influence, where possible, net zero targets and encourage innovation to support the Authority's ambition.

A new procurement strategy up to 2025 would be presented to Cabinet with consideration given to increasing the social value target or including a separate evaluation criterion for net zero carbon.

It was explained that a number of benefits had already been secured including:

- Changes to the authority's fleet, including electric and Euro 6 standard vehicles;
- Changes to packaging used by the catering service;
- The refurbishment of the Killingworth site, including for example the installation of solar panels;
- The recycling/waste contract including a move from hand sorting to an automated system and the inclusion of additional items in the recycling stream; and
- Street lighting improvements such as the installation of LED lighting.

Members sought clarification on the number of suppliers which were based in North Tyneside. Officers offered to provide the information to members. Reference was also made to the plan to carry out an audit of the environmental credentials of suppliers.

The Sub-committee was invited to consider how it wished to put forward its views/comments on the procurement strategy before it went to Cabinet. It was suggested that due to the tight timescale the Strategy be shared with members and their comments be sent direct to the officer for consideration.

The chair thanked the officer for her presentation.

Resolved that (1) the report be noted;
(2) Members views on the procurement strategy be sent direct to the officer;
(3) A report be presented to a future meeting on the steps taken to carry out an audit of the environmental credentials of suppliers

E15/21 Carbon Net Zero Challenge

Consideration was given to a presentation which provided an update on the Authority's ambition to be Carbon Net Zero by 2030 following the Authority's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019 and the publication of the Our North Tyneside Council Plan 2021-25. It was explained that the government was working towards a deadline of 2050 for the Carbon Net Zero target to be met and it had produced a 10 point plan which was outlined. Details of the supporting policies were also outlined.

Reference was made to the Borough's carbon footprint which in 2019 stood at 827,200 tonnes, down 41% from the baseline. The latest figures for the Authority's carbon footprint, in 2020/21, was 14,395 tonnes, down 52% from the baseline although it was noted that the Authority's carbon footprint only amounted to around 2% of the Borough's footprint.

It was explained that the Authority's Climate Emergency Board had identified a number of key projects including:

- the street lighting efficiency programme which had resulted in a 95% carbon reduction, 75% energy reduction and annual savings of £1.5M; and
- Works at Killingworth Depot including the installation of Solar PV, battery storage, Electric Vehicle Charging and energy efficiency measures.

It was explained that an action plan on the steps to be taken and the national investment required to make North Tyneside carbon net zero by 2030 would be published. It was also explained that all of the Authority's plans would need to be revisited to ensure that they contributed to the carbon reduction plan. The Authority would also work with partners and stakeholders to develop a carbon net zero Borough by 2030. It was acknowledged that there would be need for residents and businesses to engage in the process if the targets were to be met.

The Chair thanked the officer for the presentation.

Resolved that the presentation be received.

E16/21 Overview of the Environment Act 2021

Consideration was given to a presentation on the new Environment Act 2021 which covered air quality, biodiversity, water, resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also established the Officer for Environmental Protection.

It was explained that much of the content in relation to resources and waste would be subject to secondary legislation and therefore specific details were not yet available. Details of the a number of provisions in the Act were outlined including:

- Targets for reducing waste;
- Electronic waste tracking;
- Deposit return scheme for drinks containers;
- Consistent recycling collections for all homes/businesses;
- Extending charging for single-use plastic items; and
- Extended producer responsibility.

It was explained that the government was still analysing the responses in relation to food waste collections and was expected to publish a full response in early 2022.

It was suggested that a further update be provided to a future meeting.

The Chair thanked the officer for his presentation.

Resolved that (1) the presentation be noted; and
(2) an update be provided to a future meeting.