

Eden District Council

Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Date: 24 October 2019 Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Penrith Time: 6.45 pm

Present:

Councillors:	M Hanley D Ryland D Smith	A Todd D Wicks
Standing Deputies:	Councillor M Clark Councillor L Harker Councillor A Ross	
Officers Present:	Neil Buck, Contracts Manager Jane Langston, Assistant Director Commissioning and Technical Services	
Democratic Services Officer:	Vivien Little and Karen Wyeth	

EEc/1/10/19 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Proposed by Councillor Hanley
Seconded by Councillor Clark

that Councillor Holden be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2019/20 municipal year.

RESOLVED that Councillor Holden be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 municipal year.

Proposed by Councillor Hanley
Seconded by Councillor Harker

that Councillor Ross be appointed as Chairman for this meeting in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED that Councillor Ross be appointed as Chairman for this meeting in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

EEc/2/10/19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chambers, Councillor Holden, Councillor Harker attended as substitute, Councillor Lancaster, Councillor Clark attended as

substitute, Councillor Lawson, Councillor Ross attended as substitute and from Councillor Tonkin, the portfolio holder who had been invited to this meeting.

EEc/3/10/19 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

EEc/4/10/19 Review of Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning Delivery Options

The Assistant Director Commissioning and Technical Services gave a presentation on the current situation regarding the review of waste, recycling and street cleaning delivery options.

After the presentation a number of questions were asked by the members.

- Members queried why we had used consultants as part of the review following a statement that had been released in respect of a Cumbria combined authority and asked if collaborative decisions will be made in the future with neighbouring authorities.
- Members were concerned that 8,000 households did not receive garden waste collection and wanted to know if there were plans for these households to be included in the future. If legislation was changed Eden District Council would have to provide garden waste collection to all households which would result in an increase in costs. The Government has stated that these costs may be covered in the form of a burdens payment.
- The members asked if we could look at recycling and how best Eden District Council can increase the current recycling rate of 42.4%.
- The Chairman asked the Assistant Director Commissioning and Technical Services to look at the amount of plastic bottles that were thrown into public waste bins and asked if recycling bins could be located alongside public waste bins. The Contracts Manager advised that Eden District Council had considered this but there was a risk of contamination.

EEc/5/10/19 Questions from the Public

The following questions were received Under Rule 10 of the Constitution:

1. Mr G Rockcliffe-King asked the following question of the Chairman:

“The UK Committee on Climate Changes says that recycling rates need to be 70% by 2020, Eden District Council’s is currently 43%. The best Welsh local authorities, including those in rural areas, currently have recycling rates above 60% through food waste collections and reduced residual waste collections. Will you look at the Welsh examples so as to achieve a step change in our recycling rate and consider

increasing the range of items collected for recycling to include, for examples cartons and small electricals?

The Chairman responded as follows:

Although this is not strictly a question for the Scrutiny Committee, it has been accepted as it relates to a Council function, and as the Portfolio Holder is in attendance, we are able to answer this question.

Eden along with many local authorities have hit a plateau in terms of their recycling rate.

Recycling rates can be improved by having food waste collections and in the Governments 'Our waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England', legislation for mandatory food collection is targeted for 2023.

The Strategy also notes consistency and a list of the materials that need to be collected have been provided for consultation. As this list evolves or it is considered viable to make changes, the Council would consider the collection of additional materials.

No supplementary question was put to the Chairman.

2. Ms J Bell asked the following question of the Chairman:

According to the Resource magazine #95(Spring 2019) Eden District total household waste is 410kg per person per year, which was 184th worst out of 222 waste collection authorities in England. The lowest total amount in an authority is 250kg. Reducing the overall amount collected will save the planet and should reduce council costs. Will the council consider measures to ask households and businesses to buy longer-lasting items, repair and hand on these items for reuse?

The Chairman responded as follows:

Although this is not strictly a question for the Scrutiny Committee, it has been accepted as it relates to a Council function, and as the Portfolio Holder is in attendance, we are able to answer this question.

The Council has recently been undertaking a benchmarking of the service and when compared to similar local authorities it is clear that Eden actually collects one of the lower amounts of waste (the figure quoted is for 2017/18). That said, there is room for improvement.

As part of the review undertaken for service delivery, the consultant has been asked to look at measures to reduce the council's carbon footprint and in terms of the council's wider zero carbon agenda, we will be looking to see how we can influence behaviour going forward.

Ms J Bell then asked a supplementary question to the Chairman:

In light of the large amount of plastic bottles being used, would Eden District Council consider installing water fountains?

The Assistant Director Commissioning and Technical Services replied that this was something that Eden District Council could look at and see how feasible it would be.

3. Mr J Bodger asked the following question of the Chairman:

Will the Council consider changes to the Bulky Waste Collection service to try to avoid items always going to waste, i.e. look at repair and upcycling, for example as done in South Lakes by right2work? A repair centre in Penrith could provide employment, and act as a model for the circular economy; this could also act as a Freegle swap centre, repair café and upcycling hub.

The Chairman responded as follows:

Although this is not strictly a question for the Scrutiny Committee, it has been accepted as it relates to a Council function, and as the Portfolio Holder is in attendance, we are able to answer this question.

The Council are members of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership and are a Collection Authority. Therefore the Council would work with Cumbria County Council as the Disposal Authority, in considering how both authorities would wish to deal with bulky waste in the future.

Mr Bodger then asked a supplementary question of the Chairman:

Can Eden District Council consider using other organisations to collect bulky waste and can they keep looking at how they can deal with waste reduction?

The Assistant Director Commissioning and Technical Services responded and advised that she would discuss this with the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Tonkin and the County Council.

4. Mr C Cant asked the following question of the Chairman:

Flexibility is vital to cope with changing requirements bearing in mind the climate and ecological emergencies, and changing national legislation. Rather than be constrained by a fixed-term fixed-provision contracts with external providers, will the council consider bringing the waste and recycling contracts back in house? I have seen reports that in-sourcing can make workers happier and more proactive. This might also make it easier to coordinate services with other districts and the County Council.

The Chairman responded as follows:

Although this is not strictly a question for the Scrutiny Committee, it has been accepted as it relates to a Council function, and as the Portfolio Holder is in attendance, we are able to answer this question.

The Council as part of its review on service delivery for waste, recycling and street cleaning from 2022 is looking at all options including both in-sourcing and out-sourcing. The review will be comparing the options in terms of service delivery, value for money and risk.

Mr Cant asked a supplementary question of the Chairman:

Is Eden District Council looking at working with other neighbouring authorities or Cumbria County Council?

The Assistant Director Commissioning and Technical Services responded and advised that all strategic neighbouring authorities, except for Barrow, have brought their waste collection services back in house. Eden District Council could look at sharing services with other authorities.

EEc/6/10/19 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Board Update

The Committee received a verbal update which has been produced by the Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

EEc/7/10/19 Environment & Economy Committee Work Plan

The Committee received a verbal update which has been produced by the Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman asked members for any future agenda items for the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

No future agenda items were suggested at this time.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

EEc/8/10/19 Any Other Items which the Chairman decides are urgent

No items of urgent business were raised at this meeting.

EEc/9/10/19 Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 5 December 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

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