

CABINET

Wednesday, 15 February 2017

EAST SUFFOLK ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY (REP1495)**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The draft East Suffolk Environmental Policy, attached as Appendix A to this report, is a revised and updated version of the Joint Environmental Policy (JEP) bringing the policy in line with the priorities set out in the recently adopted East Suffolk Business Plan. The new East Suffolk Environmental Policy evaluates the current priorities within both local and national government and applies them to the environmental agenda within East Suffolk. The policy sets out the Councils' priorities and current objectives with an action plan to meet those objectives and provide a basis to monitor future progress with individual elements of the action plan.
2. The refresh of the Environmental Policy has involved: the review of the Councils' other policies and strategies to identify any links; consideration of environmental policies from leading councils nationwide; a questionnaire sent to neighbouring councils in Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, interviews with key internal stakeholders and consideration by Policy Development Task Group.
3. The East Suffolk Environmental Policy and Action Plan are structured around the three key objectives in the East Suffolk Business Plan: economic growth, enabling communities and financial self-sufficiency. Supporting each of these strands are a further three objectives. Enabling communities focuses on the sustainability of assets and households, empowering communities to improve their own 'green behaviours', as well as promoting and facilitating the use and growth of community environmental groups. Economic growth emphasises the importance of local businesses enhancing their competitiveness with strong environmental management and unlocking the full potential of the environmental advantage of operating in East Suffolk. This theme also concentrates on increasing the resilience of our businesses against severe weather conditions caused by climate change. 'Financial self-sufficiency sets out the Councils' commitment to the responsible use of our natural resources, sustainable strategies for council assets, as well as protecting and enhancing our districts biodiversity.
4. Once implemented the policy and action plan will be monitored and updated regularly with a summary of progress reported annually.
5. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the East Suffolk Environmental Policy.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stephen Ardley Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising
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Supporting Officer:	Phil Gore Head of Environmental Services & Port Health, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils Tel: 01394 444286 Phil.Gore@eastssuffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In keeping with the Business Plan's three-pronged strategy of enabling communities; promoting economic growth; and becoming financially self-sufficient, the East Suffolk Environmental Policy adopts these key elements in order to provide for local communities whilst protecting both our natural and built environments.
- 1.2 This builds on previous environmental policies and actions delivered under the Joint Environmental Policy and is focused on delivering the core aims of the Business Plan and Suffolk's ambitions of being 'The Greenest County', as well as our commitments through the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Action Plan and through meeting and, where possible, exceeding statutory obligations and national targets.
- 1.3 An action plan has been developed to deliver the objectives set out in the policy with tasks that are specific, measurable, timed, achievable and deliverable with existing resources.

2 WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

- 2.1 There have been a number of significant achievements delivered through the existing Joint Environmental Policy & Action Plan over the last 3 years:

Working with Communities:

- The Councils' Greenprint Forum celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016 with over 30 community engagement events held over the last 3 years.
- The Thriving Community Buildings project has seen 32 communities supported with advice on the efficient use of natural resources, governance and health and safety matters. Savings in energy costs of around £15,000 have been identified and many energy efficiency measures implemented.
- 9 community groups were supported with grants, information and advice to deliver environmental projects under the Community Environmental Action Fund.

Economic Growth:

- Through the East Coast Carbon Efficiency Project we have delivered green procurement reports and action plans to 200 small and medium sized businesses
- Over £197,000 of grant money has been awarded to 59 businesses to help energy efficiency measures.
- 100 businesses have been accredited under the Suffolk Carbon Charter
- On-site audits have identified over £1,200,000 of potential savings on energy costs with the potential to save 6,200 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Financial Self Sufficiency:

- We have moved to modern, more energy efficient buildings with lower running costs at Riverside Road, 70 Shed (Port Health) and East Suffolk House.
- Implementation of Travel Plans to increase the use of more sustainable travel options.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The East Suffolk Environmental Policy and Action Plan adopts the three main priorities of the business plan (enabling communities, economic growth and financial self-sufficiency). Each priority has three environmental objectives supporting it with corresponding actions below that. Splitting the action plan into these three sections will allow us to track the progress of the council in terms of meeting the criteria of the East Suffolk Business Plan.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The action plan will be monitored quarterly by the East Suffolk Environmental Policy Officer Group and updated and reported on annually by the Environmental Sustainability Officer with the support of an intern recruited through Rising High. This fits with the ambitions within the East Suffolk People Strategy 2016-2020, in particular developing and fully utilising talent. The additional cost of the intern is approximately £3,500.
- 4.2 Actions within the action plan will be met from resources already allocated or being sought. The delivery risk associated with each will be included within the plan. Any new initiatives which are not resourced or where no resources have been identified yet will be added to the 'Actions for Development' record. This will be retained internally and reviewed annually by Officers alongside the legal register.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an equality impact assessment and a sustainability impact assessment.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation with key internal stakeholders has been undertaken and the Policy and action plan has been considered at a Suffolk Coastal Cabinet Briefing on 17 January 2017

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Not retaining and updating an environmental policy and action plan. While actions will be undertaken which will benefit our environment as part of other projects captured in the business plan not having a standalone monitored policy makes it difficult to assess, communicate and continually improve our progress towards 'significantly improving the environmental wellbeing of our area'.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To ensure that the Council has an appropriate and relevant Environmental Policy and Action Plan that is linked to its Business Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Cabinet approve the East Suffolk Environmental Policy
2. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Environmental Services & Port Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising, to make minor amendments to the policy and action plan.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Draft East Suffolk Environmental Policy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
January 2013	Joint Environmental Policy	http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Green-Issues/JEP-Live-Document-Feb-2013.pdf