

Greenprint for the future in East Suffolk

Report by Andrew Cassy on behalf of the Greenprint Forum.

1. Introduction

It was previously agreed that this meeting would focus on environmental sustainability in East Suffolk. This has a good fit with the major objective of the Strategic Business Plan 2017-20 which focusses the Board's effort on ensuring that growth in East Suffolk is inclusive and takes account of the wider determinants of health.

In particular this meeting is intended to continue the discussion on how the Board will deliver the following of the ESP's major goals:

- Support a vibrant business ecosystem by working with the independent place based organisations and groups who work for, support and provide services for the benefit of the business community.
- Maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of access to the natural environment and natural assets.
- Connect key organisations, individuals and communities together through community action to support a greener economy whilst sustaining and improving the environment of East Suffolk.

2. What the Board is being asked to do

The discussion will focus on the following three perspectives:

2.1. Business:

It is well documented that natural resources are being wasted and negatively affecting communities and businesses across the world. Locally there is much we can do to improve the situation. For example, there are businesses and start ups keen to reduce their own plastic waste together with their customers. There are also businesses that are keen to act on reducing both their own costs and their impact in other areas of waste such as food, energy and fuel - and indeed some have already taken action and gained recognition from the Suffolk Carbon Charter.

At a global level, forward looking organisations have already committed to address this and over 40 industry leaders, including Core Partners of the New Plastics Economy initiative Amcor, The Coca-Cola Company, Danone, MARS, Novamont, Unilever, and Veolia, have publically endorsed the global action plan on plastic packaging which seeks to increase reuse and recycling of plastic packaging to 70% from today's global recycling rate of just 14%.

What we do not know is what stage the 9000+ businesses within East Suffolk are at with effective resource management, what blockers there are to progress, and if there are

opportunities for businesses and communities to come together to help reduce waste and keep valuable resources and money within the local area. For example, there are organisations and individuals that have expressed interest in acting to improve local circulation of resources to avoid waste and to reward those that take action to reduce it (effectively a circular local economy). Is there a role for the ESP to help influence this to happen?

Outcomes:

The Board identifies the potential for the ESP to support businesses to make best use of their resources. The best way to achieve this could be through a multiagency task group to improve understanding of the current situation and identify possible outcomes for the ESP to support.

2.2 Individuals:

At the previous meeting of the Board we were reminded of the evidence that a key emotional need for those living with dementia, mental ill health, physical and learning disabilities and special educational needs is feeling part of and valued by their wider community.

The *nature, health and wellbeing* workshop at the annual forum in November also explored how we can increase knowledge of 'green care' services and referrals of individuals onto those programmes. The key message taken from the conference is that there is a large amount of activity in East Suffolk which is all positive. However, it isn't drawn together. It would seem that the fruit from 'being well in the wild' has not come to fruition and there needs to be something that has a clearer focus and is most probably owned and progressed by the health sector, rather than the environmental sector. There is something here that ESP can help to progress.

Outcomes:

The Board identifies how it can best support the development of 'green care' pathways to improve people's health and wellbeing.

2.3 Communities:

Individuals, community groups and organisations are independently taking action or calling for change on a wide range of environmental and social issues in East Suffolk. As a result of the energy developed by documentaries like *Blue Planet II* and *A Plastic Tide* there is currently a particular focus on acting to reduce waste of plastics and its escape into the natural environment. The Greenprint Steering Group has agreed to focus in 2018 on working with partners to help inform the local debate and help, where possible, to steer action in a useful and sustained way so that behaviours will become embedded and not fade once the focus is diverted to other causes. We are compiling webinars, focusing our monthly e-newsletter and running events in partnership with others with the aim of tackling the following key areas:

- Production of waste: (For example abandoned plastic beach toys and their packaging, balloons, cigarettes, cotton buds, disposable cups, plastic films/bags, plastic bottles, nappies, tea bags and straws.
- Correct waste management: Only items that economically and environmentally can be recycled going into the recycling bin and no plastics getting into compost.
- Stopping litter getting onto land and into water bodies and removing it promptly when it is.

Outcomes:

- i) Members of the Board are asked to consider how they could reduce plastic waste in their own lives and within the organisations and networks that they represent
- ii) Consider a proposal under 3.4 on the agenda to spend ESP funds to Increase understanding amongst our communities and businesses of plastics manufacturing, use and disposal in East Suffolk, The impact of this work is aimed at reducing use of single use plastics, increasing re-use and recycling of plastic materials and reducing the amount of plastic waste in the east Suffolk Environment.