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Meeting	Goose Management Scrutiny Review Task Group
Date	2 February 2016
Present	Councillors Kramm (Chair), Eastham, Mortimer (Co-opted Non-Statutory Member) and Richardson
Apologies	Councillors Gunnell

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## **5. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

## **6. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's public participation scheme.

## **7. Goose Management Interim Report**

Members considered a report which provided information in support of objectives (ii) & (iii) of the review remit for Goose Management scrutiny review and asked the task group to agree what if any further information is required in support of those objectives.

Objectives being considered were as follows:

- ii. To examine best practice nationally and elsewhere.
- iii. To consider technical options for dropping removal, the associated costs and external funding possibilities.

Members referred to the information contained in the agenda and the fact that Wandsworth Borough Council appeared to have had some degree of success in managing geese by using a mixture of techniques and had developed an integrated management strategy for the Borough's parks. It was noted that the information was a number of years old. Members suggested that further up to date information from Wandsworth Borough

Council would be useful to find out if they are still currently managing geese successfully and by what methods.

Members agreed that the first step for York should be to understand the scale of the problem and that it would be useful for a survey to be undertaken at the start of the geese nesting season to look at the numbers of nests. This could be carried out by a contractor subject to the necessary funding being sourced. Using the scrutiny budget was discussed but it was noted that it may not be appropriate to use it for that purpose. It was suggested that the following areas should be included in any such survey:

- The Ouse from Poppleton to Bishopthorpe
- The Foss to Strensall
- Becks – St. Nicholas incorporating private gardens to Hull Road Park
- Other waterbodies such as fisherman's ponds.

Members then looked at other methods of geese management to be used alongside egg treatment and made the following comments:

- Chemicals – Officers confirmed they would be interested in a free trial of chemicals to use on grassed areas, details of which were tabled at the meeting. The Chair agreed he would contact the chemical companies to see if they would be willing to provide the Council with a free sample. It was suggested that a test area could then be identified, possibly in Memorial Gardens, to test if the chemicals were effective.
- Audio methods – it was agreed that the super sonic audio methods would not be suitable for use in public parks but officers were interested in exploring the use of ultra sound methods. Officers agreed to look into these methods and report back to the next meeting.
- Visual methods – Officers confirmed that Merchant Adventurers Hall had trialled the use of a fake fox as a deterrent to geese but were not aware of the outcome and how effective this had been. It was agreed that the use of visual deterrents could be useful in smaller localised locations but probably not suitable for larger public spaces where they could be tampered with by the public.
- Education – It was confirmed that the University uses signage to discourage students from feeding the geese but it was agreed that more complex signs explaining the effects of feeding the geese may not be suitable for public parks. Officers advised that currently, due to budget cuts, the Council does not have any dedicated park rangers or officers available to support any education programme. It was suggested that information could be distributed to primary schools so

they could undertake their own lessons. It was also suggested that local media may also assist in promoting any educational messages.

- Machinery - Members watched a brief promotional video for a machine called Tow and Collect which can be used on grassed areas to collect manure. Officers queried whether the machine would be suitable for geese droppings and confirmed a visit by a sales agent to provide a demonstration would be useful. Disposal of collected geese droppings would also be an issue and a member agreed to contact a nursery owner who specialises in fertiliser to see if anything could be done with collected droppings.

Members noted that the next meeting of the Task Group would be a consultation event on the 9<sup>th</sup> February and that a number of groups had been invited to attend. It was agreed that the proposals discussed at this meeting would be discussed with attendees at the event to identify if any groups would be willing to support any of the activities discussed.

Resolved: That the Task Group:

- (i) Considered the information provided in support of Objectives (ii) and (iii).
- (ii) Agreed that the following information would be required:
  - Further up to date information from Wandsworth Borough Council
  - Further investigation of the various methods outlined above
  - Officers to investigate the possibility of a survey of nests
- (iii) Agreed the arrangements for the consultation meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 5.30pm.

Reason: To progress the scrutiny review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Councillor Kramm, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.15 pm].