

CABINET MEETING

3rd December 2001

- Present:** Mr Egleton (Leader), Mr Whitehouse (Deputy Leader),
Mr Bowater (Environment), Mrs Mallowan (Safety Health and Well-Being), and
Mr Sheasby (Resources).
- Also Present:** Mr Cooper, Dr Hollis, Dr Kennedy (Chairman of the Council), Mr Rigby, Dr Scott,
Mrs Temple and Mr Winterbourn.

61. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 October 2001 were confirmed and signed by the Leader.

62. CABINET COMPOSITION

The Leader reported the resignation as a Councillor of Mr McKenzie, who had previously held the Portfolio for Safety, Health and Well-Being.

In view of the limited time left for the trial of the Cabinet system, the Leader proposed that rather than appoint a replacement, Mr Whitehouse add the Community Portfolio to his existing External Communications and Partnerships Portfolio and Mrs Mallowan assume responsibility for the Safety Health and Well-Being Portfolio.

Following on from the debate at the last Council meeting, Mr Whitehouse proposed the setting up of a Policy Advisory Group to consider Youth Issues, which were most relevant to both the Portfolios he now had responsibility for. It was possible that outside representation could be invited to participate e.g. a Youth Parliament representative, to assist dealing with the various cross-cutting issues affecting youth.

RECOMMENDED that the re-assignment of Cabinet Portfolios be approved.

63. MEETING OF SOUTH EAST LEADERS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES WITH STEPHEN BYERS, SECRETARY OF STATE DTLR.

The Cabinet considered a report from the Leader about a meeting he had attended with Leaders and Chief Executives in the South East Region with Secretary of State, Stephen Byers. The purpose of the meeting was to have discussions with the Secretary of State about the forthcoming Local Government White Paper which was expected to be published just before Christmas.

The report set out the key points made by Mr Byers with regard to a "more adult relationship" between central and local government, the restoration of local government with powers to deliver high quality public services, a review of the bureaucracy surrounding Best Value, and the making available of additional freedoms and powers to high performing authorities. The report also summarised a number of the questions which had been put to the Secretary of State together with the responses given.

The address and promised actions of the Secretary of State appeared to be very positive and it remained to be seen whether these would be delivered. The possibility of additional freedoms and powers would assist local authorities, particularly in relation to

the new roles of community leadership and advocacy. However, it was noted that other controls such as Standard Spending Assessments and burdens arising from such things as Best Value did not assist local authorities in carrying out these new roles.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

64. THE COUNCIL TAX – SETTING THE TAX BASE FOR 2002/2003

The Cabinet considered a report of the Resources Portfolio Holder concerning the setting of the Council tax base for 2002/2003. The report contained an assessment of the factors involved in calculating the tax base and provided calculations of the tax base for each Parish area.

The appendices to the report set out where variations had occurred in the number of Band D equivalent properties, amounting to a minor reduction in the total for the District from the previous year to 30,590. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that a reduction in the number of Band D equivalents was not related to the revenue contractors collection rates or targets for it. The reduction was mainly due to a correction of an optimistic view taken in the previous year of an increase in, and completion of, new dwellings and entitlement to discounts.

RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2002/2003, as set out in the report of the Resources Porfolio Holder be approved;

(2) In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by South Bucks District Council as its tax base for the year 2002/2003 be as follows:-

Beaconsfield	5,597
Burnham	4,985
Denham	3,194
Dorney	368
Farnham Royal	2,845
Fulmer	310
Gerrards Cross	4,144
Hedgerley	424
Iver	4,661
Stoke Poges	2,242
Taplow	860
Wexham	960
South Bucks District	30,590

65. UPGRADE OF INTEGRA FINANCE SYSTEM AND REPLACEMENT OF SERVER HARDWARE

The Cabinet considered a report from the Resources Portfolio Holder seeking funding approval for the replacement of the Integra Finance Server hardware and the upgrade of the operating systems software and applications software. The report set out the difficulties in continuing with the server currently running the Council's finance system which was obsolete. Unless this was replaced it would not be possible to upgrade to the current version of the Integra Finance Software, which it was necessary to do to continue to receive a fully supported service from the suppliers McKeowns. It was proposed that a new server be purchased and the model identified was scalable, expandable and flexible enough to meet the Council's requirements for the next three years. It would be necessary to configure and build the replacement server in advance of going live in order for the requisite training and migration to take place which would involve some parallel running of the systems.

The report detailed the estimated costs of the hardware and upgrade of the software based on the competitive quotations received. This amounted to an initial one-off cost of £70,000 (which included £25,000 for the migration and implementation) which it was proposed to charge to the Capital Fund. There were also costs of annual maintenance amounting to £9,572 over five years.

The Cabinet agreed it was essential to progress this matter to replace obsolete equipment and noted that the new server would be installed in a new comms room facility being arranged as part of an exercise to adjust office accommodation in the light of the move of ITnet staff.

RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The new hardware and upgraded Integra Finance System be purchased at a total cost of £70,000 to be financed by an addition to the Capital Programme, with an additional £3,524 maintenance costs for the current financial year to be met from revenue. (This would enable the finance system to be upgraded to go "live" by the end of September 2002 at the latest).
2. The ICT Services Co-ordinator be further instructed to investigate the availability of a second-hand system and be authorised to purchase, subject to the constraints that:-
 - It offers a significant saving to the Council.
 - It has a minimum of two years of the three year SUN warranty remaining.
 - The supplier upgrades any such system to the latest hardware and firmware levels.
 - It is fully supported by SUN maintenance for five years
 - A full service history is supplied
 - It is available within the timescales required by the Council.

66. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCILS: DISCUSSIONS ABOUT ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

The Cabinet considered a report from the Resources Portfolio Holder on discussions about electronic government in Buckinghamshire. Representatives of the County and four District Councils had held meetings to consider whether there were common aspirations in the areas of electronic government that might allow joint working and facilitate sharing costs and allow economies of scale.

Six areas of potential joint working had so far emerged:-

- Joint Consultation – rationalising consultation arrangement.

- Customer Contact Facilities – developing a county-wide approach
- Buckinghamshire Portal – a multi-agency web portal
- Geographic Information Systems – cohesive use of GIS products for the purposes of sharing and validating data.
- Electronic Business – improving the effectiveness and efficiency of procurement
- Smartcards – linking a variety of projects and providing access to services

Whilst there was an acceptance of the advantages of joint working on these matters, there was a recognition that the different systems in use, and the variations in the way services were delivered were a barrier to easy alignment of services. Some were keen to build on the new customer facilities set up to deal with callers to Aylesbury Vale District Council although this may not be an appropriate way forward for all Councils. Developments in e-government generally had resource implications. It was reported that the Council's Implementing E-Government statement had now been approved but it remained to be seen whether Government would provide any additional resources to assist.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

67. INVESTMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet received a report of the Investment Policy Advisory Group which had met on 20 November 2001, under the Chairmanship of the Resources Portfolio Holder.

The report covered the performance of the Cash Fund Managers, which had out-performed the benchmark during the last quarter and the slight under-performance of the Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens Maintenance Fund Manager against that benchmark. The new arrangements for investment of the Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens Maintenance Fund were in the course of being implemented.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

68. COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Cabinet considered a report of the External Partnerships, Communications and Community Portfolio Holder concerning five applications for Community Grants.

A total of £9,186 had been distributed from the budget of £31,000 leaving £21,814 available for allocation in the remainder of the year. The report detailed the applications for grants, which had been measured against the Grants Policy and the Community Plan objectives, as follows:-

1. St Andrews Church and Centre – to rebuild and extend the existing kitchen - £5,000 requested.
2. Iver and District Countryside Association – to purchase equipment - £1,095 requested.
3. Burnham Business Association – To erect and remove the Christmas lights in Burnham High Street - £1,640 requested.
4. Beaconsfield Festival of Lights Trust – Assistance towards lighting, road signing and entertainment - £1,250 requested.

5. The A40 Choir - Assistance towards the costs of their concert programme and rehearsal costs - £700 requested.

In response to questions about the application from St Andrews Church and the working of the Community Grants Scheme generally, it was reported that the St Andrews Church application had been deferred at the last meeting of the Cabinet while further information was sought about the nature and benefit of the works and the priority to be accorded to them in comparison with other projects under consideration. As regards the working of their Grants Scheme generally, Mr Whitehouse referred to the improvements already made whereby applications were gauged against Community Plan objectives. Nevertheless procedures were overdue for review and he would be seeking a scheme with clearer guidelines to ensure that applications were focused more closely to those priorities with a clear and transparent procedure for evaluating applications. Currently, any application for a grant for more than five per cent of the total fund available received very careful consideration before arriving at a recommendation for the Cabinet. The report set out the background to the recommendations including the reasons for deferring the Iver and District Countryside Association application while further consultations with Iver Parish Council took place.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The following grants be approved:-

St Andrews Church and Centre - £1,500

Burnham Business Association - £1,640

Beaconsfield Festival of Lights Trust - £1,250

A40 Choir - £500
2. The level of grant to St Andrews Church and Centre be reviewed at the end of the financial year with a view to considering an increase if there was a balance remaining in the Community Grants fund. (The Village Hall Grants Fund also be examined to see whether this could assist).
3. The Iver and District Countryside Association application be deferred.

69. CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The Cabinet considered a report from the External Partnerships, Communications and Community Portfolio Holder about a request for funding by Chiltern and South Bucks Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).

This was a new organisation derived from the merger of Chiltern Council for Voluntary Services and South Bucks Volunteer Bureau. The report set out the further investigations carried out since the CVS had first applied for funding and the CVS manager had made a presentation to the Policy Committee in June 2001. The Policy Committee had agreed to make no commitment to support the CVS at that stage and had asked for further consideration to be given to:

- The Council's own responsibilities for advice and support of the voluntary sector and how best to provide that service.
- The extent to which a fully funded CVS would assist the Council deliver its

Community Plan objectives.

- Whether the proposed merger would produce savings.
- The level of service that could be provided by the CVS.

It was recognised that the Council was working far more with Community Groups and this re-focusing of work should reduce the need to sponsor an intermediary organisation. The objectives set out in the CVS Business Plan had been examined and although very worthy, were to some extent equally the aims of local authorities and other organisations where resources may be better directed to achieve results. Advice received on the Business Plan suggested that it was not well constructed. With regard to whether the proposed merger would produce savings, there was a discrepancy between what the National Association for Voluntary Service recommends as a minimum budget to run a district-wide CVS service, and the estimated budget put forward by the Chiltern and South Bucks CVS, which included for a volunteer bureau service. Funding and income currently identified totalled £35,500, leaving a large shortfall between that and estimated running costs. The CVS had applied for core funding to the Lottery Community Fund but this application had been delayed and there was an overall concern about future viability. The CVS had indicated that it would be happy to agree a service level agreement. However, some element of this work would duplicate support and advice to the voluntary sector provided by Bucks Community Action.

Informal discussion with Members since the CVS had applied for grant funding indicated that many of the concerns expressed at the time still remained. It was felt the organisation would suffer from a lack of focus being spread across two districts and generally the view was taken that a convincing case for its support had yet to be made.

RESOLVED that:

1. The earlier view of Policy Committee be upheld and that no grant be given at this time, but that the CVS be open to approach the Council again in the financial year 2002-2003, by which time uncertainties over its future prospects may have been resolved.
2. The Portfolio Holder review with Officers the current level of service provision to the voluntary sector to ensure the limited resources available are used to maximum benefit.

70. PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW

The Cabinet considered a report of the External Communications, Partnerships and Community Portfolio Holder about the Local Government Commission for England's final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Bucks.

The Commission's final recommendations did not differ substantially from its draft recommendations and provided for a Council size of 40 members to be retained. There would be 19 wards, the same as at present although the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards would need to be modified. A copy of the Commission's report had been circulated to all Members and a report setting out the implications in more detail would be submitted to Policy Committee/Council on 18 December 2001.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

71. THE LANGLEY PARK HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PROJECT

The Cabinet considered a report of the Environment Portfolio Holder suggesting a formal view to take on the current consultation regarding the Langley Park Historic Landscape Project.

The project had been discussed by Members on the Country Parks Liaison Group, at meetings of the Langley Park Historic Landscape Project Stakeholders Group which was attended by several District Councillors, and at a presentation made to District Councillors on 11 October. The Langley Park Estate made an important contribution to the District, not only in the terms of the opportunities it provided for informal recreation but also in terms of the heritage of the estate which is an historic park and garden listed as Grade 1 by English Heritage. Accordingly it was appropriate to give a broad welcome to the proposals to preserve and enhance this historic estate, while at the same time ensuring that the proposals were established within the planning policy framework and did not involve development which would harm the purposes of Green Belt policy or result in commercialisation.

The report and suggested response covered a number of detailed aspects of the project including the provision of:

- A feature/structure within the rhododendron garden
- Visitor facilities at Langley Park
- A focus for the arboretum

- A Black Park recreation area
- A crossing on the A412

Arising from suggestions from Members, the Cabinet agreed that the draft letter of response should be revised to strike a more positive and supportive note, and reference was made in particular to the sections on new signs, the rhododendron garden, visitor facilities, the Black Park recreation area and the safe crossing on the A412. Members were concerned to welcome the preparation of an application for Heritage Lottery Funding. However, it was noted that if this application was successful the maximum grant available would be 75% of the total costs of the project and it was not clear how the remaining 25% would be raised.

RESOLVED that the draft letter of response be approved for submission to the County Council, subject to revision to reflect the views set out above in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

72. COLNE VALLEY PARK PROJECTS 2001-2002

The Cabinet considered a report of the Environment Portfolio Holder seeking approval of the projects to be undertaken in the Colne Valley Park this financial year.

The core funding of £6,600 which the Council provided to Groundwork Thames Valley had been paid and there remained the allocation of the annual budget for projects to be carried out by Groundwork amounting to £14,937. The majority of suggested projects for 2001/2002 concentrated on the section of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal which falls within South Bucks. The works involved vegetation clearance, planting, new fencing, improvements to a public footbridge and resurfacing of sections of the towpath. A further suggested project was to carry out works in partnership with Groundwork Thames Valley and Iver Parish Council to bring about the restoration of an area of derelict land to the north west of Hardings Row, Iver Heath. The restored land would be managed and maintained as a local nature reserve for the general public. Other funding had been secured from Iver Parish Council, the landowners, who had contributed £10,000, from sponsors and, if the application was successful, from landfill tax money.

These projects would assist in implementation of the Community Plan and, in particular a A.6 which related to improving the visual appearance of the environment with strategies for beautifying South Bucks. The projects also formed part of the Colne Valley Action

Plan.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Various improvement works to the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal be taken at an estimated cost of £8,937.
2. A contribution of £5,500 be made towards the creation of a local nature reserve at Hardings Row, subject to confirmation from the Environmental Health Section that safety checks were satisfactory.
3. The maintenance of last year's Colne Valley Park schemes be carried out at a cost of £500.

73. FLY-TIPPING AND ABANDONED CARS

The Cabinet considered a report of the Environment Portfolio Holder setting out the current financial position and providing guidance on the way forward with regards to the removal of fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles.

The report outlined the Council's statutory duties on removal of fly tipping and abandoned cars and the arrangements with contractors to carry this out. The cost of providing a service is fixed per occurrence of £55 to remove an abandoned car and £10 per cubic metre for removal of fly-tipping (excluding contaminated material). Details were reported of a large increase in both occurrences and the expenditure required to deal with this. Expenditure on removal of fly-tipping had risen from £35,260 in the year 1999/2000 to a predicted £123,000 in the current year. Expenditure on removal of abandoned cars had risen from £8,085 in 1999/2000 to a predicted £44,000 in the current year.

The position of the District, the road and motorway network and the mainly rural nature of the District made it an attractive location for fly-tippers. Increases in landfill tax and tipping charges were considered to be a factor in the increase in fly-tipping, since there was a clear financial temptation to illegally fly-tip. Concern about the increasing problem of fly-tipping had resulted in a joint officer meeting with County and Chiltern District Officers. A number of ways to tackle a problem were being investigated including seeking assistance from the Environment Agency as to prosecution of offenders (or whether the local authority could prosecute in their place), the cost and practicalities of using a surveillance company to monitor known blackspots, joint exercises on vehicle inspections, and considering whether a small amount of trade waste could be accepted at Civic Amenity Sites (which would involve removal of height barriers).

In the current financial year the Council had removed 372 abandoned cars to date following the statutory procedure. The Council's free removal of vehicles service provided for residents had been popular and taken up by 215 residents to date. Action had already been taken to streamline the procedure on removal of vehicles and the Police took action to immediately remove vehicles causing a hazard on the highway. Further investigations were taking place into whether procedures could be quickened any more including whether a contribution from the County Council as waste disposal authority could be made towards the disposal cost of each vehicle.

The Cabinet were concerned about the steeply rising costs of dealing with these problems. It supported the various investigations into methods whereby fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles could be dealt with more effectively and/or more cheaply. The possibility of more waste being allowed into Civic Amenity Sites was felt to be particularly worth pursuing, even to the extent of making a contribution to the County Council if that would significantly reduce the amount of fly-tipping. Closer co-operation between the County and the Police would assist in the removal of abandoned cars, particularly from certain blackspots e.g. the A412. The possibility of lobbying government to amend

legislation to reduce these problems was referred to.

After further consideration, particularly in relation to how to manage the increased cost of these services it was:

RECOMMENDED that:-

1. Virement of £6,400 from the Council Offices car parking be approved as part funding for the overspend in 2001/02, virement of £20,000 from various repairs and maintenance codes be approved as part funding for the overspend.
 - (2) The balance of the current year overspend of £83,625 be a first charge on any savings within the Portfolio with any shortfall to be funded from reserves.
 - (3) The continuing negotiations with Bucks County Council, aiming to reduce the amount of fly-tipping including considering prosecutions and the comments in regard to abandoned cars, be approved.
1. The extra costs in 2002/2003 be taken into account by the Portfolio Holder when considering the budget.
 - (5) No steps be taken to delay the removal of fly-tipping in order to try and reduce expenditure.
 - (6) The Director of Services be asked to re-tender the removal of fly-tipping and abandoned cars as soon as possible to see if costs can be reduced.
 - (7) The Leader of Council be asked to raise at the forthcoming meeting of Bucks Council Leaders the question of tipping at Civic Amenity Sites and removal of height barriers.

74. CONSENT FOR SALE – NORTH GRANGE, LANGLEY PARK

The Cabinet considered a report from the Environment Portfolio Holder about a request from Bucks County Council seeking consent to the sale of the freehold interest of North Grange, Langley Park.

When Bucks County Council, using Green Belt Act powers, acquired Black Park and Langley Park, the former Eton Rural District Council contributed the equivalent of 10% of the purchase price. The County Council now wished to dispose of part of the property, North Grange at Langley Park, and the District Council's consent as a contributing authority was required. The County Council had previously granted a long lease of North Grange and the tenant now wished to exercise his rights under the Leasehold Reform Act and acquire the freehold.

When previous sales of property in Black Park or Langley Park have occurred, the Council has been concerned to seek the agreement of the County Council to apply the proceeds, or a proportion of them, received from the disposals to the benefit of the Country Parks Service. In April 2001, the Policy Committee had approved a report from the Country Parks Liaison Committee which included an agreement on future such sales whereby that if the County Council undertook to ring-fence a minimum of 50% of the net proceeds of sales for the benefit of the Country Parks, the District Council would match that percentage from its own share of the proceeds. An estimate of the valuation for North Grange was not yet available but since it related only to the acquisition of the freehold by an existing leaseholder, it seemed unlikely that the sum would be significant.

RESOLVED that:-

(1) Consent for the sale of North Grange, Langley Park be granted subject to the District Council receiving 10% of the gross sale proceeds;

(2) Provided the County Council ring-fence a minimum of 50% of their net proceeds of sale for the benefit of the Country Parks, the District Council will match that percentage from its own share of the proceeds.

75. LAND USE STRATEGY POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet received a report of a meeting of the Land Use Strategy Policy Advisory Group held on 23 October 2001. The Group had been set up to assist the Environment Portfolio Holder and had considered a report on a damaged land survey and a contaminated land survey. A further meeting of the Group had been held on 28 November when consultants had attended to put forward views on carrying out of the surveys.

76. KEY WORKER HOUSING

The Cabinet considered a report of the Safety Health and Well-Being Portfolio Holder about the Government's starter home initiative and whether other forms of accommodation should be provided for key workers.

The result of this year's bids for Government funding for keyworker housing (The Starter Home Initiative) was that Chiltern Hundreds Housing Association (CHHA) had been awarded £6,988,224 for the three years ending 31 March 2004 to assist 272 keyworkers in Buckinghamshire to buy homes on a shared ownership basis. CHHA would provide homes either from its own shared ownership developments or through do-it-yourself shared ownership (DIYSO). Provisional targets had been set by CHHA to assist keyworkers for each year and in South Bucks the aim was to provide homes for keyworkers in the following groups over the three year period:-

Police	5
Teachers	10
Nurses/Other Health Workers	30
Fire Staff	5

It appeared that the provisional CHHA target for South Bucks District was low bearing in mind the high cost of property and feedback from some of the main employers. It was suggested that CHHA should review its allocation to correct the potential shortfall. There were also, of course, keyworkers who preferred to rent rather than buy and the Council could consider giving additional needs points to increase their priority for rented housing on the Council's housing register. A fair reflection of this priority was considered to be equal to approved homeless applicants amounting to an additional 60 points.

The Cabinet also noted that negotiations were taking place for the possible provision of keyworker housing on sites which could become available in the near future, including sites in Taplow, Stoke Poges, Beaconsfield and Iver Heath. Keyworker housing provision is not included in the current Local Plan but would be subject to inclusion when the Plan is reviewed. It was also noted that further information was being gathered on keyworker needs through the Housing Needs Survey currently under way. This would assist in development of the Council's keyworker strategy.

In answer to questions, it was confirmed that while there may also be a need for Police family housing, the conversion of the 8 Thames Valley Police houses in Tatling End to provide 24 units of accommodation for single Officers would fulfil an identified need, and would clearly be an improvement over the situation whereby the houses had remained vacant for 4 years.

RESOLVED that:

1. CHHA be informed that the South Bucks allocation for Shared Ownership under the Starter Home Initiative should reflect the needs of the District as identified in the report.
2. The Council continues to assess the needs of accommodation for keyworkers and incorporates this provision in its housing strategy, including identifying other categories of staff that should be included as keyworkers.
3. More effective advice be issued to keyworkers and their employees about the Housing Registrar and the DIYSO scheme.

(4) The Council's allocation policy for social housing be amended – keyworkers be awarded 60 points to increase their priority for housing on the housing register.

77. REDEVELOPMENT OF DENHAM GARDEN VILLAGE – REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Cabinet considered a report of the Safety Health and Well-Being Portfolio Holder about progress on this redevelopment scheme and a request for assistance with funding for it.

Denham Garden Village consisted of 183 bungalows and a home providing 24 nursing and 53 residential care places. It was the largest component of retirement housing owned by Licensed Victuallers National Homes (LVNH) until April 2001, when LVNH transferred its housing assets to Anchor Trust. Denham Garden Village is in need of substantial upgrading, the nursing home will not satisfy new registration requirements and the Housing Corporation is unhappy about funding Housing Associations with closed waiting lists like LVNH. For these reasons the transfer to Anchor took place.

Anchor Trust was proposing to redevelop the whole of Denham Garden Village over five years including replacement of all current dwellings, including the nursing/care home, incorporating a Home Care service by a partner service provider and replacing the existing pub, shop and Post Office. Additional communal and leisure facilities including a library, bowling green, swimming pool and fitness centre were proposed.

Anchor has undertaken some consultations locally on its proposals. Planning Permission has yet to be obtained but if approved the new housing will comprise 320 bungalows, flats and houses of which 192 will be rented and 128 leasehold for the elderly. The likely programme of work means that tenants will have to be decanted to alternative homes while construction work takes place.

Anchor is requesting the Council for help in funding Phase 1 of the project which will be 96 houses and 5 bungalows for rent, incorporating extra care support. Later phases will provide an element of properties for sale and the profits arising will help fund these later phases of the work. In return for financial support, the Council would receive 100% nomination rights initially, with 80% of re-lets for the 101 dwellings in Phase 1. Anchor was seeking support of approximately £8 million in Social Housing Grant (SHG), some of which it hoped to obtain direct from the Housing Corporation. For any SHG which the Council provided, it would be reimbursed by the Housing Corporation although the replacement capital would not be useable again for funding future housing capital

projects.

Local Members expressed concern about the Anchor proposals, referring to the preliminary nature of the plans, possible difficulty with decanting tenants, the adequacy of social care for existing tenants/residents and site security and supervision. Cabinet Members also recognised concerns about the scale of this development of older people's housing, which was not identified as a Community Plan priority, the substantial level of SHG which was sought and the generally imprecise details about the development. All these factors, which cut across a number of Council policy areas, made it difficult to consider without further information.

RESOLVED that a Policy Advisory Group be appointed to examine the redevelopment proposals for Denham Garden Village in detail and report back to Cabinet.

78. NHS SCRUTINY AND HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

The Cabinet considered a report from the Safety Health and Well-Being Portfolio Holder on ways for the Council to scrutinise NHS activities and increase involvement in Health Improvement Initiatives.

As community leader, the Council should help ensure its residents received decent health services. The Council should also be consulted by the NHS on service proposals likely to affect residents. The Community Plan included lobbying for a better health service as an objective.

At present, the Council had 3 Members to represent it on the Community Health Councils (CHC's) serving the area. CHC's directly monitored NHS institutions and procedures and were consulted on proposed changes in NHS activities. CHC's were due to be wound up in 2002 as part of the Government's modernisation agenda. New local bodies that will include patients' representatives, but not local authority appointees, will take up the role of Patients Watchdogs and by 2002 there would be a Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS) for every NHS Trust.

The Health and Social Care Act 2001 gives Local Government a formal scrutiny role, but County Councils are given that responsibility in two-tier areas as in Buckinghamshire. Consequently, District Councils had no statutory responsibility for NHS Scrutiny. Nevertheless, Bucks County Council has invited Districts to appoint representatives to its Scrutiny Committee and the Environment and Housing Review Panel has appointed Mrs Kverndal (with Mrs Woolveridge as deputy). This new health scrutiny role will require elected Members to develop new skills and take an active investigatory role.

Currently Primary Care Groups (PCG's) oversee the delivery of GP and related services as Sub-Committees of Health Authorities. PCG's are being replaced by Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) which will have greater autonomy on budgets and how health services are planned. The PCG for this area was now a combined area of South Bucks and Chiltern District Councils and from 1 April 2002 would achieve PCT status. The Council had been invited to appoint a representative to the PCG/PCT. The Portfolio Holder suggested that Mrs Woolveridge be appointed as the representative, with Mr Adams (should he be agreeable to serve) to be appointed deputy. The report included an extract from an Audit Commission paper providing a list of recommended roles and activities for local authorities, local NHS bodies and central government in relation to health scrutiny.

Buckinghamshire Health Authority was required to draw up a Health Improvement Plan (HImP) in partnership with other agencies and groups to address needs in the County as a whole. PCG's and PCT's had been asked to lead on local initiatives.

The Health for All Group covering Chiltern and South Bucks had been looking at indices

of deprivation published by the Department of Health with a view to encouraging and supporting projects to improve health and well-being in the areas of most need. This meant projects would be identified in Burnham and Iver Village where Community Safety Forums had been established and there was potential for shared objectives of community safety and health improvement initiatives to be met.

The PCG employed a project worker, the cost of whom was part funded by Chiltern District Council, to encourage and facilitate health improvement work in Chiltern District. The current cost to Chiltern DC was £15,000 and the Council had direct use of that Officer for about two days per week. The PCG had asked if this Council would like to make a similar contribution to employ an Officer on the same basis to cover the South Bucks District. In South Bucks, community safety staff worked alongside those who liaised with the PCG over Health For All. There was also a close relationship with Leisure Services and local Community Safety Forums. Also, in Burnham the Burnham Health Promotion Trust has funds for work, employs staff and is keen to work with the Council on developing initiatives. As a result, Members recognised that as a first step the Council should fully utilise existing health improvement opportunities and not take up the offer of the PCG to employ an Officer.

Members recognised the importance of NHS scrutiny and developing the Council's role in this as an important step in achieving Community Plan objectives. Further consideration could also be given to whether the existing Member Panels were appropriate and adequate to carry out the NHS scrutiny role.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Mrs Woolveridge be appointed representative, with Mr Adams deputy representative (if he was willing to serve) to the Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Group.
2. The employment by the PCG of a Health Improvement Project Worker for South Bucks be not supported at this time.
3. Buckinghamshire County Council continue to be supported in its statutory role of health scrutiny and this matter be kept under review in conjunction with our representative on the Buckinghamshire County Council Scrutiny Panel.
4. Every opportunity be used to publicise any concerns on NHS matters and the work the Council is doing to improve health.
5. Further consideration be given to appropriate Member mechanisms for carrying out NHS scrutiny.

79

ROAD CLOSURES

The Cabinet considered a report from the Safety Health and Well-Being Portfolio Holder seeking approval to requests for the temporary closure of roads in Denham, Iver, Gerrards Cross and Burnham.

The events involved were the Annual Church Fayre in Village Road, Denham on 3 June 2002, the Iver Golden Jubilee Carnival on Iver High Street and surrounding roads on 13 July 2002, the Gerrards Cross Fun Run over various roads in Gerrards Cross on 19 May 2002 and the opening of the new obelisk seating area in High Street, Burnham on 15 December 2001.

RESOLVED that subject to no objections from the consultees, formal consent be granted for the temporary closure of roads in Denham, Iver, Gerrards Cross and Burnham as set out in the report and on the dates referred to, pursuant to Section 21 of the Town Police Clause Act 1847.

80. ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING REVIEW PANEL

The Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Housing Review Panel held on 21 November 2001. The Panel had undertaken a review of the Cabinet decision on Development Control staffing which had been called-in and had concluded that the decision was broadly acceptable and could be forwarded but further scrutiny by the Review Panel be undertaken within the next 6 months.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

81. WASTE TRANSFER STATION AT IVER

Reference was made to the recent decision of Bucks County Council to grant Planning Permission for a Waste Transfer Station at the Bison Estate, Thorney Lane North, Iver. The District Council had formally objected to the County Council on the application and representations from local people and Iver Parish had also been made. This decision appeared to conflict with the agreement of the local authorities to work together on reducing the impact of heavy goods vehicles on the village roads through Iver.

RESOLVED that the Environment Portfolio Holder be asked to write a letter of protest against this decision to the Leader of Bucks County Council.

82. COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Safety Health and Well-Being Portfolio Holder reported recent work by the Community Safety team which had identified that 6 out of the top 15 hot-spots for vehicle crime in the District were in the Council's own car parks. Further investigations were being undertaken into how to deal with this. The Portfolio Holder suggested an agenda item at future Cabinet meetings to give regular reports on Community Safety progress.

83. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act:-

Update on Lease of Capswood and the Sale of the Council Offices

(Paragraph 9 – Terms proposed in the course of negotiation of a contract).

The Cabinet considered reports on an update on the lease of Capswood and the sale of the Council Offices. It was agreed to note the advice received and grant delegated authority to approve steps to secure the Council's best interest with regard to the lease of premises at Capswood.

